THE IMPLICATIONS OF SCHOOL DISTRICT REORGANIZATION FOR SELECTED COUNTIES IN OKLAHOMA

By

PATRICK M. JENLINK

Bachelor of Science
Northwestern Oklahoma State University
Alva, Oklahoma
1972

Master of Education
Northwestern Oklahoma State University
Alva, Oklahoma
1977

Submitted to the Faculty of the Graduate College
of the Oklahoma State University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the Degree of
DOCTOR OF EDUCATION
July, 1986

THE IMPLICATIONS OF SCHOOL DISTRICT REORGANIZATION

FOR SELECTED COUNTIES IN OKLAHOMA

Thesis Approved:

Kenneth St. Clair
Thesis Adviser

A. Kenneth Stern

Thomas A. Karman

George E. Arquitt Jr.

Norman N. Durham
Dean of the Graduate College

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The purpose of this study was to determine the implications of school district reorganization for selected school districts in the State of Oklahoma. The model design for district reorganization was developed based on improving the quality of schools and the providing of more equal access to educational opportunity. It is hoped that the results of this study will provide useful data on the effects of a district reorganization plan for two counties in Oklahoma, as well as provide a perspective from which to view decisions regarding district reorganization or consolidation of schools.

I wish to express my sincere appreciation to those people who have jointly worked toward the fulfillment of a lifelong goal. Sincere thanks are extended to the school superintendents and the State Department of Education personnel who participated in this research study.

Deep appreciation is extended to Dr. Kenneth St. Clair, thesis adviser, for his patience, guiding thought, and honest friendship. The other members of the committee, Dr. Thomas Karman, Dr. Ken Stern, and Dr. Ed Arquitt, have provided needed guidance and assurance throughout the completion of this study. A special thanks is offered to Mr. David Self, who, through his close friendship and often needed encouragement, helped me to maintain proper perspective and confidence to reach this goal.

My warmest appreciation goes to my parents, Mr. and Mrs. Glenn Jenlink, for their constant concern and interest in the furthering of my education. This has been as much a goal for them as it has for me.

Finally, to my wife Christee goes my heartfelt expression of love, gratitude, and appreciation. It was through Christee's patience, understanding, and ever-present faith and love that the realization of this goal was made possible.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES

LIST OF FIGURES

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Few problems in American society are more crucial and of more immediate concern than those related to the structure of education at the level of elementary and secondary schools. In an era of constantly accelerating change, the current structure does not seem to satisfy the educational needs of people affected by the rapid adjustment and modification demanded of a high technology society. As a result, the educational structure of the country is under critical evaluation by legislators, business and industrial leaders, and professional educators in an attempt to find a structure that meets these demands. A great deal of current research has been directed toward the implications of consolidation of school districts. Ironically, Coleman et al. (1971) stated that the main motivation in school district reorganization was the drive to keep educational structures in step with societal demands exacted on the educational system. Since 1971, the demands have continued to accelerate to almost hurricane force while little has changed organizationally to respond to or to keep pace with the demands.

Coupled with the current concern and analysis of educational structure is an equal concern for a quality educational offering that provides equal access to all. Again, the implications of consolidation as an avenue for effecting this higher quality education with more equal access to educational opportunities has been considered during the past few years; concern for this issue has become prominent at the state level.

As each state addresses this issue, it is becoming apparent that there are many factors affecting school structure organization that play an important role in any analysis of past, present, or future consolidation attempts. It is also apparent that, quite often, factors found to be of major importance in determining a solution to a problem may result in conditions which may or may not substantiate the wisdom of that decision several years later. It is in this light that much current research is involved with an indepth analysis of the reasons for past consolidation and the present effects it has. Also questioned is the validity of the basis for past consolidation efforts.

Presently, Oklahoma, not unlike many other states, faces the consolidation issue. This is not a new issue to the State in that Oklahoma has undergone some consolidation as recently as 1969. However, the basis for consolidation has undergone considerable change over the past 17 years. Actually, school district consolidation has increased in complexity since the days of one-room school houses. The process continues to be complicated by: current reform reports pushing for curriculum improvement, declining and shifting enrollment, the question of equity in access to educational opportunity, a persistent shortfall of revenue, the ever-increasing need for "high tech" oriented education within the state, and America's historically based tradition of local control over education. Even with these complications unresolved, a recommendation for consolidation of all dependent districts, along with consolidation of small independent districts, has been presented by the Governor's Committee on Reform to the State Legislature for its consideration (Governor's Committee on Reform, 1983).

The thrust for this type of recommendation rests on providing more quality for the schools and increasing the scope of programs offered for

all students. Some disagree, saying the thrust is purely economic. In light of such a recommendation, many forces are asking for additional supportive data, as the question has arisen whether the evidence proposed by the Reform Committee fully substantiates their recommendation for further consolidation.

The focus for this research project is the educational implications in past district consolidation of Oklahoma schools, based on a careful analysis of presently available data and a realistic view of the validity and scope of these data. In addition to this question and concern of supportive data for past consolidation efforts, there is a second matter: whether quality improvement in school districts may be effected by further school district reorganization or consolidation.

Statement of the Problem

The problem which is the focus of this research is the lack of sufficient data on school district consolidation in the State of Oklahoma. Second in concern are the implications of school district reorganization or consolidation imposed for the purpose of effecting quality improvement in school districts.

The problem might well be framed into the following questions:

1. What factors are of critical concern to school district reorganization on a national level?

2. What factors are of critical concern to school district reorganization within the State of Oklahoma?

3. What constitutes the "comprehensive high school?"

4. What criteria are necessary for establishing a model for reorganization?

5. What model would serve for reorganization of independent districts in Oklahoma?

6. What are the implications of a model of school district reorganization when executed for improving quality of education and increasing the scope of offering for all students?

Purpose of Study

The purpose of this study was to investigate the implications of school district consolidation on selected K-12 independent school districts in relation to improving the quality of schools and providing access to equal educational opportunity. It is hoped that this study will provide additional data on the potential outcomes of future consolidation of schools across Oklahoma and that it will identify a perspective from which to view decisions regarding consolidation of schools.

Definitions

The following definitions were utilized in this study:

Consolidation:

> . . . signifies the transportation of high school students from their local communities to a school in a neighboring community. Essential elements are: (a) commuting, and (b) attendance at a larger school than the one that had previously existed, or could exist in the local community (Barker and Gump, 1964, p. 139).

Based on this definition, districts are often assigned the name "consolidated." These are school districts which have experienced a change in attendance site, significant change in transportation district, and/or addition of commuting of students. They may also have absorbed other communities in their vicinity into their serving site. Consolidated may also refer to reorganization of programs, administration, physical sites,

community schools, and attendance and tax areas of school districts. In the general sense, it is a structure reorganization of an existing organization commonly referred to as the school (district).

Equal Educational Opportunity: Equality of educational opportunity is attained when there is roughly equal opportunity for different segments of the population to compete for the benefits of the educational system (Tesconi and Hurwitz, Jr., 1974). This does not imply that each student shall have all the learning he can profit from, but that a student shall have equal opportunity to programs, service, and ability to have needs met. In this research, equal educational opportunity will be viewed as situationally relevant to the state, district, and community involved.

Reorganization: Defined as meaning the enlarging and rearranging of the administrative, attendance, and tax areas of school districts.

Independent District: "All independent school districts shall be those which shall have maintained during the previous year a school offering high school subjects fully accredited by the State Board of Education" (School Laws of Oklahoma, 1984, p. 61).

Dependent District: "Dependent school districts shall offer grades Kindergarten (K) through eight (8) and are those which have not met the minimum standards for and have not been designated as independent school districts by the State Board of Education (School Laws of Oklahoma, 1984, p. 62).

Nonconsolidated: School districts which still operate at the same existing site as recorded and reported to state agencies in 1960. No additional commuting of students or significant changes in the transportation district have occurred. This shall also include no change in the number of communities being served by one school district.

Small School: Defined as (1) any elementary school which supports not more than one classroom per grade level (example: a K-8 school with an average of 20 pupils in each grade = total attendance of 180 pupils), and (2) any high school with a graduating class of less than 100 pupils (Sher and Tompkins, 1976).

Rural School: A school located in a nonmetropolitan place having a total population of less than 10,000 residents (Sher and Tompkins, 1976).

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Consolidation is not a new issue to America. Since the very beginning of one-room school houses, there have been attempts to restructure the place called school. Many reasons for consolidation have been offered in the past, ranging from economy of scale to more quality education, and from more education per pupil for the dollar to equal access to educational opportunities. Whatever the reason, the trend in consolidation seems always toward larger schools. This immediately puts small schools in jeopardy and quite often evokes a large scale "war" to save the community schools. When issues as delicate to local communities as consolidation and as important as quality education (in relation to equal access to educational opportunities) are blended together to form a major focal point in society, attention must be given to the foundations of research supporting them.

One important factor for consideration in the school consolidation issue is that of school size. Based on this factor, the question has often been asked as to what constitutes a school that is too small or too large. The Summary of Research of Size of Schools and Districts (1974) provided a comprehensive review of literature on this factor. Several concluding remarks from this summary were:

> School size is not absolute; it is but one of many factors related to educational quality. Good education can and does occur in schools ranging in sizes from small to large.

> School districts size is not absolute; district size, too, is but one of many factors relating to educational quality and operational efficiency. Good education can and does occur in school districts ranging in sizes from small to large.
>
> Schools and school districts that are small can achieve quality in educational programs but only if sufficient funds are available and are properly spent to compensate for the diseconomies of smallness (Summary of Research on Size of Schools and School Districts, 1974, pp. 49-50.)

The appropriate size of school and school district will vary from locality to locality, and one must remember that size does not necessarily effect quality or equality in any setting, regardless of type. Schools and school districts can be either too large or too small in terms of program quality and efficiency of operation.

Many states have viewed consolidation as the method by which a move from less quality and diseconomy of scale may be made toward greater quality and efficiency in operation. Often, the contention that there are too many school districts to provide both quality and equal education dominates, and consolidation takes place. One such contention prompted a hypothetical approach to reorganization in Missouri.

Wadlington (1980) conducted a study of reorganization of Missouri's 521 out-of-state school districts into 116 new administrative units in an attempt to create greater access to equal educational opportunity. The basis of the problem was districts with small pupil enrollments, illogically set school district boundaries, inequality in access to educational opportunities, and poor quality schools. Included in the deficiencies of schools in Missouri were: no kindergarten, enrollment under 100 pupils of 72 districts, enrollment of under 200 in 187 schools, failure to meet minimum standards set by the state, and variation in units of credits offered by high schools.

The proposed reorganization plan established an enrollment range of 1,589 to 24,144 student population. A set of five criteria was established to determine the new district plan. While the study provided a basic model for reorganization, it was limited by the inability to apply the model to actual use. The study provided a theoretical model for facilitating access to an equal and comprehensive educational program for all students, regardless of where they happen to reside in a given geographical location. Substantial improvement in the educational programs was achieved, but inability for actual implementation limited this study.

Another common factor for concern in most current research on consolidation is the increase in distance traveled by students. The problem is to create a new district without creating an impact on the pupils transported. The impact generally comes from excessive time spent in travel from their home to the school.

Honey and Kohler (1978), in their study of distance effects of school district reorganization, concluded that equalization of educational opportunity is a complex goal. The study was conducted to determine what would happen as a result of reorganization of districts in Iowa. Four optimum school sizes were used--400, 600, 750, and 1,000 as a basis for hypothetically reorganizing the districts using a location-allocation methodology. The analysis showed that the average distance increase for children would be minimal on an overall student basis, but that among reassigned children, the impact would be significant. The analysis also showed that most of the distance effects on children would occur even with moderate increases in enrollment sizes. A small marginal increase in distance would result from setting enrollment at 1,000 (or 750 pupils), rather than 600 or 400. The realization that inequities would develop for some, based on added travel

time and distance, adds some question of concern for what is optimum size, travel distance, and travel time.

A question which often arises in discussing the consolidation issue is the effect on student participation in activities and student attitudes toward the consolidated school. O'Brien (1981) conducted research on small, large, consolidated and nonconsolidated schools in the State of Vermont. School size was found to be of major importance when a school system has as one of its objectives an active and participating student body. It was found that organization into larger schools with a larger student population discouraged the active involvement that occurs in the one-classroom setting of smaller schools. A greater percentage of student participation was found in small schools versus large, and the students participated at a more active level.

Barker and Gump (1964) reported that student participation in extracurricular activities is greatest in small schools. They concluded that high schools of between 61 and 150 students involved the highest proportion of students in musical, dramatic, journalistic, and student government competitions. Barker and Gump also found that if small school students were transported to a county school, they would have more opportunities for experienced involvement in school activities. The negative impact of this transition was that with the enlarged school setting, small school students do not experience family, peer group, and community pressures for individual involvement in the many activities offered. The consequences were that the small school student does not become involved to the degree he/she once did, and most likely will lose in the end. The losses experienced would occur in the areas of satisfaction associated with physical well-being, acquisition of knowledge, development of intellectual interests, and development of self-concept. When the number of offerings and activities

available for students increases, the total number of individual involvements decreases, and the student will most likely suffer from the larger school environment.

As evidenced by the research cited, it is clear that school size differences and school organization differences do have an effect on student participation in both the school and community, and may affect value development associated with both.

Another question in relation to the effect consolidation movements have is that of the value structure of the community when their local attendance site is removed or reorganized. In a research study conducted on the effects of consolidation on fidelity to a community's traditional value system, Kay, Hapgood, and Russell (1982) concluded that consolidation of the school system is only one factor among many which influences values. By itself, consolidation is not a major factor in changing values, despite the theoretical concerns of anticonsolidationists. Data from this study suggested that the degree of homogeneity of the community and the stability of other major social institutions, like the family and church may, in fact, soften the influence of consolidation when and where it exists. The actual effects of consolidation may not weigh heavily upon the value structure of the community because of the other social institutions (for example, family and church) acting as buffers to any serious impact.

In light of the attention given nationally to the consolidation issue, it would seem necessary to look within the state to gain a perspective on the results of research conducted on consolidation efforts in Oklahoma.

McCutchan (1963), in his research on school district reorganization in the State of Oklahoma, found that at the time of his study all school districts were not educationally acceptable and would likely not be acceptable under current district organizational patterns. By selecting three

counties with respect to wealth, student population, and area (sparsity of population) and by applying a reorganizational model, it was found that educational opportunity could be created in all counties as established by the literature cited. McCutchan also stated, however, that optimum educational opportunities were limited, based on the factor of population sparsity.

Another researcher, Parker (1980), found that Oklahoma must consider some type of reorganization of the 620 districts in the state. He viewed consolidation as an issue that cannot be ignored by any responsible group considering not only the financing of schools but also the provision of equal and adequate educational opportunities as well.

In her analysis of Oklahoma financing, Ware (1982) noted the obvious fact that there are a very large number of small schools in Oklahoma. Approximately 8% of the students in Oklahoma attend 47% of the school districts. Based on this figure, Ware felt that consolidation should be considered as an issue of consolidation of programs to provide equity of quality and access rather than as one of equalization of financing. She further stated that consolidation should be approached in relation to the effect it imposes upon the overall educational environment of the students involved. Ware's study involved a test of a distribution formula in Oklahoma applied to revenues available in the years 1972, 1981, and 1982. In her concluding remarks, Ware posed three points of concern which are summarized in the following questions:

1. What would be the educational and economic effects of the elimination of all dependent school districts of Oklahoma?

2. What would be the educational and economic effects of consolidation of all school districts with an ADA of less than 300 in kindergarten

through grade 12 whose transportation district, after consolidation, would not exceed 400 square miles?

3. Should a small school factor cost be paid outside the formula to school districts that must be maintained because of population sparsity and the size of their transportation district?

Viewed from a national and/or state perspective, it is easily discernible that the consolidation issue is complex and does not render an easy decision. Many factors are involved and will require additional research and review before a plausible plan for reorganization may be developed.

Based on an extensive review of literature and research, certain questions must be answered at this point. These questions should serve to establish a firm foundation upon which to build a sound structure for determining the implications of consolidation of schools in Oklahoma. It is noted that while these questions are secondary to the original research questions assigned to the identified problems, they are absolutely essential to the implementation of this research. The questions are:

1. What are common types of consolidation or reorganization legislation?

2. What are the pros and cons of consolidation or district reorganization?

3. What are the strengths and weaknesses of small schools? (This question is important, since reorganization and consolidation almost always affects small schools.)

4. What are identified criteria for reorganization? (If we are to approach the question of implications of reorganization of schools, it is well to have a blueprint and guidelines.)

5. What have other states done, and what is the variation in number of districts by state?

6. What is an optimum size for school districts? (If we are to consider reorganization, an optimum size for the school should be viewed.) What effect does size have on quality of the educational program? (The quality of offerings is of primary importance here, but the question arises as to whether or not quality is improved by simply changing the size of the school.)

7. What is the comprehensive school? (One focus of this research has been derived from the intent of the legislature to provide quality for the schools and to increase the scope of programs offered for all students. With this in mind, it is important to understand what is a good, effective, or "comprehensive" school. This understanding will help to guide the development of a model school district and the criteria that provides the blueprint.)

The following sections will attempt to answer the above questions as they have been presented.

Common Types of School District Reorganization

Consolidation Legislation

District reorganization (consolidation) legislation has generally taken three forms in the United States. The three forms are identified as permissive legislation, mandatory legislation, and semi-permissive legislation. They are defined as:

1. Mandatory legislation reorganizes local school districts by direct legislative action without referring the action to the voters for approval.

2. Permissive legislation makes reorganization possible but leaves the initiation of action leading to reorganization decisions on proposed reorganizations entirely with the voters at the local level in the areas affected.

3. Semi-permissive legislation requires that certain steps and planning procedures for reorganizing districts be

> taken and that the proposed plan be submitted to the voters, but it leaves final approval or rejection of a proposed reorganization to a vote of the people in the area affected. Such legislation emphasizes planning with the local adoption (American Association of School Administrators, 1958, p. 176).

These three forms of reorganization legislation provide the basis for most all consolidation processes in America today. These processes are by constitutional intent ones reserved to the states.

By interpretation of the U.S. Constitution, education is recognized as a function of the state. With that power reserved to the states, the state legislature has the responsibility and authority to establish, maintain, and regulate schools, subject to the state's constitutional provisions. Consequently, the local powers enjoyed by the individual school districts are those delegated to the district by the state legislature. School districts are thus political subdivisions of the state, and as such, have no inherent powers and are subject to the volition of the state authorities (Norton, 1974).

In the State of Oklahoma, districts may be reorganized by annexation or consolidation under Oklahoma Statute 70, Sec. 7-105 (Oklahoma School Laws, 1984). These two methods of reorganization, annexation, and consolidation are examples of permissive and semi-permissive. Voters in both methods are allowed to vote on the reorganization. In some instances, the State Board of Education may elect to direct the local board of education to determine what, if any, consolidation should be carried on in areas under study. This may be executed without a vote of the electors.

Annexation involves the combining of all or part of a school district with two or more districts, when approved at an annexation election called by the county superintendent. In certain cases, mandatory annexation may be required by the State Department of Education; this would exclude use of

an election. If there is an annexation election, the question must be approved by a simple majority of the voters. Following a successful election, the county superintendent shall notify schools and execute the necessary procedures for all county and districts involved (School Laws of Oklahoma, 1984).

Consolidation involves the combining of two or more districts into a single district in accordance with standards and rules established by the State Department of Education. Evaluations of districts considerd will be conducted to determine the necessary steps to be taken. Unlike annexation, which is generally voluntary, consolidation studies may be required by the State. The action may also be voluntarily initiated by the joint consent of district school boards involved. Ten percent of the qualified school electors in any district may petition the school boards concerned for appropriate information and data concerning such an act as consolidation. This study may also be initiated by the State Department of Education (School Laws of Oklahoma, 1984).

Both methods of reorganization have been used successfully in the State of Oklahoma. The major differences between the two methods involve: (1) who initiates the action, (2) assumption of district liabilities, (3) realignment of boundaries, and (4) whether school sites remain open or closed.

Pros and Cons of School Consolidation (Reorganization)

The most successfully implemented policy of the past 50 years has been the consolidation of rural schools and districts. The concept of "bigger is better" has gone unchallenged. The values of "smallness" (local

control, close relationships, and the opportunity for many to participate) were often sacrificed (Sher and Tompkins, 1976).

Between 1932 and 1977, the number of schools in the country dropped from 261,000 to 89,000 through consolidation. In this massive consolidation, the one most common objection to consolidation is that it weakens the local community's sense of identity and foreshadows its decline. The richness of the larger units' curriculum is the one most powerful argument for consolidation when compared with the benefits of rural schools (Gjelten, 1980).

Sher (1977) maintained that objections to consolidation have come, for the most part, from rural parents and their elected representatives, who either did not want their children going to distant, unfamiliar schools, or who feared the effects of such consolidation on the life and vitality of their individual communities. The values of smallness--local control; the close relations possible among professionals, parents, students, and community; and the opportunity for many more students to participate in school activities at a more meaningful level--were often discussed but seemed overshadowed by the promise of new buildings, more courses, and sophisticated equipment (Sher, 1977).

There have been a great number of studies done to support the proponents of school consolidation and larger schools. The evidence in favor of consolidation centers around the topics of economic advantages, richness of the curriculum, additional educational opportunities, greater achievement test scores, improved quality of the program, and better trained professionals. Many of these studies attempted to prescribe an ideal size for a school, and this size was expressed in terms of either student numbers or teacher numbers. The issue of the financial advantages permeated nearly

every study which concluded that consolidation was an answer to the country's educational problems.

Hickey (1969) conducted a study which dealt with the optimum size for school districts. Hickey's conclusions expressed the opinion of the proponents of consolidation when he said:

> . . . there were no advocates of the small school districts, or, if there were, they had not taken a public stand in defense of their beliefs. Excessively small districts are tolerated at best, their only viable defense seeming to be that they are necessary to provide education for children living in remote areas. To this writer's knowledge, this 'remote and necessary criterion is the only justification offered for the existence of the numerous small districts throughout the country (p. 29).

The proponents of consolidation point out the obvious savings resulting from higher pupil-teacher ratios and resulting in reductions in staff. It is important to look at these savings over a period of time and to weigh them against increased transportation costs, possible additional services such as full-time librarians and additional staff in physical education, home economics, industrial arts, guidance, and sciences. Districts may have, in fact, saved money, but this is not something guaranteed as a result of a school consolidation.

Proponents and opponents of school district reorganization have argued the advantages and disadvantages of the restructuring of school districts for decades. According to Mullins (1973), the following reasons are most frequently cited by proponents of school district reorganization:

1. More economical and efficient operations would be provided because of reductions in administrative staff, fuller utilization of facilities and teachers, savings incurred by bulk purchasing, and combined transportation costs.

2. Confusion and lack of articulation created by separate elementary and high school districts would be eliminated.

3. Comprehensive curriculum and educatonal programs could only be offered in schools large enough to support them (over 100 in a graduating class).

4. Inequities and inequality of educational opportunities of rich and poor school districts residing side-by-side would be eliminated.

Various forms of the above stated reasons are given for consolidation and reorganization by researchers (Conant, 1959; McCutchan, 1963; Krietlow, 1971). Because of the similarity in reasons, the above will serve as a representative sample.

Opponents of school district reorganization generally agree on the following reasons for opposing reorganization:

1. Cost economies in instruction and attendant functions accrue from larger numbers of students, but cost diseconomies from transportation outweigh these economies as more students must be brought to school.

2. Larger school districts are not necessarily better. As a district gets larger, a monolithic bureaucracy is created.

3. One of the most dominant elements in the organization of the American school system is the independence and autonomy of the local educational system. Lateral relationships between districts are not usually provided for in the organizational structure of the state system.

4. Equalizing opportunity cannot take us very far toward eliminating inequality.

5. Reorganization of a school district would result in the domination of the district by the most politically powerful portion of it (loss of local control).

6. Change just to change is unjust. If the districts are operating smoothly now, reorganization is not necessary.

Again, various forms of the above stated reasons are quite often cited as justification for maintaining the status quo (Barker and Gump, 1964; Guthrie, 1979). Due to the similarity of their nature, the above will suffice for a collective representation.

Strengths and Weaknesses of Small Schools

Most of the arguments related to small schools give considerable attention to the alleged strengths and/or weaknesses of their educational programs and the opportunities available to students. A predominance of the literature on small schools has focused on these issues. In considering the various aspects of consolidation and in answering the question of "What are the strengths and weaknesses of small schools?" an excellent response may be found in a 1974 publication by the North Central Association of Colleges and Secondary Schools (1974a). A summary of that report follows to provide the answer sought:

The starting point for the renaissance of the small school must be the determination of its inherent strengths and the identification of its structural weaknesses. Then steps can be taken to build programs and procedures on those strengths, while at the same time devising expedients to reduce if not eliminate the weaknesses. Hitherto, the primary problem seems to have been that small schools chose to mirror their larger counterparts rather than to recognize their own unique advantages, then structure their education programs to take full advantage of those strengths.

It should be recognized that many of the strengths of small schools can prove to be deterrents to effective education unless they are capitalized upon creatively. Small class size means little if the teacher persists in lecturing to the class as though standing before an audience of hundreds. Potential flexibility of scheduling for all students has no

value if the school continues on a rigid six by five schedule for all students. The exigent need is not only to recognize the values and retardants of smallness but to take steps to modify the program so as to realize the strengths and repress the weaknesses.

An examination of some of the strengths and weaknesses of the small school is the first step in solving the problem. It offers this census with no great assurance that it has exhausted the subject, but it does have sturdy confidence in the fact that the strengths and weaknesses it has delineated are indeed realities in the field (North Central Association of Colleges and Secondary Schools, 1974a).

When considering the reorganization or consolidation of school districts, it is very important to analyze the basis for such a change and survey the strengths and weaknesses of the existing system. The generally accepted basis for reorganization or consolidation is that there are too many small schools. Whatever the reason (be it economy of scale, declining student enrollment, or poor curriculum), the smallness of the district is being attacked. With this consideration, an analysis of the literature pertaining to the strengths and weaknesses of small schools will be made.

Most of the literature related to small schools focuses its attention on the purported strengths and/or weaknesses of their educational programs and the opportunities available to students. A major source of surveyed strengths and weaknesses, the 1974 publication of the North Central Association of Colleges and Secondary Schools (1974a) provided an excellent review of purported strengths of small schools, from which the following was summarized:

1. Smallness by its very nature ordains involvement. Closer relationships are possible between teachers and students in the classrooms.

The actual student/teacher ratios are generally more favorable in the small school. Smallness also fosters a close relationship among teachers.

2. A small school presents a student with a greater opportunity to discover his identity, to learn about himself. The small school also provides greater opportunity for each student to participate, as an individual, in the total school program.

3. More staff effort can be devoted to the teaching process. A student-oriented environment may predominate rather than a program-oriented environment. Guidance becomes a staff-wide function in reality.

4. Teachers of small schools tend to be more generalist than specialist.

5. Change can be effected with greater ease in a small school. The school schedule can be altered more readily in a small school to permit field trips, school-wide assemblies, and work-study programs.

6. Close working relationships normally subsist between the small school and its community. Teachers get to know parents better, thus providing more effective cooperation in the resolution of whatever problems might arise.

7. A larger percentage of the parents become involved in school affairs than in larger ones.

8. The small school can become the community school, serving the needs of its students and satisfying the wide range of educational demands of both school age students and adults (North Central Association of Colleges and Secondary Schools, 1974a)

It should be recognized that these are only strengths when they are capitalized upon creatively. Strength, like size, is relative to the situational and environmental variables encountered. The self-same

strengths may become the Achilles' heel of small schools if dealt with improperly.

As in any situation which contains strengths, there are also various aspects considered to be weaknesses. Small schools are no exception to this rule. To provide insight into the other side of smallness in public schools, the 1974 publication of the North Central Association of Colleges and Secondary Schools (1974b) was used to summarize the purported problems smallness produces:

The size of a school is not necessarily the determining factor for quality. There are good large schools and good small schools. The reverse is also true. The quality of the educational program is usually determined by how well a school capitalizes on its strengths and how well it overcomes its weaknesses. The small school also has potential strengths and weaknesses, but the strengths will not be realized and the weaknesses will not be overcome unless programs are planned to analyze the potential strengths and weaknesses and steps are then taken to improve the quality of student experiences in school.

There clearly are some disadvantages connected with smallness in a school. While weaknesses can be palliated in some circumstances, and even eliminated, this can be achieved only by a conscious effort on the part of the professional staff. The major disabilities that can afflict small schools seem to be:

1. A quality small school program requires a relatively high per student expenditure. Small schools are not inherently efficient--that is, they do not educate the largest number of students for the smallest amount of money.

2. The small school's enrollment makes it difficult to offer a broad and variegated curriculum.

3. The student body in a small school normally is more homogeneous in ethnic, socioeconomic, and cultural background. The need, often found in small schools, is to provide experiences in cultural diversity within the school's program.

4. Limited alternatives are open to a student and teacher when they become embroiled in conflict or antagonism.

5. Small schools experience difficulty in providing programs other than those that are strictly academic. Limited supportive services--health services, psychological services, counseling services--are available to students in small schools.

6. Since the number of staff members is small, not all the requisite competencies--academic, psychological, social, vocational--may be found on staff. Teachers generally must be assigned multiple preparations, sometimes as many as four or five different offerings.

7. Students with exceptional learning problems frequently are not adequately or appropriately cared for in small schools. Small schools sometimes feel, also, that they cannot offer work at the advanced or specialized levels within the academic program.

8. Teachers are frequently isolated from their colleagues in their respective fields, making exchange of professional ideas within a field rather difficult.

9. Recruitment and maintenance of quality staff poses a problem in small schools.

However, when the school transforms itself into a truly community school, some of these intractable problems vanish, since the "we/they" distinction blends into an "our" situation.

These constraints placed upon the small school may seem almost inseparable at first blush, but in reality, practically all of them can be

moderated, and in most cases, obviated by creative educational thinking and sound planning on the part of the professional staff. The basic need is to establish the school patterns appropriate to procedures of larger schools. In this way, not only will the small school prove to be effective--and perhaps even "efficient"--but it also will find and cherish its own identity (North Central Association of Colleges and Secondary Schools, 1974a).

Criteria for Reorganization

McCutchan (1963) concluded that the design of a new school district should meet one of the criteria of population, area, or wealth. Based upon this premise, a new school district design was developed for selected counties in Oklahoma.

Hunt and Pierce (1958) developed basic principles for guiding reorganization of rural school districts, which are summarized as follows:

1. The local district is a creature of the state and receives its power from the state.

2. The local administrative unit must be sufficiently large to support a complete and effective system of elementary, secondary, and adult education, but not so large as to cause loss of interest by the people in their school.

3. Local districts with limited resources should have a supplementary intermediate unit responsible for supplying needed services and yet close enough to this local neighborhood for understanding their desire for local autonomy.

4. Reorganization must preserve the concept of delegating control of administration and supervision of local districts and their lay boards.

5. Sufficient flexibility should be maintained in the local district organization to allow a small school to continue rather than sacrifice

community interest, pride, and support, or allow small schools to continue in sparsely settled areas where transportation problems are serious (Hunt and Pierce (1958).

The Council of Chief State School Officers (1962) listed the following conditions as necessary for local educational adequacy:

1. The local educational agency and its attendance units should be organized to provide comprehensive programs of elementary, secondary, and adult education for all persons three years of age or older who can benefit therefrom. It should employ a competent staff of teachers and other personnel necessary to carry out its program, develop school facilities properly located to be accessible to all children and to serve community needs, and facilitate individual and group instruction at reasonable costs. The local administrative unit should develop sound methods of finance and administration within the general requirements of the state and exercise intelligent initiative and autonomy in the development of its educational program.

2. Local administrative and attendance units for education should be large enough in terms of pupil population to operate effective programs of education. In determining their boundaries, the unit must consider: available economic resources; prevailing social, economic, and community interest; and such other factors as physical facilities, distances, topography, and transportation. Boundaries of local education, administrative, and attendance units should facilitate comprehensive programs for all citizens of all ages who are included within the scope of educational services provided. These programs should eliminate inequalities and promote broad and effective educational opportunities for all persons, according to their needs. Special services to the mentally, physically, emotionally, and economically handicapped should be emphasized (Council of Chief State School Officers, 1962, pp. 18-19).

Morphet, Johns, and Reller (1974) found, based on experiences in various states and other developments, that the following criteria might help guide the development of state plans and laws related to district reorganization:

1. Legislation relating to district reorganization should be kept as simple as possible and should make it easy for districts to effect defensible reorganization.

2. All state laws, regulations, and financial provisions should be reviewed periodically to determine their effect

on district reorganization. Those that encourage the continuance of inadequate districts or retard needed reorganization should be revised or repealed.

3. All reorganization proposals should be based on careful studies and planning. Many reorganizations based on the desires of local groups have been found to be unsatisfactory because facts pertinent to the situation were overlooked or ignored.

4. The people in each state should agree upon, and the legislature should prescribe, basic criteria or minimum standards to be used for guidance in planning reorganization of districts.

5. In all states with a large number of small districts, the law probably should provide for a state reorganization commission. This commission must be properly financed and staffed if it is to function effectively.

6. The responsibilities of any reorganization commission and of all groups and persons officially involved in the reorganization program should be clearly defined.

7. Provision should be made for the participation of lay and educational leaders who will work cooperatively for effective district reorganization. Only when the people involved in developing a plan for reorganization understand all the pertinent facts are they in a position to make wise decisions.

8. A favorable vote by a majority of the electors in an area proposed for a reorganized district (or both in a major center of population and in the remainder of the area) should suffice to make the proposal effective.

9. Needed funds for adequate educational programs, buildings, and transportation should be assured for any properly reorganized district.

10. A three- or four-year deadline within which reorganization is scheduled for completion on a voluntary basis should be established by the legislature which should also provide that, for any reorganizations not completed by that time, the state education agency or a district reorganization commission is to develop a reorganization plan for approval by the legislature (p. 288).

Wadlington (1980) conducted a study on district reorganization in the State of Missouri which resulted in the following criteria being developed:

Criterion 1: School districts should provide for elementary and secondary programs; that is, they should provide education at least through grades K-12.

Criterion 2: Each district should encompass a geographical area which includes one or more established population centers. It should be of optimum size to insure the most competent lay and professional leadership and to permit a high level of citizen participation and communication.

Criterion 3: Pupil enrollment should be large enough to provide comprehensive K-12 programs. Specifically, each district should have a minimum student enrollment of 1,500 pupils. Whenever and wherever possible, larger districts than the minimum should be established.

Criterion 4: Reorganization should help to reduce financial disparities in the variables of equalized valuation per pupil, expenditures per pupil, and local financial support for school purposes.

Criterion 5: Each district should provide, as a minimum, the following educational programs and personnel:

1. A fully certified superintendent of schools, giving full-time to administration of the district.

2. A fully certificated high school principal, giving full-time to administration and supervision of the secondary instructional program.

3. A minimum of 60-1/2 units of approved credit in grades 9-12, with the broad distribution by subject area, including academic and vocational-technical fields.

4. A fully certificated high school and elementary librarian, each giving full-time to library activities.

5. A fully certificated counselor, giving full-time to the counseling program.

6. A fully certificated elementary school principal, giving full-time to administration and supervision of the elementary instructional program.

7. Elementary teachers fully certificated for the position they hold.

8. Specialists in the elementary school program in the areas of music, art, physical education, and remedial instruction.

9. A program of special instruction for atypical children, such as the gifted, retarded, emotionally disturbed and socially maladjusted (pp. 137-28).

District Organization in Other States

When considering the issue of district reorganization, it seems appropriate to evaluate other states which have undergone similar programs. The resultant evaluation may then be used to develop an understanding of the trends in such matters. Also, the evaluation may present those laws, proposals, and criteria which were used to develop viable plans for specific states. Following are selected states and their organizational plans.

The General Assembly of Delaware instructed the Department of Public Instruction to adopt by March 1, 1969, a plan to implement in all the state's school districts a reorganization into no less than 20 and no more than 25 districts. The Delaware State Department of Public Instruction's (1968) requirements for this reorganization included:

1. A complete K-12 program
2. A pupil enrollment of no fewer than 2,000 nor more than 12,000
3. A vocational school superimposed over the other district schools

Subsequent to 1968, standard for schools in Michigan, as stated by the Michigan Department of Education (1968) were:

1. A complete and adequate K-12 program
2. Control close to the local citizens
3. Natural communities that can include more than one political unit
4. A minimum pupil enrollment of 1,000 to 1,500
5. Essential administrative, supervisory, and specialized services
6. Adequate financial resources

Wisconsin, between 1949-50, established standards for district reorganization. The Wisconsin State Department of Public Instruction (1965)

listed them as follows:

1. A minimum enrollment of 800 to 1,000 in a K-12 program
2. One class per grade per each elementary school
3. A minimum of 300 pupils per four-year high school
4. Travel maximum of 45 minutes for elementary pupils and 60 minutes for secondary
5. School areas related to interests of people
6. Sufficient valuation
7. One board
8. Educational opportunities for post-high school students and adults

(The minimum high school was raised to 500 students in 1965.)

Wyoming required districts to undergo reorganization into what were considered effective units based on the following considerations:

1. Geography
2. Climate
3. Road conditions
4. Education convenience
5. Welfare of children

Trade areas rather than county areas were to be considered to provide equalized opportunities within areas. Unification of districts resulted in K-12 units in Wyoming (Wyoming Governor's Committee on Education, 1964).

Kansas, not unlike Wyoming, has also undergone a comprehensive district reorganization program. A unification program was enacted in Kansas after several attempts, resulting in 305 district being formed following legislation implemented in the 1968-69 school year (Education Almanac: Facts and Figures About our Nation's System of Education, 1985-86).

Initially, in Oklahoma the legislature provided for four school districts per township, with each consisting of approximately nine square miles so the walking distance for children would be short. High school districts could also be organized. At its peak in 1914, there were 5,880 districts in the state. By January of 1984, there were a combined total of 615 (158 dependent and 457 independent) districts which maintained either elementary or high school sites or both.

A better perspective of the consolidation movement may be found by comparing Oklahoma to the surrounding states. There are 305 districts in Kansas, Oklahoma's neighbor to the north, with a larger geographical area but a slightly smaller population. Arkansas has 370 districts and Missouri 547. New Mexico has only 89 districts and Colorado 181, fewer than other surrounding states. Oklahoma ranks eighteenth among the states in land area and twenty-sixth in population, but is eighth in the country in number of school districts, with only Texas, Nebraska, California, Illinois, New York, and New Jersey having more than Oklahoma. Ohio is shown as having 615, the same number as Oklahoma (National Education Association Research, 1983).

A clear perspective of the variance in the number of school districts per state may be obtained by viewing Table I. District numbers range from 1 in the state of Hawaii and the District of Columbia to 1,099 in the state of Texas. The national average of districts per state is 350. Oklahoma ranks eighth in total school districts in comparison to the nation. The broad range or variance in number of districts further illustrates the fact that each state is unique in its approach to organization of its educational system.

Almost every state has passed legislation which encourages or mandates consolidation of school systems. Illustrated in Table II is the fact of

TABLE I

NUMBER OF SCHOOL DISTRICTS BY STATE

State	No. of Districts	State	No. of Districts
Alabama	129	Missouri	546
Alaska	53	Montana	551
Arizona	225	Nebraska	1035
Arkansas	367	Nevada	17
California	1029	New Hampshire	169
Colorado	181	New Jersey	616
Connecticut	145	New Mexico	88
Delaware	19	New York	728
Dist. of Columbia	1	North Carolina	142
Florida	67	North Dakota	296
Georgia	187	Ohio	616
Hawaii	1	Oklahoma	617
Idaho	116	Oregon	309
Illinois	1010	Pennsylvania	501
Indiana	305	Rhode Island	40
Iowa	438	South Carolina	92
Kansas	305	South Dakota	195
Kentucky	180	Tennessee	143
Louisiana	66	Texas	1099
Maine	178	Utah	40
Maryland	24	Vermont	277
Massachusetts	337	Virginia	139
Michigan	527	Washington	299
Minnesota	434	West Virginia	55
Mississippi	154	Wisconsin	432
		Wyoming	49

Source: Education Almanac: Facts and Figures About Our Nation's System of Education (1985-86).

how successful the move to reduce the number of school districts in the country has been. The fact that consolidation of schools was taking place at an imposing rate is also demonstrated by the statistics that four-year high schools have declined in number by 50%, while the student population has increased by 300% (Sher, 1977).

TABLE II

NUMBER OF PUBLIC SCHOOLS AND SCHOOL DISTRICTS
(1930-1972)

Year	School Districts	Elementary Schools (Total)	Elementary Schools (One-Teacher)	High Schools (Four-Year)
1930	128,000	238,000	149,000	16,500
1940	117,000	185,000	114,000	15,000
1950	84,000	128,000	60,000	10,400
1960	40,000	92,000	20,000	6,000
1970	18,000	66,000	2,000	6,500
1972	16,000	64,945	1,475	N/A

Source: Digest of Educational Statistics (1968).

Optimum Size of Schools

Since the 1970's, the effects of declining enrollment have been experienced across the United States from the cities and suburbs down to the small rural communities. Declining enrollment most frequently leads to the question of "What is the optimum school size?" From the framework of this question arises relative points for consideration. The identification of the most efficient size of school to effect "economy of scale" and the

most efficient size of school which offers all the educational opportunities necessary for the vast range of students enrolled. This aspect of "comprehensiveness" offers a point of comparison which would be based on predetermined criteria for the comprehensive school.

In the early 1960's, the move to consolidate was given a significant thrust by the publication Conant's (1959) book, The American High School Today. Conant's work, it seems fair to state, was probably one of the most often read pieces of literature in nearly every graduate school of education in the country. In the forward to this book, John Gardner (former secretary of the HEW) made the following statement:

> Some of us believe that Mr. Conant, after a lifetime of distinguished contributions to the nation, has in this study made his greatest contribution of all. If I had to recommend a single piece of reading to all Americans who want to improve their schools, I would ask them to read this report (Conant, 1959, p. ii).

Conant's most important contribution was his conclusion that high schools with less than 100 in the graduating class could not offer a comprehensive program. He advocated the immediate reduction in the number of small high schools, and he stated this innovation would have a greater effect on the improvement of education than anything else that could be done at that time.

With a recommendation of this magnitude, it is necessary to identify what is viewed as optimum size. Optimum size in school districts may well be like wealth in that it must be considered in light of the particular county, community, and group of schools involved.

McCutchan (1963) recommended as a criterion for administrative size a minimum student population of 1,200 students. A maximum of 300 square miles of district territory for a high school attendance unit was set to

keep the time limitation a student must ride a school bus to one and one-fourth hours.

Guthrie (1979) saw the school consolidation movement as one which very possibly reflects one of the most awesome and least publicized governmental changes to occur in the nation during the twentieth century. Between 1930 and 1972, the number of school districts in the nation decreased eightfold and the total number of schools decreased threefold, while the nation's school population doubled.

The consolidation movement, according to Fox (1980), assumed that larger schools and districts would provide increased economy and efficiency in the delivery of education. Intensive research on the relationship between cost of education and school size, however, was not begun until the late 1950's, and offers some inconsistency in findings.

What constitutes the optimum size of schools has been a question often asked in the advent of consolidation and district reorganization. The Educational Research Service (Summary of Research on Size of Schools and School Districts, 1974) pointed out that recommendations for elementary schools range from a minimum size of 175 to 720, with the optimum size being from 350 to 720 and the maximum size from 350 to 1,500. Recommendations for middle, junior high, and senior high schools vary similarly. In comparison, Fox (1980) found optimum size of high schools to be in the range of 1,400 to 1,800 pupils.

Several authors have recommended a "universal" size criterion which is not based on any particular geographical region and which should apply to most, if not all, schools (Smith, 1960; Conant, 1959; White and Tweeten, 1973). It has been found that enrollments of less than 200-400 pupils resulted in districts paying a premium for their educational programs. Johns and Alexander (1971) considered a somewhat larger enrollment when

discussing the optimum size of a school district. Their research revealed that reasonable economics of scale cannot be secured until districts have at least 10,000 students. In certain cases, enrollments of 4,000-5,000 students may be defensible in sparsely populated areas. Hanson (1964) recommended optimum school district sizes for a number of states, ranging from 20,000 students in Nebraska to 160,000 in New York. In an Iowa study, Cohn (1968) estimated optimum district size at about 1,500 pupils, with a range of 1,277 to 1,663. Fitzwater (1953), in a study of 552 reorganized districts established in eight states between 1941 and 1952, found the median enrollment to be about 600, with less than one-fourth of the districts having enrollments of 1,200.

It becomes apparent that what experts in the field of district reorganization consider to be an optimum size varied greatly. When looking within the State of Oklahoma, it is found that research is limited on optimum size of districts.

White and Tweeten (1973) calculated a minimum enrollment in average daily attendance (ADA) of 550 pupils in order to offer their "minimum" program at lowest cost. The "desirable" broader program could not be offered, they calculated, at minimum cost with an enrollment below 900 students ADA. Employing Oklahoma data, they suggested that 675 students provide a school district with optimal operating efficiency. However, they allowed for a range of enrollments which permits efficient operation. A cost versus district size

> . . . curve is very flat between 400 and 1,100 ADA. School districts can operate anywhere within this range without significant differences in per-unit costs. School districts operating outside this range face substantially higher per-unit costs (White and Tweeten, 1973, p. 51).

Guthrie (1979), in a recent article on "Organizational Scale and School Success," concluded that economic efficiencies and improved

educational quality have not been realized from larger education units. A school should be sufficiently large enough to meet its purpose. The answer to "How large should a district be?" relates not so much to population but to factors such as cost, geographic area, and curriculum offerings, among others.

Much of the research suggests that school districts of less than 300 have difficulty in providing satisfactory educational programs (Cashen, 1970; Rajpal, 1967; Ohio Education Association, 1959; Smith, 1961; Gray, 1961). Stephens (1982) conducted a multiple regression analysis of data on 140 North Carolina high schools to establish a perspective of school size. The following results were found (representing the degree of managerial reform):

1. School size has little effect on most school resource measures and no effect on student's competency test scores.

2. Larger schools have fewer subject preparations per teacher and moderately lower per pupil costs than small schools.

3. School size and class size are strongly and positively related.

4. Whether or not a school is good in terms of available resources is largely determined by the wealth, racial makeup, and rurality of the county in which it is located. Whether or not a school is good in terms of cognitive outcomes is wholly determined by these same characteristics. Large schools have a small resource advantage over small schools, but in terms of cognitive outcomes they have no advantage.

As Millard (1979) pointed out, a school should be large enough to do the job, to provide the educational programs that meet the needs of its students. School are small or large only in relationship to the local environment. This presents unavoidable problems when discussing size of a

district. It becomes apparent after a brief examination of the literature that what is a large and what is a small district ranges widely.

Rural children progress through school more slowly, score lower on achievement tests, are more likely to drop out at an early age, and are less likely to continue studies after graduation (Sher and Tompkins, 1976). Many people have seen consolidation as the way to a better education. Between 1932 and 1977, the number of schools in the country dropped from 261,000 to 89,000 through consolidation, and local battles continue. The most common objection to consolidation is that it weakens the local community's sense of identity and probably foreshadows its decline. Many argue that this sense of community promotes overly provincial attitudes in children. The richness of the curriculum "remains the most powerful argument for consolidation when compared with the benefits of rural schools" (Gjelten, 1980, p. 80).

Size Versus Quality

Since 1972, several states have conducted research projects concerning educational quality versus size, either directly or indirectly, in varying scope and quality, respectively. The aspect of size has been married to the suggestion of mandating a minimum and perhaps maximum structure for allowing a more efficient and effective delivery of educational programs

Harrow and Dzrieban (1972) studied reorganization in Florida and concluded that:

1. Smaller counties had greater administrative costs.

2. Smaller counties had greater difficulty attracting and retaining qualified personnel.

3. Smaller counties offered a narrower educational program.

Fonstad (1973), who conducted a study under the direction of the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction, analyzed data from state reports and concluded that:

1. The number of high school course offerings was related to the size of the high school.

2. The smaller districts in Wisconsin offered fewer shared time services.

3. The smaller districts had smaller pupil/teacher ratios.

The Governor's office in Massachusetts formed a Commission on School District Organization and Collaboration that studied and conferred during the 1973-74 school year (Effectiveness, Efficiency, and Equal Opportunity in the Public Schools of Massachusetts, 1974). Using data from commonwealth reports, they concluded:

1. Curriculum breadth was less in small schools

2. Smaller districts usually found it more difficult to support staff training and renewal programs.

3. Smaller districts had smaller perdentages of graduates entering college.

Other studies have produced opposing results. Coleman et al. (1966) found school size to be a variable not significantly correlated with achievement. He also found that the size of the twelfth grade is negatively correlated with verbal achievement; each additional 200 students is kassociated with a decline of one-fifth grade level of achievement.

Bidwell and Kasarda (1975) used data from 104 school districts in Colorado and concluded that size had, overall, a very slight effect on student output. The main effect was that, as a district size increased, the student-to-teacher ratio increased, impacting the teachers provided for instruction.

Turner and Thrasher (1970) found no significant differences on Iowa Test of Basic Skills scores that could be attributed to small school size, and found no difference in grade point averages of small versus large school graduates in their freshman year of college.

Kreitlow (1966) has done one of the most intensive research projects on the question of reorganization. Krietlow compared five newly organized districts with five districts that maintained the traditional midwest independent district. This study gathered evidence to support the theory that reorganization does make a difference in the areas of educational opportunities, achievement test scores, and cost per pupil. Students in the reorganized schools were offered a greater number and variety of courses. Achievement on standardized tests was higher in the reorganized schools. Cost per pupil ran higher in the reorganized schools.

Sher and Tompkins (1976), in a report done for the National Institute for Education, indicated that the advantages attributed to consolidation appear to dissipate over time. They studied Krietlow's longitudinal data and found that although consolidated districts had an advantage in several kinds of resources immediately following consolidation, over time the non-consolidated districts obtained the same resources.

The Comprehensive School

Every high school is unique; still, America's high schools have much in common. The vast majority call themselves "comprehensive." They offer under one roof (or several roofs) an academic program for those going on to college, a vocational program for those preparing for jobs, and a general studies program for those still unclear about their goals.

In his forward to Conant's (1959) book, The American High School Today, John Gardner presented this clear and profound perspective of

the comprehensive high school:

> The comprehensive high school is a peculiarly American phenomenon. It is called comprehensive because it offers, under one administration . . . a secondary education for almost all the high school age children of one town or neighborhood. It is responsible for educating the boy who will be an atomic scientist and the girl who will marry at eighteen; the prospective captain of a ship and the future captain of industry. It is responsible for educating the bright and the not so bright children with different vocational and professional ambitions and with various motivations. It is responsible, in sum, for providing good and appropriate education, both academic and vocational, for all young people within a democratic environment which the American people believe serves the principles they cherish (Conant, 1959, p. i).

In the 1950's, the notion of a comprehensive high school meant that each high school should contain within its own four walls all the educational services needed by a diversified community. In the 1980's, however, the term "comprehensive" will most likely come to mean a coordinated delivery system, tying together the other agents of socialization into an educational network (Fantini, 1984).

When viewing what "comprehensive" encompasses, one should look first to the function of schools, second to the goals of education, and finally to the characteristics of the comprehensive school. This will then provide a total picture of education in America rather than a partial portrait.

The identified characteristics of effective schools are numerous and all very important. They include: academic focus, high expectations, strong leadership, emphasis on basic skills, use of a variety of teaching strategies, clearcut instructional objectives, sound discipline practices, and maximum use of time (Sewall, 1983). These characteristics vary, depending upon the environmental setting, but as a whole they are found in most effective schools. Effective schools, in turn, rely upon these characteristics in order to carry out their function in society.

When approaching the question of "What is the function of the school in Society?" one might turn to John Dewey for the answer. In 1916, Dewey prophetically said:

> The school has the function . . . of coordinating within the disposition of each individual the diverse influence of the various social environments into which he enters. One code prevails in the family; another on the streets; a third, in the workshop or store; a fourth, in the religious association. As a person passes from one of the environments to another, he is subjects to antagonistic pulls, and is in danger of being split into a being having different standards of judgment and emotion for different occasions. This danger imposes upon the school a steadying and integrating office (Archambault, 1964, p. 438).

A more current offering of the function of schools in today's society might come from Sizer (1984), who offered that schools are functioning social systems with distinctive cultures. Within these cultures the effort of improvement is aimed toward incremental, long-term cultural changes.

The school, then, is seen as a system for effecting change and for steadying this change in society. When change occurs in society, certain goals are established which provide the direction for the change. Just as goals are needed for change in society, so too are goals needed to guide education. These goals serve as a point of reference from which progress may be determined. They also serve to give guidance to implementation, revision, and growth in the educational arena.

The annual Gallup (1984) polls have repeatedly shown that Americans want their secondary schools to be comprehensive in function; the polls also report that the public sees the goals of education as the development of:

1. Enlightened citizens
2. Productive workers
3. Life-long learners

Boyer (1983) proposed the following four goals to give a clear and coherent vision of what the nation's high schools should be seeking to accomplish:

> First, the high school should help all students develop the capacity to think critically and communicate effectively through a mastery of language.
>
> Second, the high school should help all students learn about themselves, the human heritage, and the interdependent world in which they live, through a core curriculum based upon consequential human experiences common to all people.
>
> Third, the high school should prepare all students for work and further education through a program of electives that develop individual aptitudes and interests.
>
> Fourth, the high school should help all students fulfill their social and civic obligations through school and community service (pp. 66-67).

Goodlad (1984) completed a massive study of schools across America and concluded that schools need a comprehensive list of goals to guide the framework for curriculum planning and teaching. Sorting through the many schools' research, he presented four broad goal areas which schools should consider. These are: academic, vocational, social, civic, and cultural, and personal goals. These four are further differentiated into objectives. The objectives for the four major goals are: academic goals include the objective areas of mastery of basic skills and fundamental processes and intellectual development; vocational goals include the objective areas of career education and vocational education; the social, civic, and cultural group includes the objective areas of interpersonal understandings, citizenship participation, enculturation, and moral and ethical character; personal goals include the objective areas of emotional and physical well-being, creativity and aesthetic expression, and self-realization. Within these goals and objectives are found a guiding framework for curriculum and teaching in the public schools of America.

The third step in establishing what the "comprehensive" school stands for is to identify certain characteristics peculiar to these schools. Conant (1959) defined the comprehensive high school as one whose programs correspond to the educational needs of the community. He further stated that a comprehensive school should have the following points:

1. Adequacy of general education for all, as judged by:
    a. adequate instruction in English composition
    b. adequate instruction in social studies
    c. students grouped by ability in required subjects
2. Adequacy of nonacademic elective programs judged by:
    a. adequate nonacademic elective programs
    b. adequate opportunities for supervised work experience
    c. special provision for slow readers
3. Special arrangements for the academically talented student:
    a. special provisions for challenging the highly gifted
    b. special instruction in developing reading skills
    c. regular summer session
    d. individualized programs
    e. school day organized into seven or more instruction periods
4. Other features:
    a. guidance service
    b. good student morale
    c. well organized homeroom
    d. effective social interaction among students

These characteristics illustrate what is to be found in the "comprehensive" school setting. As evidenced here, curricula are of major importance when characterizing the "comprehensive" school.

Cawelti (1974), in his critique of six major reform reports of the seventies, summarized one report by the National Panel on High Schools. The Panel analyzed the strengths and weaknesses of the nation's high schools in terms of their service to individuals and society at large. From the Panel's report, Cawelti summarized that a "comprehensive" education for adolescents is based on experiences in five "curricular domains." These five "domains" include: personal values, citizenship, the arts, the humanities, and technics or career education. These five "domains" establish a foundation for curriculum in the "comprehensive" educational program.

Another point surfacing from this report is that there is a greater need for comprehensive education than for continuation of the comprehensive school concept. Comprehensive education reaches out to the individual student needs of the study.

Comprehensiveness appears to center on the curricula offering found in the school. A current source for consideration when discussing the overall content of a comprehensive curriculum is the report A Nation at Risk: The Imperative for Educational Reform (1983), which was prepared by the National Commission on Excellence in Education. In this report, the following recommendation was given for curriculum:

Recommendation A: Content

> We recommend that State and local high school graduation requirements be strengthened and that, at a minimum, all students seeking a diploma be required to lay the foundations in the Five New Basics by taking the following curriculum during their 4 years of high school: (a) 4 years of English; (b) 3 years of mathematics; (c) 3 years of science; (d) 3 years of social studies; and (e) 1/2 year of computer science. For the college-bound, 2 years of foreign language in high school are strongly recommended in addition to those taken earlier (p. 2).

Following the recommendation, a series of nine implementation steps was

given for effecting the recommendation. In addition to the aforementioned recommendations, the implementation steps included two steps which point particularly to crucial needs for schools to consider in their curriculum. These two steps for implementation are as follows:

7. The high school curriculum should also provide students with programs requiring rigorous effort in subjects that advance students' personal, educational, and occupational goals, such as the fine and performing arts and vocational education. These areas complement the New Basics, and they should demand the same level of performance as the Basics.

8. The curriculum in the crucial eight grades leading to the high school years should be specifically designed to provide a sound base for study in those and later years in such areas as English language development and writing, computational and problem solving skills, science, social studies, foreign language, and the arts. These years should foster an enthusiasm for learning and the development of the individual's gifts and talents (A Nation at Risk: The Imperative for Educational Reform, 1983, p. 3).

The steps outlined in the recommendations and implementation steps give strong indication that the high school curriculum should be strongly academically oriented while also addressing the major goal areas of occupational, vocational, personal, and the fine and performing arts. Together these areas of educational performance and pursuit should provide a most comprehensive educational program if approached with enthusiasm and a positive attitude.

Summary

The issue of school consolidation or district reorganization is one very familiar to states across the nation. The basis for consolidation has taken on many different forms and always seems to point to elimination of the small school. As with any issue, there are those in favor of and those against further consolidation. The reasons for consolidation, both past

and present, vary, and generally address finance equity, curriculum improvement, better quality schools, more equal access to educational opportunities, and remediation of problems supposedly predominant in small schools.

The time has come in the nation and in the State of Oklahoma when current data must be acquired before additional consolidation and district reorganization is attempted. As the research shows, optimum size of school districts may well be situationally relevant. The school must be viewed with respect to its "comprehensiveness" and to its quality of curriculum offering rather than to its size. When and if consolidation is to be approached for any school district, it should be done in a manner which follows guidelines or criteria. Consolidation must be considered in the framework of what the needs are for a district and the students.

If the proponents of continued district consolidation are to ever reconsider their position, additional data and information relevant to consolidation must be obtained in a current setting of schools and districts of the present. What we have as an information base is from a time gone past. What we need is information and data for the present.

CHAPTER III

METHODS AND PROCEDURES

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to investigate the implications of school district reorganization on selected K-12, independent school districts in relation to improving the quality of schools and providing access to equal educational opportunity. The study will also provide additional data on the potential outcomes of future consolidation of schools across Oklahoma and will identify a perspective from which to view decisions regarding consolidation of schools.

A factor of critical concern was equal access to quality educational programs and services. School size, curriculum offering, transportation factors, and criteria for guiding the reorganization of districts are elements which will be viewed.

Procedure

To study the implications of school consolidation on the public schools of Oklahoma, a theoretical procedure model for consolidation was developed and tested utilizing data from two Oklahoma counties. The model was developed based on five areas of data and information. These included:

1. An intensive review of literature and research pertaining to consolidation

2. Methods of district consolidation and reorganization which have been employed in other states

3. Currently available data from local districts within the selected counties and the State Department of Education

4. Data collected by on-site interviews with the chief administrative officer of the local districts sampled

5. Demographic information pertaining to these districts

A model and procedures for consolidation will be presented which, it is hoped, will be applicable to other school districts within the state.

The procedure for carrying out the study included:

1. An analysis (review) of the literature and research related to school district reorganization in order to:

   a. determine what factors are critical in district reorganization
   b. consider suggestions put forward by recognized authorities in the field of school district organization-reorganization
   c. develop criteria by which a viable school district reorganization plan can be guided

2. An analysis of data obtained from the State Department of Education Annual Statistical Report to view:

   a. school district transportation areas
   b. pupil density or distribution
   c. district distribution by county and state
   d. ADA by district, county, and state

3. Analysis of information obtained from State Department of Education personnel regarding units of credit offered in the high school

4. Interview with district superintendents of sampled districts regarding:

   a. their districts' organization

b. perceptions and ideas concerning consolidation and the possible implications it offers

5. Development of a plan for reorganization of selected districts in the State of Oklahoma, based upon the obtained information, data, and satisfying the State criteria.

6. Each criterion or factor used to establish the reorganization district plan was devised from the literature, other state efforts in school district reorganization, and a survey/interview of sample districts in the State of Oklahoma.

Selected Counties

This study was designed to include all the independent districts (those districts within the state which have grades K-12, as listed in the 1983-84 State Department of Education Annual Statistical Report). The total number of districts (both dependent and independent districts) was 615, with 159 being dependent districts (those districts within the state which have grades K-8) and the independent districts (which have high schools) numbering 456.

Dependent districts were excluded because they do not offer a program for high school students. Dependent district high school age students are bussed into host high school districts. This decision was made also as a deliminter to the overall scope of the study.

The eight schools chosen for this study were selected because they were considered representative of the small and rural, consolidated and nonconsolidated, one county and multiple county districts. The districts chosen also represent examples of districts which exist in one and two community settings with their physical plants located in one or two communities. More importantly, these schools were selected as representative of

rural area schools which exist in an area already heavily subjected to consolidation over the past 50 years. This research was, however, limited to a sample of eight schools located primarily in two counties of Oklahoma. In consideration of this factor, the research generalizability beyond the population of these two counties and Oklahoma is at best tenuous. A description of the eight schools is presented in Table III.

TABLE III

DESCRIPTION OF SAMPLE: SCHOOL DESIGNATION, SCHOOL TYPE, AND STUDENT POPULATION BY ADA

School	Designation[a]	Type[b]	ADA[c]
R1	S	NC	161.01
R2	S	C	405.24
R3	N	C	208.78
R4	N	C	275.78
B1	S	C	1077.88
B2	S	NC	305.96
B3	S	NC	131.65
B4	N	C	167.91

[a]School Designation: S=Single Community; N=Multiple Community

[b]School Type: C=Consolidated (since 1960); NC=Nonconsolidated (since 1960)

[c]ADA taken from the 1983-84 Annual Statistical Report, Oklahoma State Department of Education (1984)

Welfare of Subjects

In order to ensure anonymity of the schools and administration sampled, all districts were assigned code names. The counties chosen were coded "Red" county and "Blue" county, respectively. Districts also were assigned codes. These were "R1-R4" and "B1-B4," respectively. The codes as utilized were as follows:

County - Red (Districts R1, R2, R3, and R4)

County - Blue (Districts B1, B2, B3, and B4)

The researcher felt it necessary to enlist the participation of any school district in an interview or survey concerning the topic of consolidation at a time when emotions were high and controversy was apparent.

Derivation of the Instrument

The instrument used in this study was a superintendent survey/interview style questionnaire which contained 17 questions. The questions were developed by the researcher from a review of relevant literature--community, student, and administrative questionnaires found in current research--based on identified information required for completion of the research project. (A copy of the research instrument may be found in Appendix A.)

The validity and reliability of the questions were assessed by means of a pilot study. The questions were placed into a questionnaire form and mailed to selected superintendents, along with a cover letter explaining the research project (Appendix B).

Due to the small number of actual samples being utilized in the research, an equivalent number of district superintendents were chosen from a list of superintendents with whom the researcher was acquainted. Each

pilot-group superintendent was mailed a copy of the survey/interview instrument (Appendix A) accompanied by a cover letter and an explanatory sheet (Appendix B). A stamped self-addressed envelope for return was also enclosed. Anonymity was assured to all involved. Approximately two weeks was allowed as return time on the pilot study. At the end of the two week period, 63% of the questionnaires had been returned. The 37% not returned were analyzed, and it was found that these individuals were not returning to their present positions of superintendent in their respective districts. It was assumed that these superintendents felt the completion of the instrument was not necessary since they were leaving their districts and the state.

Of the instruments returned, 100% had completed all questions with some manner of response. It was noted that some responses were of a negative nature and provided little information, but did indicate an attitude of the administrator involved.

The survey/interview questionnaire was re-evaluated and found to meet the need of data required for the completion of the research project. A revised cover letter was developed for the actual on-site interviews of the research sample selected (Appendix B).

All questions asked were of an objective nature, with the exception of questions 12, 16, and 17. These involved the participant recording responses in a subjective manner. The questions were designed to collect specific demographic data for each district involved which were used to help establish the curricular status and future need of each district. The data were also analyzed to help establish the model used to study the implications of reorganization on selected districts.

The actual model tested was based on data pertaining to district size, student population, time spent on traveling, length of bus routes, room for

growth of student population, identified future curriculum needs, and an analysis of the advantages/disadvantages of consolidation. These data, combined with data secured from the State Department of Education, provided the foundation of the models. A review of literature relevant to specific questions identified in the initial proposal also provided a source of data for the model(s).

Question 16 (Given your knowledge and understanding of the state and local situations critical to your school district, where, in your opinion, would be the most viable site for district consolidation in your geographical area?) was used to establish, in the participant superintendent's own view, what appeared to be the most viable point for district reorganization in their own geographical area. Combined with what the research revealed about optimal plans for reorganization, parameters for the reorganization were selected.

Question 17 (Based on your expertise in school administration and knowledge of school organization, what would you consider to be the advantages and disadvantages of district consolidation for schools in Oklahoma?) was used to establish a list of advantages and disadvantages which will be used to help develop the model for reorganization. The list will be used to determine perceived concepts of district reorganization and its effects on existing districts. The list will also serve to give direction to the model designed to test the effects of reorganization on districts selected as samples for the study.

Procedure for Contacting Schools and Administration

Each of the eight schools chosen for the study is under the administration of a different superintendent of schools. Seven of the eight

superintendents were personally contacted, followed by a telephone contact. The eighth school is under the administration of the researcher, so endorsement was guaranteed in at least one school. The purpose of the study was explained to each of the superintendents in person, as well as a description of the survey/interview technique to be used. A copy of the survey/interview instrument was mailed to each superintendent with an attached cover letter, which again explained the purpose as well as initiating the follow-up on the site interview concept. The superintendents all endorsed the survey/interview and were in full agreement to participate with a guarantee of anonymity. (A copy of the cover letter may be found in Appendix B.)

Each of the superintendents was visited within a two week period following the mailing of the instrument. The questionnaire was discussed with each superintendent, and approximately 30 minutes were allowed as time-on-survey to ensure a comparable average time for each interview. All superintendents indicated that they understood the survey and that all questions were worded appropriately for easy answering. Elaboration was given on the subjective questions involved in the survey/interview instrument, which included question numbers 12, 16, and 17. Each superintendent felt he could offer more extensive responses to these three questions but that the points considered most important were given for the record. This researcher elected to omit answering these questions to avoid biasing the research. Each superintendent interviewed was asked to complete the survey individually rather than have the researcher record data, thus ensuring accuracy in recording responses of both subjective and objective questions involved.

The researcher inspected each of the completed instruments and found 100% completion of questions (with the exception of the questions omitted

by the researcher's response). Only one of the eight instruments was found to contain a statement not reflective of the questions asked.

Following the completion of the administration of the survey/interview instrument, a letter of appreciation was sent to all the superintendents (Appendix B). Each superintendent was thanked for his cooperation by the researcher personally when they met.

Analysis of Data

This research project was purely descriptive in nature and required little statistical analysis of an advanced form. The approach was aimed primarily at developing a model to test, hypothetically, the implications of district reorganization on selected county school districts in Oklahoma. Some data was obtained which required analysis to a limited degree. The following statistics were used when necessary:

1. Frequency distributions where applicable to determine mean, variance, and range of data

2. Percentage distribution by district, county, and state

Other methods of analyzing data will include the use of maps, charts, and scales. The data collected and generated by this project will be used to provide a perspective of the educational system in Oklahoma and specific counties, to help develop a model for application to selected school districts, to study the implication of district consolidation, and to analyze the application of the models.

The analysis of the data generated from the application of the model will include current curriculum offerings and transportation district factors. More specifically, current district data will be compared to post-model application data to determine what, if any, effect consolidation would have on selected districts. It also will be used to determine if

there is a positive or negative effect. Information from the survey instrument used will also aid in determining the criteria of the model for reorganization.

While this study did not allow generalization to all schools in the country and lacks the opportunity for pure application, it should prove sufficiently representative to serve as a rich source for exploratory data analysis and speculation to schools in most districts of Oklahoma.

Delimitation of the Study

The study was limited in the following ways:

1. Only independent districts were represented

2. The plan developed pertained specifically to schools in two counties in the State of Oklahoma

3. Only existing school district boundaries and county boundaries were used to develop the plan for reorganization

4. District finance, state finance, and alterations in school funding formulas and methods were excluded from the scope of this study

The research was focused upon a sample of two selected counties and the school districts found as subdivisions. Therefore, the extent to which the findings can be generalized depends on more extensive research into districts from the remaining quadrants of the state not surveyed within this project.

CHAPTER IV

A MODEL FOR SCHOOL DISTRICT REORGANIZATION IN OKLAHOMA

The purpose of this study was to investigate the implications of school district reorganization on K-12, independent school districts. The focus of the reorganization was to improve the quality of the school and to provide more equal access to educational opportunity. It was intended that this study should also provide data on the outcome of future consolidation of schools by a hypothetical application. It was hoped that this study would also provide a perspective from which to view decisions regarding consolidation of schools in Oklahoma.

This chapter presents the development of the reorganization criteria which served to drive the reorganization model. The reorganization model is presented in a schematic form at the end of the chapter. The chapter is divided into five sections: (1) a perspective of Oklahoma, (2) a perspective of the selected counties, (3) basic assumptions about the model, (4) criteria for reorganization, and (5) the reorganization model (a schematic).

The first section presents a perspective of schools in Oklahoma based on: (1) an evaluation of data from the Annual Statistical Report for the years 1983-84 (Oklahoma State Department of Education, 1984), and (2) data obtained from sections of the Oklahoma State Department of Education. The second section presents a perspective of the two selected counties and the eight districts researched. Section three presents basic assumptions

necessary to the development of the reorganization criteria and the model. These assumptions were based on: (1) the review of literature, (2) data collected from the on-site survey/interview instrument, (3) a perspective of the two selected counties, and (4) a perspective of Oklahoma education. Section four lists the reorganization criteria which served to drive the reorganization model. These criteria were developed from: (1) the review of literature, (2) data from the analysis of the survey instrument (Appendix D), (3) a perspective of the selected counties, and (4) a perspective of Oklahoma. Section five illustrates the reorganization model as developed. The figures (schematics), based on the assumptions for reorganization and the criterion selected, illustrate the sampled districts in present form and in the reorganized form.

A Perspective of Oklahoma Schools and Education

Whether considering consolidation (reorganization) or the implications such an action might have on schools, a perspective of the schools, districts, and/or state in question is required. This section will provide a perspective of Oklahoma schools and, more importantly, the eight districts sampled for this research study. The information will be presented in a format of: a view of Oklahoma educational organization, curriculum offerings in selected districts, and pupil transportation in Oklahoma schools. This information and data will be used to establish a comparison of schools as they now are organized and as they would be if the reorganization model were applied.

Oklahoma ranks eighth in the nation in number of school districts, with 615 districts, both dependent and independent (see Table I, Chapter II). School sites, inclusive of elementary, junior high, and high school,

number 1,901 (Education Almanac: Facts and Figures About Our Nation's System of Education, 1985-86).

In the 1983-84 school year, Oklahoma's scholastic population numbered 568,457 for grades 1-12 and 49,417 for kindergarten. The total ADA was 553,962. The average daily haul, on transportation for students in grades K-12, was 295,695 (Oklahoma State Department of Education, 1984). Oklahoma, for the 1983-84 school year, had a professional education staff of 21,852 teachers with bachelor's degrees, 17,561 teachers with master's degrees, and 50 nondegree persons, for a total professional staff of 39,949. The average salary for these professional staff members was $20,658 (Oklahoma State Department Education, 1984).

Illustrative of the changes in Oklahoma is the fact that from 1970 to 1981, Oklahoma increased its number of teachers from 28,184 to 32,007, or realized a 20.3% increase in 11 years. Also indicative of transition is the fact that from 1970 to 1981, Oklahoma's total enrollment decreased from an approximate 627,000 students to approximately 594,000 (a 5.3% decrease). More specifically, preprimary to eighth grade enrollment dropped from an approximate 437,000 to approximately 423,000. The high school enrollment, grades 9-12, decreased from an approximate 190,000 to 171,000. These figures indicate a decrease in students and an increase in staff. This transition is even more apparent at the district level, where the variance in the 615 districts is extremely pronounced (Education Almanac: Facts and Figures About Our Nation's System of Education, 1985-86).

Independent districts in Oklahoma also show great variance in district size by ADA rank order. Independent districts range from the largest, with an ADA of 42,078.61, to the smallest, with an ADA of 93.98. Variance may also be seen in the square miles of area in districts, with the smallest having a one square mile area and 638.80 ADA, and the largest having 821

square miles and only 354.58 ADA. A final example in the variation in districts is in the range of revenue available per student. Revenue per student runs from $21,258.80 to $1,948.77 per student. This illustrates the extreme ends of the spectrum concerning revenue per student available for the educational process (Oklahoma State Department of Education, 1984).

A comparison of the distribution of districts in the State provides another perspective of Oklahoma's educational system (see Table II, Chapter II). If the number of districts are compared west to east of Interstate-35 (using the next county west of those intersected by I-35), a view of the distribution is obtained (note: I-35 has historically served in Oklahoma as a line of demarcation across which issues concerning finance equity in schools, consolidation, distribution of state dedicated revenues and so forth have been fought). A comparison of numbers shows that there are 204 districts (both dependent and independent) west of I-35 and 412 districts (both dependent and independent) east of I-35. The western districts comprise 33.1% of the actual school districts, while the eastern districts comprise 66.9% of the actual school districts (Oklahoma State Department of Education, 1984). A comparison of the district distribution, county distribution, and the ADA distribution by a east-west view if found in Table IV.

It appears from this analysis that the western portion of the State yields the lower percentage of counties, with the lowest percentage of districts in these counties and the lowest percentage of ADA by counties. Another way to view this could be that the eastern portion of the state is geographically larger, has a larger number of counties, and has the highest percentage of school districts, and consequently, the largest percentage of ADA.

TABLE IV

DISTRICT, COUNTY, AND ADA DISTRIBUTION
EAST TO WEST

	West	East
Number of Counties	39.0%	61.0%
Number of Districts (by county)	33.1%	66.9%
Percentage of State ADA (by county)	21.0%	79.0%

Source: Oklahoma State Department of Education, Annual Statistical Report (1984).

In addition to the home school districts, it is common knowledge that Oklahoma also sponsors Area Vocational-Technical (vo-tech) Schools. The State is subdivided into 26 main districts that support 44 attendance sites around the State, providing occupational training to high school students. In addition to training for high school students, they also provide adult education courses in many vocational fields.

Combined in service to students and adults, these vo-tech schools serve as alternatives to regular high school courses and provide an option for vocationally oriented students. The district is supported by local taxes and state aid, with additional money coming from the federal government. These schools are a necessary part of a comprehensive school concept and provide for a well rounded education to high school age students.

Oklahoma is also divided into Regional Educational Service Centers (RESC), which serve the local districts. The State Department of Education sponsors 20 RESCs throughout Oklahoma. Professional assistance is offered

to local school districts in a variety of efforts aimed toward the improvement of instruction for students.

Each service center provides basic services which include, but are not limited to, the following:

1. Student appraisal. Each center provides individual diagnostic and evaluative services for students exhibiting an exceptionality in one or more areas.

2. Media. The RESCs maintain a media library for the purpose of providing a lending service. They provide teachers with materials for meeting the needs of exceptional children. Specifically designed materials are provided on a prescriptive basis to classroom teachers working with students who have an identified exceptionality.

3. Staff Development. Assistance is provided in organizing and presenting workshops, conferences, institutes, and other inservice programs for educators, parents, and others working with students who have special needs.

4. Individualized Learning Plans. The RESCs provide prescriptive plans for children identified as exceptional.

5. Coordination of education services. RESCs work in the improvement of present services for students and provide leadership in the expansion of education services and in curriculum development.

RESCs offer necessary and important services to local districts which might not otherwise be available or might be extremely limited. They also lend the expertise of qualified experts in the field of preschool screening, student appraisal, and working with students identified as exceptional.

Curriculum Offering

Oklahoma currently (1985-86 school year) requires a minimum of 18 units of credit for graduation. These are: 4 units of English, literature or other language arts; 1 unit of mathematics; 1 unit of laboratory science; 1 unit of American history; 1/2 unit of Oklahoma history; and 10-1/2 units of elective courses. For the school year 1986-87, Oklahoma will require a minimum of 20 units of credit for graduation. These will be: 4 units of English, literature, or other language arts; 2 units of science; 2 units of mathematics; 1 unit of American history; 1/2 unit of world history; 1/2 unit of Oklahoma history; and 10 units of elective coursess (Oklahoma State Department of Education, 1985).

In the State there are 499 school sites offering high school credit toward graduation. Of these, 371 districts offer access to area vo-tech schools, as well as their home school curriculum. The remaining 128 schools offer access only to home school curriculum units. The State average on curriculum offering from home school units is 57.94 units. The State average on curriculum offering, area vo-tech school and home school unit combined, is 91.90 units. It is interesting to note that 35% of all high schools offer units for credit in the range of 41-50 and 56% in the range of 41-60 units (Table V).

Another perspective of curriculum offering in the schools of Oklahoma may be gained from the eight schools sampled for the present study. In these eight schools, the average number of units offered (both vo-tech and home school units) is 57.6 units. The average for only home unit offering is 50.1 units (Table VI). This indicates that for the purpose of this study, the districts sampled fall within the average range of the state on units offered.

TABLE V

HIGH SCHOOL UNIT OFFERING, 1983-84
SCHOOL YEAR

No. Home School Units Offered	No. Schools	Percentage
0-40	70	14
41-50	174	35
51-60	106	21
61-70	53	11
71-80	31	6
81-90	19	4
91-100	15	3
101-110	11	2
111-120	10	2
121-130	4	.8
131-140	2	.4
141-150	2	.4
151-200	1	.2

Source: Data collected from the Accreditation Section of the Oklahoma State Department of Education.

Note: Percentage numbers are rounded; home units refers to curriculum offerings for high school accreditation.

When discussing the curriculum offering within schools, it is important to analyze the curriculum content by way of actual courses and programs offered. Table VII presents the courses and programs offered for high school credit toward graduation. The eight school sampled have all

received their accreditation from the State Department of Education. They meet the "minimum units offered" criterion required by the accreditation section, and in addition, most participate in the Area Vo-Tech Schools. They all offer programs and courses which fall into the broad curriculum goal areas of academic, vocational, social, civic, cultural, and personal.

TABLE VI

NUMBER OF UNITS OF APPROVED COURSE CREDIT
BY SELECTED DISTRICT, 1984-85
SCHOOL YEAR

Coded School	Home Units	Vo-Tech and Home
Red 1	48.5	48.5
Red 2	47.5	53.5
Red 3	44.5	44.5
Red 4	55.0	61.0
Blue 1	67.5	82.5
Blue 2	37.5	46.5
Blue 3	52.5	70.5
Blue 4	48.0	54.0
Total	401.0	461.0
Average	50.1	57.6

Source: Data collected from the Accreditation Section of the Oklahoma State Department of Education.

TABLE VII

CURRICULUM AND COURSE OFFERING BY THE EIGHT DISTRICTS SELECTED, 1984-85 SCHOOL YEAR

Courses Offered	R1	R2	R3	R4	B1	B2	B3	B4	Avg.
Language Arts (English)	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4.0
Speech and/or Drama	1	1¼	1	2	1	1	1	½	1.09
Foreign Language	0	2	2	0	5	1	1	0	1.4
Social Studies	6	5	4	2½	5	2½	3	5½	4.2
Mathematics	6	7½	6	8	6	6	5	5	6.2
Science	4	6	7	5	10	5	5½	4	5.8
Fine Arts (Music/Art)	2¼	3	3	2	8½	6	1	4	3.7
Practical Arts	6	3	4	4	6	5	1	3	4.0
Office/Business Education	7	4	5	6	5	3	4½	7	5.2
Home Economics	3	4	0	4	4	4	3	4	3.35
Vocational Agriculture	4	4	4	5	4	7	5	6	4.9
Vocational-Technical	0	6	0	9	15	18	9	6	7.9
Physical Education	2	1	2	2	2	2	2	2	1.9
Health	½	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	.06
Electives	2½	2¾	2½	7	7	6	1½	3	4.0
Total	48½	53½	44½	61	82½	70½	46½	54	57.63

Source: Data collected from the Accreditation Section of the Oklahoma State Department of Education

Pupil Transportation in Oklahoma

The 77 counties of Oklahoma each encompass, in part or in entirety, the 615 school districts of the State. These school districts represent, in turn, individual and unique transportation districts. Each transportation district varies in number of buses, route miles traveled, average daily haul, and expenditure for transportation. The total number of buses for the 1983-84 school year was 6,610. The buses traveled 50,837,525 miles during the school year, for an average daily haul of 297,440. This resulted in total district expenditures of $71,746,013.24 (see Appendix C for individual county data).

The eight districts sampled in this research offered a more individual perspective of transportation. The districts in Red and Blue counties are organized in transportation districts, ranging in size from 138 square miles to 496 square miles (Table VIII).

The districts, assigned to Red and Blue counties, have an average area in square miles of 202.5 and 405,25, respectively, as compared to an average of 126.77 square miles for the State's 615 districts. Transportation within these districts differs according to local variables. Presented in Table IX are the transportation data for the Red and Blue county school districts. The average cost per mil in Red county is $.97, with an average of $401.24 per student cost for the 175 days transported. Blue county's average cost per student is $641.46 for the 175 days and $1.23 per mile cost for route miles traveled. The state average for cost on transportation is $.56 per mile, or $94.95 per pupil, for a total of $161,377.68 per day for 175 days transportation of the average daily haul of students numbering 297,440. These students constitute 51% of the state ADA for the 1983-84 school year (Oklahoma State Department of Education, 1984).

TABLE VIII

RED AND BLUE SCHOOL DISTRICT SIZE BY SQUARE MILE

Red	Size	Blue	Size
R1	178	B1	453
R2	273	B2	486
R3	220	B3	496
R4	138	B4	186
Total	809		1621
Average	202.5		406.25

Source: Data collected from the Transportation Section of the Oklahoma State Department of Education

TABLE IX

RED AND BLUE COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICTS, 1983-84 TRANSPORTATION DATA

County	No. of Buses	Route Miles	Average Daily Haul	Expenditure for Trans.	$/Mile	$/Student
Red	31	278,853	543	$271,871.03	.97	401.24
Blue	35	319,998	616	$395,142.16	1.23	641.46

Source: Data collected from Annual Statistical Report, Oklahoma State Department of Education (1984).

A Perspective of the Selected Counties

From the analysis of the data obtained from the survey/interview questions answered by the superintendents of the selected districts, a perspective of the eight school districts selected for this study was developed. (See Appendix D for responses to survey/interview questions.)

The two counties selected for this research each have four school districts. The counties and districts located within are representative of the northwest region of the State of Oklahoma. They represent an area of the State which has already experienced some degree of consolidation. From the responses of the superintendents it was found that the average years of experience as superintendent was 8.18 years, with an average of 13.63 years in administration overall. Both counties have equal numbers of districts and differ only in number of actual building sites.

The counties are similar in that the largest district in each county is located at the county seat. The remaining three districts for each county are within 28 miles or less from the county seat. The diversity in number of students and course offerings gives each district a unique char-characteristic. The larger districts, R3 and B1, both offered a more diverse curriculum and employed a larger number of personnel.

Each of the school districts selected offered a curriculum which met the minimum requirements for accreditation purposes. In addition to the regular curriculum, seven of the eight districts surveyed also attended an area vo-tech school. Five of the districts offered a foreign language at the high school level, and all of the districts offered some form of gifted and talented program. In addition to these programs, it was found that five of the eight districts offered a learning disabilities program for K-12 grades, and three of the eight offered special education at the K-12

levels. All offered vocal music, five offered instrumental music, and four of the school districts offered some form of art at various levels.

Each district was found to have a superintendent, a high school principal, and an elementary principal, with only one district having a junior high principal. Each district maintained a staff comprised of elementary, junior high, and high school teachers to meet the minimum accreditation requirements. With respect to curriculum, all of the districts offered some form of computer course in their respective high schools, six offered some form of computer studies at the junior high level, and six at the elementary level. It was found that points of concern for the future curriculum needs centered on increased requirements, additional foreign language teachers, greater emphasis on vocational training, advanced courses in mathematics and science, and financial shortfalls affecting the quality of teachers in the classroom. In the area of employment, five of the districts have experienced problems in securing qualified personnel.

One of the major differences found in the eight districts was the number and length of bus routes. Each district appeared to be peculiar in its need for transportation. This seemed to be based on geography and actual size in square miles of the district.

Of the eight districts elected, the two with the largest capacity for growth were Red district 3 and Blue district 1. It was found that approximately 180 and 440 students, respectively, could be added to the present system without adding additional buildings. In a comparison of county-to-county, it was found that Blue county had the largest cumulative student population, traveled the most miles, and employed the largest number of personnel.

Assumptions of the Study

Whenever a problem such as the implications of consolidation of schools is considered, a series of simplifying assumptions must be made. The assumptions are required because they can reduce an enormous task to a manageable one; they also must be realistic enough not to invalidate the analysis. Unrealistic assumptions can yield unrealistic results. On the other hand, what may appear to be unrealistic assumptions may enhance the analysis without jeopardizing the validity of the results.

The primary reorganization assumption was that change in district organization would be accomplished only by consolidation of existing districts. No district would be split in the analysis. This assumption was necessary because enrollment data were available only for a school district as a whole, rather than for portions of a district. The data limitations thus precluded use of data units finer than entire districts.

The second assumption was that districts would use existing facilities only, building no new schools. This assumption was reasonable because the fiscal advantage of reorganization would be lost if new construction were required.

The data limitations forced use of the third assumption, which was that the important distances were those from a student's existing high school to a newly assigned high school, with the distance between home and a pupil's existing high school ignored.

What was important in the analysis was not so much the total distance children would travel in a reorganized system but rather the increase in distance which would result from reorganization. Following from the first two assumptions (reorganization by consolidation only and use of existing facilities), one current district would likely have to retain use of its

present high school in each new district. The other representative districts within the new district would retain an elementary attendance site or become a satellite district of the new high school district. Students would be bussed from respective communities to the high school. Given the way high schools are located within existing districts (fairly centrally in most cases), the distance between the existing high school and the new high school was probably a quite accurate reflection of the average distance students' homes would be from the new high school. About as many students would have lived between a pair of schools (and therefore have their distances overestimated) as would have had to travel past the old school to get to the newly assigned school (and therefore have their distances underestimated). Thus, the high school to high school measure was a reasonable one with which to capture the increases in distance generated by reorganization.

A fourth assumption was based on data limitations pertaining to unit offering in individual schools. Specifically, it related to access of program offering and quality of services offered. Only strict quantitative data concerning units offered were considered. Also, quantity and type of programs or services offered were considered rather than any form of subjective analysis of the program or service quality.

A fifth assumption concerning local, state, and federal funding of public school education is that the total dollars available to the reorganized district will approximate the total dollar amount now available to the individual districts. A realignment of the boundaries does not necessarily constitute consideration of a new or changed funding formula at the local and state level. Also, it is noted that federal funding of programs for local districts is not necessarily relevant to the organizational style of the district but rather to the population of people living there. More

specifically, the socioeconomic distribution often has a distinct effect on the allocation of federal funds.

Criteria for Reorganization Model

In the development of the model (plan) of school district reorganization for Oklahoma, this investigation used the common elements of the reviewed studies and literature, the perspective of the State of Oklahoma, and the on-site survey/interview instrument data to develop the criteria. Also used as a guide were the criteria established by Wadlington (1980) for his reorganization model. Eight criteria were developed and are as follows:

Criterion One. School districts should provide for elementary and secondary programs; that is, they should provide for a K-12 educational setting.

It becomes apparent from this researcher's review of literature and comments recorded in the on-site interviews that the maintenance of an attendance site in the community is critical. The school serves as the hub of the community's existence and is the center for a continued educational system to serve the needs of a rapidly changing society.

Another aspect for concern in maintenance of an attendance site in the community is that of "value" formation in the young people. To preserve the grassroots value structure which is fundamental to the integrity of the community it is important to keep the elementary school as a viable part of the community. It is in the early years that values are formed.

With these concerns in mind, the K-12 district shall maintain an attendance site for K-8 grades where more than one community exists in the geographical area of the district (as reorganized).

Criterion Two. Each district should encompass a geographic area with a minimum of 300 square miles and a maximum allowable transportation distance of 30 miles.

Criterion Three. Pupil enrollment should be such that a "comprehensive" educational system may be offered. This "comprehensive" program should be for grades K-12. Specifically, each district should have a minimum student population of 1,500.

The majority of research varies on the optimum size, but all reports concur that student enrollment is vital to the programs offered. The concept of optimum size has changed since the first years of consolidation in America, as progress in transportation methods have been made.

While recommendations vary, based on local conditions, a certain optimum size must be viewed as necessary in order to be "comprehensive." The minimum student enrollment of 1,500 in grades K-12 was selected.

Criterion Four. Transportation time shall not exceed a maximum of 60 minutes for elementary students (K-8) and a maximum of 75 minutes for secondary students. This shall not pertain to shuttle time within reorganized districts (K-12) to and from satellite schools (K-8).

Criterion Five. A maximum of commuting distance of 30 miles between reorganized districts (K-12) and existing sites which support K-8 attendance was selected.

Criterion Six. Each district should provide, as a minimum, the following for a "comprehensive" educational program aimed at providing quality and equal access to programs and services:

1. A chief administrator fully certified by the State of Oklahoma, giving full time to administration of the district.

2. A high school principal fully certified by the State of Oklahoma, giving full time to the administration and supervision of the secondary institutional program.

3. A minimum of 57 units of approved credit in grades 9-12, with the broad distribution by subject areas, including academic and vo-tech fields.

4. A librarian, high school and elementary, fully certified by the State of Oklahoma, giving full time to library activity.

5. A counselor fully certified by the State of Oklahoma, giving full time to the counseling program.

6. An elementary school principal fully certified by the State of Oklahoma, giving full time to administration and supervision of the elementary instructional program.

7. A fully certified staff of elementary teachers for each grade level.

8. Fully certified secondary teachers by the State of Oklahoma, for the basic curriculum areas of: mathematics, science, English, and social studies. In addition, secondary teachers properly certified shall be present to meet the overall curriculum needs to address the broad curriculum goal areas of: academic, vocational, social, civic, cultural, and personal.

9. Specialists in secondary and elementary programs in the areas of music (both instrumental and vocal), art, physical education, learning disabilities, special education, gifted-talented, emotionally and mentally handicapped, foreign language, and computer science.

The importance of curricular programs and units offered was evidenced by a significant number of the studies researched. This import is further established by the concept of a "comprehensive" education. In light of this, a "comprehensive" curriculum should include programs in major

curricular areas of: academic, vocational, social, civic, cultural, and personal.

Criterion Seven. All K-12 districts shall be served by an area vo-tech school. This school shall offer students (when appropriate to their secondary education needs and abilities) additional studies in several occupational areas.

Criterion Eight. All K-12 districts shall be served by a RESC. As a subdivision of the State Department of Education (for Oklahoma), the RESC provides enrichment to the curriculum, programs, and services made available to students.

The criteria developed here will provide guidance for driving the model of reorganization as it is applied to the selected districts in Red and Blue counties. As with any organizational structure, certain specific guidelines must exist. These criteria will provide the necessary framework to accomplish the purpose of the study.

The Model for Reorganization

It is generally easier to visualize a model when a black and white example is given. The following figures illustrate the two counties selected for this research study and their school districts. Each will be presented as it (the county) exists (Figures 1 and 2), and as it would exist after the reorganization model is applied in a hypothetical (on paper only) method (Figures 3, 4, and 5). In both counties, the criteria developed was used to guide the application. The basic assumptions stated previously in this chapter also helped to guide the model application.

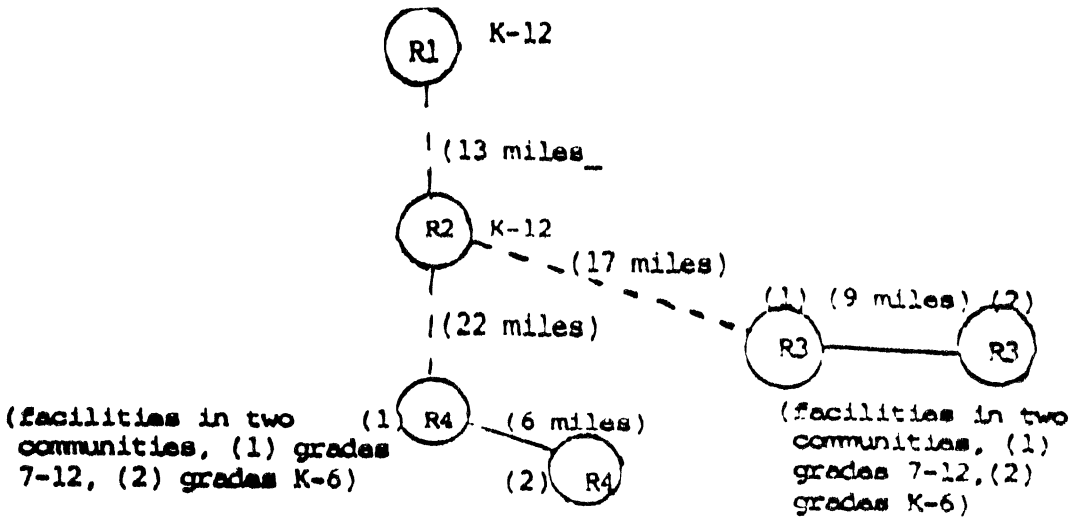


Figure 1. Red County and Existing Districts--Mileage Between Districts

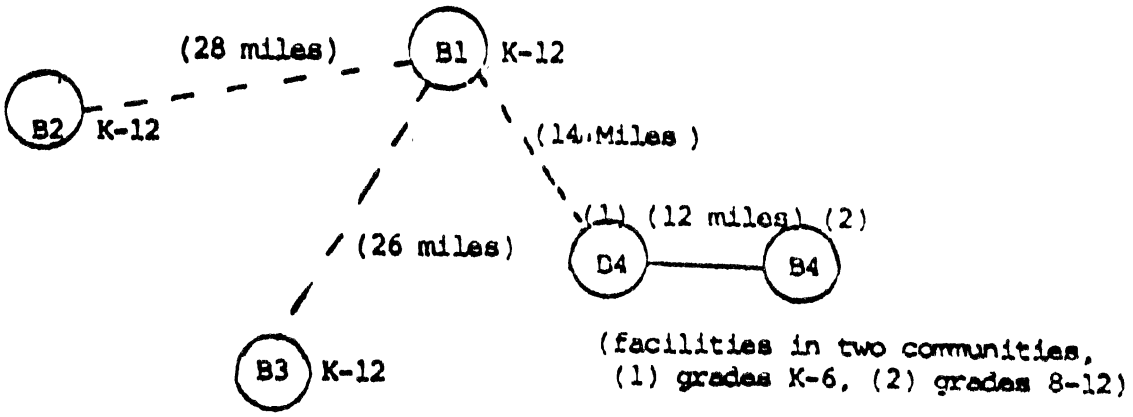


Figure 2. Blue County and Existing Districts--Mileage Between Districts

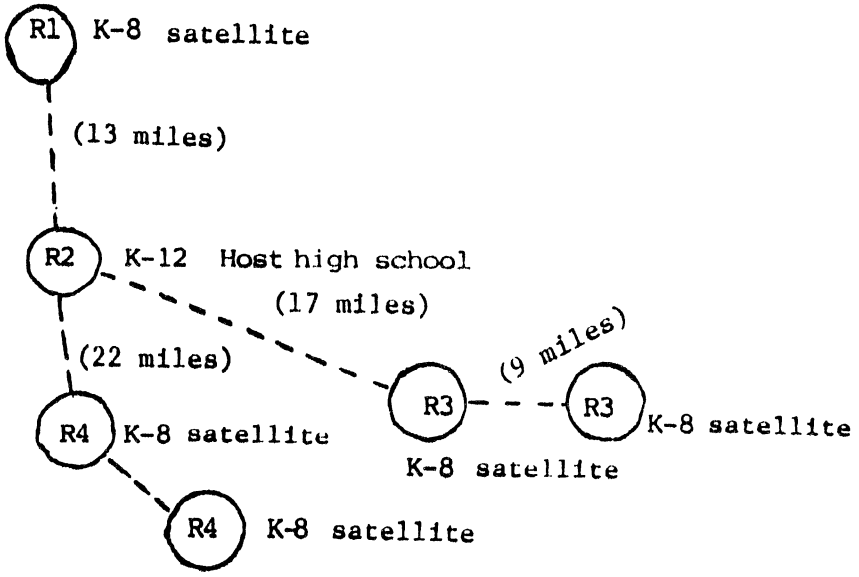


Figure 3. Red County and Districts as Reorganized--Maintenance of K-8 Attendance Site

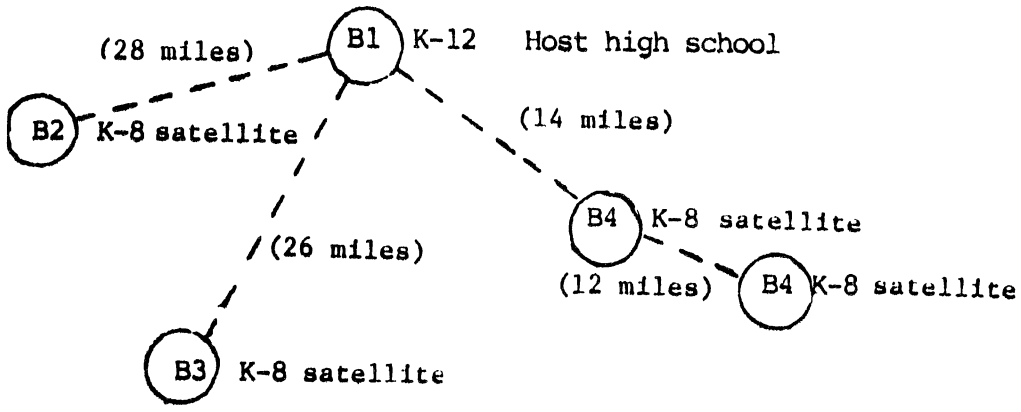
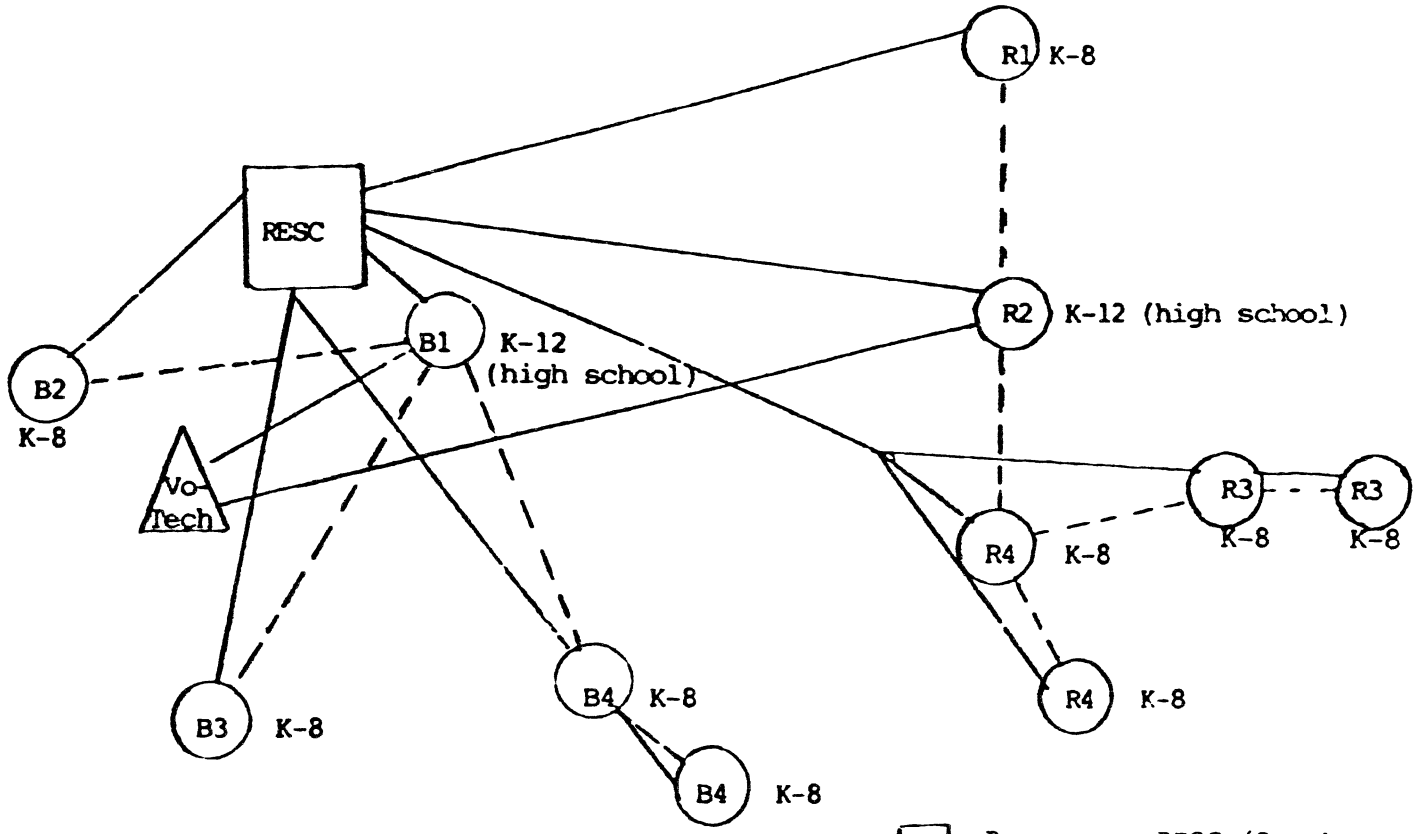


Figure 4. Blue County and Districts as Reorganized--Maintenance of K-8 Attendance Site



B1 - High school for new district

R2 - High school for new district

Figure 5. Red and Blue Counties and Respective Districts as Reorganized--Indicates Service by RESC and Area Vo-Tech School

CHAPTER V

APPLICATION OF THE REORGANIZATION MODEL

The purpose of this study was to investigate the implications of school district reorganization on existing K-12, independent school districts with relation to improving the quality of schools and providing access to equal educational opportunity. The proposal of consolidation of small districts to acquire a more quality school and to provide an equal access to educational opportunity is not an absolute guarantee of success in either of these goals. While increasing student numbers, curriculum offerings and programs, or "comprehensiveness" of the school setting is not assured, it is very possibly a positive step toward the goals sought. The implications of these types of actions must be considered carefully in light of such an emotionally charged issue as consolidation or district reorganization. The proposed plan for such a reorganization is presented in this chapter.

Procedures for the Development of the Proposed Plan of School District Reorganization in Oklahoma

Many ways exist that the school districts of Oklahoma might be reorganized and perhaps each, in their own way, would result in local districts that conform to the literature and satisfy the developed criteria. The proposed reorganization model presented in this chapter for selected schools in Oklahoma was judged most acceptable for the stated purpose of

this study. Many of the decisions concerning the placement of existing schools into their reorganized unit were judgmental in nature, and were based on data collected throughout this research study. A brief discussion of the rationale used in the development of the proposed plan will be presented to help establish a perspective of the reorganization model.

The first step in development was to obtain copies of 1983-84 transportation district maps for the selected districts and to create a composite picture of the geography of both counties and school districts. On this composite map, the researcher established in each county a geographic central point for the high school. This was viewed from a transportation perspective.

The second step was to apply the basic assumptions to the selected districts. These assumptions were established prior to the development of the criteria and model design. These assumptions set the stage for the reorganization plan. Possible satellite (K-8 attendance sites) were identified and possible high school sites were identified.

The third step was to apply the criteria to existing districts in order to determine the one district with the best character and potential for hosting the reorganized high school site. Following the selection of the high school site, the remaining schools were assigned the status of K-8 attendance sites or satellite units.

The final step was to make an analysis of the overall geographic area and transportation districts. From this analysis, the schematic(s) of the reorganized districts were designed as presented in Chapter IV.

Procedure for Presentation of the Proposed Reorganization Plan

The proposed plan of reorganization of the eight school districts in

Oklahoma was presented using the following procedures for organization of the data:

1. The proposed reorganized districts were given the name of the county in which the high school was to be centrally located. Schools in communities outside the host high school, where K-8 attendance sites were maintained, were named according to the county code utilized for this study.

2. The proposed new administrative units were described in terms of:
   a. student enrollment at the "new" high school and satellite, K-8 attendance units, based on 1983-84 student enrollment data
   b. increase of transportation cost and increase of travel (commuting) time
   c. offerings in curriculum and programs and/or services

District Reorganization Model for Oklahoma

The eight selected districts located in Red and Blue counties of Oklahoma were placed into two local K-12 school districts. The decision for the K-12 host schools was based on available facilities to host additional students, comprehensiveness of programs and course offerings, central geographic location to surrounding districts, data obtained from on-site interviews, and the perspective of Oklahoma schools. The proposed reorganized districts are listed with data in Tables X through XVI. Data on student enrollment for grades 9-12 and a total enrollment for the county schools and reorganized districts are found in Tables X, XI, XII, and XIII. The increase in transportation cost and time on travel resulting from the application of the model is presented in Tables XIV and XV. The increase in transportation cost and travel time is a result of added time for commuting between the host site and the satellites.

TABLE X

GRADES 9-12 ENROLLMENT FOR ORIGINAL AND REORGANIZED UNITS, RED COUNTY

School Code	Grades 9	10	11	12	Total
R1	16	10	15	18	59
R2	35	29	21	34	119
R3	20	18	19	14	71
R4	18	24	17	22	81
Total	89	81	72	88	330
Reorganized Unit	89	81	72	88	330

Source: Data taken from survey question two, data analysis.

TABLE XI

GRADES 9-12 ENROLLMENT FOR ORIGINAL AND REORGANIZED UNITS, BLUE COUNTY

School Code	Grades 9	10	11	12	Total
B1	95	76	94	81	346
B2	31	20	24	24	99
B3	8	15	13	10	46
B4	18	8	13	12	51
Total	152	119	144	127	542
Reorganized Unit	152	119	144	127	542

Source: Data taken from survey question two, data analysis.

TABLE XII

TOTAL ENROLLMENT FOR GRADES K-12,
RED AND BLUE COUNTIES

School Code	K-12 Enrollment
R1	257
R2	409
R3	201
R4	290
B1	1101
B2	297
B3	128
B4	164

Source: Data taken from survey question two, data analysis.

TABLE XIII

REORGANIZED DISTRICT ENROLLMENT, HIGH SCHOOL
AND K-8 SATELLITES, RED AND BLUE COUNTIES

Red County	Enrollment	Blue County	Enrollment
High School	330	High School	542
R1 Satellite	198	B1 Satellite(s)	755
R2 Satellite	290	B2 Satellite	198
R3 Satellite	130	B3 Satellite	82
R4 Satellite	209	B4 Satellite	113

Source: Data taken from survey question two, data analysis.

TABLE XIV

TRANSPORTATION COST INCREASE PER STUDENT
COUNTY AVERAGE ON STUDENT COST,
RED AND BLUE COUNTIES

District Code	Enrollment Grades 9-12	1983-84 Cost per Student	Total
Red District	330	$500.68	$165,224.40
Blue District	542	$641.46	$347,671.32

TABLE XV

TRANSPORTATION COST AND TIME INCREASE,
RED AND BLUE COUNTIES

District Code	Increase in Trans. Cost			Increase in Time	
	Miles	$/Day	Total	Miles	Travel Minutes
R1	13	169.75	2206.75	13	30
R2	(home high school)				
R3	17	169.75	2885.75	17	30
R4	22	169.75	3734.50	22	30
Total	52	509.25	8827.00	52	90
B1	(home high school)				
B2	28	215.25	6027.00	28	40
B3	26	215.25	5596.50	26	40
B4	26	215.25	5596.50	26	40
Total	26	645.75	17220.00	80	120

Source: Data taken from 1983-84 Annual Statistical Report (Oklahoma State Department of Education (1984).

The application of the model also resulted in changes in the offerings and programs available for the new districts. The changes and increases in e curriculum and programs offered, based on the criterion applied, are found in Table XVI. Both of the new districts met all criteria, with the exception of the minimum enrollment of 1,500 for the Red district and that of travel time for the Blue district. The reorganization plan allowed the districts to meet all requirements set by the State of Oklahoma and to offer an increase in quality and access to programs and unit offerings.

TABLE XVI

COMPREHENSIVE OFFERINGS IN REORGANIZED DISTRICTS--A CRITERIA CHECKLIST

Criterion	Red	Blue
One - Grades K-12	X	X
K-8 Satellite Attendance Sites	X	X
Two - Geographical area of 300 square miles minimum	X	X
Three - Minimum enrollment of 1500 students	--	X
Four - Travel time: Elementary, 60 minutes	X	--
Secondary, 75 minutes	X	--
Five - Commuting distance of 30 miles	X	X
Six - Part 1 Certified chief administrator	X	X
Part 2 Certified high school principal	X	X
Part 3 57 units credit minimum	X	X
Part 4 Certified librarian	X	X
Part 5 Certified counselor	X	X
Part 6 Certified elementary principal	X	X
Part 7 Fully certified elementary staff	X	X
Part 8 Fully certified secondary staff	X	X
Part 9 Specialist	X	X
Seven - Served by Area Vo-Tech School	X	X
Eight - Served by RESC	X	X

Summary

The purpose of this study was to establish local school units, through school district reorganization, with a quality setting for school. It was also intended to provide an equal and comprehensive educational program for students served from the original districts. This purpose was aimed at the eight school districts sampled in Oklahoma. The application of the proposed plan for reorganizing the school districts was presented in this chapter. The review of literature, on-site interview/survey, the perspective of education in Oklahoma, the basic assumption, and the developed criteria provided the basis for the establishment of the two districts presented in the plan.

The eight districts selected were hypothetically reorganized into two local school administrative units. The educational programs, quality, and comprehensiveness which could be offered by the new units have been improved under the scope of this study. It was noted that all districts selected had maintained minimum accreditation criteria as set by the State of Oklahoma. The improvement in quality, offerings, and comprehensiveness allows performance above the minimum criteria set by the state or local districts as they were surveyed in this research. It was also noted that increased time in travel for students in grades 9-12 was required. Additional transportation costs were also incurred, both on a per pupil basis and on a per mile basis (considering only operational cost).

Advantages of this model are as follows: (1) increased curriculum offering, (2) more equal access to programs and offerings for all students, (3) elimination of redundant transportation routes, and (4) improved quality of school setting based on numbers of offerings. Disadvantages of this model would include: (1) time away from family, school, and other

responsibilities; (2) increased transportation costs; (3) increased travel time, which impacts students already riding the bus; and (4) possible reduction in time available per student for teacher-student contact.

The model developed has both positive and negative attributes. It appears that the quality of the school and access to programs and services may be increased by utilizing this plan for district reorganization. The districts, as they currently exist, fall short of providing the type of school setting offered under the hypothetical reorganization model.

CHAPTER VI

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, DISCUSSION, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to investigate the implications of school district reorganization on selected districts in Oklahoma with regard to improving the quality of schools and providing more equal access to educational opportunity.

Summary

The population of this study was limited to eight independent school districts located in two counties of Oklahoma. The districts were representative of small and rural, consolidated and nonconsolidated, and single county and multiple county school districts.

The research and literature pertaining to school district reorganization revealed that consolidation or school district reorganization is not a new issue for America's educational system. Many reasons for consolidation have been offered in the past, ranging from economy of scale to more quality education and from more education per pupil for the dollar to equal access to educational opportunities. The general focus of these reasons has been to transform small schools into large schools.

With these thoughts in mind, the researcher elected to examine the possible implications of school district reorganization on selected school

districts in Oklahoma. In addition to the stated purpose of the research, it was also intended that this study would provide additional data on the outcome of future consolidation of schools in Oklahoma. It was also intended that the study would provide a perspective from which to view decisions regarding consolidation of schools.

Within the framework of the stated purpose, the following research objectives were developed: (1) to determine what factors have or will affect quality education; (2) to determine what constitutes the "comprehensive high school," supporting a quality comprehensive program of educational opportunities for all students with equal access; (3) to determine what criteria are necessary for establishing a model for an educational delivery system offering both quality and equal access to educational opportunities on a basis that can respond to both present and future societal demands; (4) to derive a model that will serve for reorganization of independent districts in Oklahoma; and (5) to determine what the implications of a model of school district reorganization are when executed for improving quality of education and increasing the scope of offering for all students.

The method utilized was to begin with the research and literature relative to reorganization and to develop an actual model (plan) of school district reorganization for the State of Oklahoma. The steps included a thorough review of research and literature, guided by a set of secondary research questions pertaining to school district reorganization; an on-site survey/interview to establish a perspective on present school district organization of the sampled schools; development of the criteria to drive the model and development of the model (plan) for reorganization; and the application of the model to the selected districts. Based on these steps,

the implications of such reorganization were established relevant to the eight schools sampled from Oklahoma.

Conclusions

While considering the conclusions of this study, the reader should keep in mind the limitations mentioned in Chapter III and the assumptions discussed in Chapter VI. The focus was placed on only two counties of Oklahoma and involved only independent school districts; therefore, one should not generalize beyond the eight school districts. It should be remembered that no existing districts were split. The conclusions were as follows:

1. School district reorganization can improve quality if quality is based on a quantitative measure of programs and services offered.

2. School district reorganization can improve equal access to educational opportunities.

3. Students sacrifice time away from their homes, families, and community responsibilities when afforded the type of programs and service enhancements provided by this reorganization plan.

4. School districts will realize additional costs in transportation to reorganized districts.

5. A more "comprehensive" education may be afforded high school students at the expense of time away from their out-of-school responsibilities and at additional expense financially to the district.

6. Elementary (K-8) students are afforded the opportunity to attend school in their respective communities under the proposed reorganization plan. This allows the grass roots value structure to remain intact and the identity of the community to logically remain unchanged.

7. An obvious conclusion and consequent implication to be drawn from this study is that any change that is contemplated in school size or organization may have far-reaching effects.

8. School district reorganization or consolidation is a viable option for effecting significant change in the school environment, type and quality of programs offered, and access to educational opportunity. Before any attempt is made, a thorough research and study should be undertaken to determine the deleterious effects such a move might have.

Discussion

Much of the research and literature reviewed supported larger attendance units, which are termed more educationally effective, of better quality, or offering more equal access to educational opportunity. It is noted, however, that current research and investigation into the subject of consolidation has indicated that all is not right with the results of such past efforts. Quite the contrary, many of the researchers are questioning the validity of past decisions and even some present recommendations. The common thread in consolidation literature and research has been, and appears to continue to be, that many schools fail to offer the quality or access to educational opportunities necessary to meet the demands of a rapidly changing society. Consequently, there has been a move from the concept of small schools toward larger educational units in the past and present. The basis for this move is the contention that a larger administrative unit offers the justification, based on larger enrollment and curricular offerings, for a more comprehensive school system.

The comprehensive school concept, with its roots in past consolidation efforts of the 1950's, has four basic curricular goal areas. These are: academic, vocational, social, civic, cultural, and personal. These areas

must be addressed in the school setting in order to assure that each individual has his or her needs met to the school's best ability. Furth differentiation of these curricular areas yields a need for a curriculum which addresses the basic areas, as well as computer science, foreign languages, citizenship, and an ability to communicate effectively.

Oklahoma schools vary according to local needs and established goals. The variance occurs in the enrollment, programs offered, services available, and overall persona of the school-in-the-community setting. Characteristics of these variances are found in the selected eight schools. Identified differences included number of units offered for graduation credit, programs and services available for the special or exceptional student, and perceived future needs of the schools.

While it is noted that there are many variances in the actual school districts, it is important to point out that all of the eight districts selected had been approved for accreditation by the State Department of Education. This establishes that the schools had met minimum criteria by the State of Oklahoma. Based on this fact, the researcher chose to address improving the schools above the state minimum criteria set for meeting accreditation. To this end, the reorganization plan developed did effect an improvement in available programs and services to meet the needs of all students served. In addition, the total number of curricular offerings available would be increased to those students transported into the new high schools. The negative impact felt by districts and students would result from increased time spent on travel, increased time away from school, family, personal, and community responsibilities. Also realized as a negative impact would be additional transportation costs to the districts involved. Perhaps the increased expense would be outweighed by

the increased benefits to students in terms of access to educational opportunities.

The reader will note that this study addressed only a limited number of the variables which would be involved in the consolidation question. Time in travel, additional transportation costs, increased curricular offerings, and access to programs and services provided the focus of this study. Certain conditions, limitations, and assumptions were set at the beginning of this research that preclude any generalization past the eight selected districts.

School district reorganization in Oklahoma is not a new issue. In an era of constantly accelerated change, the current structure does not seem to satisfy the educational needs of people affected by the rapid adjustment and modification demanded of a high tech society. Because of this rapid change in society and because of an almost incomprehensible amount of knowledge present today, the improvement of schools through structural change in the state and in the nation must be an ongoing process.

Recommendations for Further Research

While this research met the original purpose assigned, it is felt that the research and data available concerning consolidation are still incomplete. Additional research relative to the topic of consolidation or reorganization of school districts in Oklahoma might address the following:

1. A study should be conducted to determine what effects small school consolidation or district reorganization would have on the small communities and towns in the State of Oklahoma because of past and present concerns of the town or community being impacted by the change.

2. A study should be conducted to determine how small schools might be improved without district reorganization into larger units. This should be done to establish a means to preserve as many districts as possible.

3. A study should be conducted on small and rural schools in Oklahoma. This should be done to determine if they are an important part of the State's education system and to determine their strengths and weaknesses.

4. A comprehensive study of all schools in Oklahoma should be undertaken to establish a need for school district reorganization. This should be done because of a lack of sufficient data pertaining to Oklahoma schools.

5. A study similar to that recorded in this research should be conducted on schools in each of the four quadrants of the State. This should be done because of the variances in schools, programs, and people in the different areas of the State.

Concluding Comments

It is hoped that the findings of this study have added substantially to the understanding of school district consolidation or reorganization in two counties in the State of Oklahoma. It is also hoped that this study has provided a perspective from which to view consolidation of schools in Oklahoma, as well as future attempts at reorganization of the place called school.

Even though the pressure for change has established the conviction for alteration in present school structure, the establishment of larger school districts is not a panacea for improvement in the areas of quality or more equal access to educational opportunity. Comprehensiveness, quality, and equal access may all be gained by reorganization to some degree.

Consolidation may or may not be the answer. The one caution which should prevail above all else is that the educational system which must effect the needed changes in society must not be caught up so strongly in the change itself that it is permanently and irreversibly damaged.

A SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY

A Nation at Risk: The Imperative for Educational Reform. Washington, D.C.: National Commission on Excellence in Education, 1983.

American Association of School Administrators (AASA). School District Reorganization. Washington, D.C., 1958.

Rachambault, R. (Ed.). "My Pedagogic Creed," John Dewey on Education: Selected Writings. (Modern Library Series.) New York: Random House, 1964.

Barker, R. G. and Gump, P. V. Big School, Small School. Palo Alto, California: Stanford University Press, 1964.

Bidwell, c. C. and Karsada, J. "School District Organization and Student Achievement." American Sociological Review, 1975, 55-70.

Boyer, E. L. High School: A Report on Secondary Education in America. New York: Harper and Row, 1983.

Cashen, V. H. "High School Size as a Factor in College Academic Success." Journal of Secondary Education, 1970, 45, 256-259.

Cawelti, G. Vitalizing the High School: A Curriculum Critique of Major Reform Proposals. Washington, D.C.: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, 1974.

Cohn, E. "Economics of Scale in Iowa High School Operations." Journal of Human Resources: Education, Manpower, and Welfare Policies, Fall, 1968, 3, 422-434.

Coleman, J. et al. Equality of Educational Opportunity. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1966.

Conant, J. B. The American High School Today. (Carnegie Series in American Education.) New York: McGraw-Hill, 1959.

Council of Chief State School Officers. State and Local Responsibilities for Education. Danville, Illinois: Interstate Printers and Publishers, 1962.

Delaware State Department of Public Instructors. Plan for School District Reorganization. Dover, Delaware: State Department of Public Instructors, 1968.

Digest of Educational Statistics. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Office of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, 1974.

Dreirer, W. H. "What Happens When the High School Leaves the Community." (Paper presented at the Annual National Conference on People United for Rural Education, Des Moines, Iowa, February 5-6, 1982.)

Education Almanac: Facts and Figures About Our Nation's System of Education. Reston, Virginia: National Association of Elementary Principals, 1985-86.

Effectiveness, Efficiency, and Equal Opportunity in the Public Schools of Massachusetts. (A Summary Report and Recommendations of the Governor's Commission on School District Organization and Collaboration.) Boston, October, 1974.

Fantini, M. D. "John Dewey's Influence on Community and Nonformal Education." Community Education Journal, July, 1984, XI(4), 4-10.

Fitzwater, C. O. "Educational Change in Reorganized School Districts." Bulletin No. 4. Washington, D.C.: Office of Education, 1953.

Fitzwater, C. O. "Selected Characteristics of Reorganized School Districts." Bulletin No. 3. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, U.S. Department of HEW, 1953.

Fonstad, C. What Research Says About Schools and School Districts: Factors Related to Effectiveness. Madison, Wisconsin: Department of Public Instruction, October, 1973.

Fox, W. F. "Relationships Between Size of Schools and School Districts and the Cost of Education." Technical Bulletin No. 1621. Washington, D.C.: Department of Agriculture, 1980.

Gallup, G. H. "The 16th Annual Gallup Poll on the Public's Attitudes Toward the Public Schools." Phi Delta Kappan, September, 1984, 37-38.

Gjelten, T. "Consolidating Rural Schools--Is Bigger Better?" Country Journal, September, 1980, 80-89.

Goodlad, J. I. A Place Called School: Prospects for the Future. New York: McGraw-Hill, 1984.

Governor's Committtee on Reform. (Executive Order 84-1.) Report and Recommendations (prepublication copy). Oklahoma City: State Department of Education, 1983.

Gray, S. C. "A Study of the Relationship Between Size and Number of Qualitative and Quantitative Factors of Education in Four Sizes of Secondary Schools in Iowa." (Unpub. doctoral dissertation, University of Iowa, 1961.)

Guthrie, J. W. "Organizational Scale and School Success." Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis, January-February, 1979, 1(1), pp. 92-95.

Hanson, N. W. "Economy of Scale as a Cost Factor in Financing Public Schools." National Tax Journal, March, 1964, 42, 92-95.

Harrow, T. L. and Dzrieban, C. D. "An Investigation in Educational Research Allocation in School Districts." (Paper presented at American Research Association Annual Meeting, Chicago, Illinois, April 3-7, 1972.)

Hickey, M. E. Optimum School District Size. Arlington, Virginia: Research Analysis Services, 1969.

Honey, R. and Kohler, J. A. Distance Effects of School District Reorganization. Iowa City, Iowa: Institute of Urban and Regional Research, 1978.

Hunt, H. C. and Pierce, P. R. A Practice of School Administration. Boston: Houghton-Mifflin, 1958.

Johns, R. L. and Alexander, K. Alternative Programs for Financing Education. Gainesville, Florida: National Educational Finance Project, 1971.

Kay, S.; Hapgood, N.; and Russell, R. K. The Effect of Consolidation on Fidelity to Traditional Value Systems. Washington, D.C.: Cooperative State Research Service, 1982.

Krietlow, B. "Long-Term Study of Educational Effectiveness of Newly Formed Centralized School Districts in Rural Areas." Report No. 1. Madison, Wisconsin: University of Wisconsin Press, 1962.

Krietlow, B. "Long-Term Study of Educational Effectiveness of Newly Formed Centralized School Districts in Rural Areas." Report No. 2. Madison, Wisconsin: University of Wisconsin Press, 1966.

Krietlow, B. "Long-Term Study of Educational Effectiveness of Newly Formed Centralized School Districts in Rural Areas." Report No. 3. Madison, Wisconsin: University of Wisconsin Press, 1971.

McCutchan, G. A. "School District Reorganization in Oklahoma." (Unpub. doctoral dissertation, University of Oklahoma, 1963.)

Morphet, E. L.; Johns, R. L.; and Reller, T. L. Educational Organization and Administration: Concept, Practices, and Issues. Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, 1974.

Michigan Department of Education. School Finance and Educational Opportunity in Michigan. Lansing, Michigan: Department of Education, 1968.

Millard, J. E. How Long Should a Man's Legs Be? Washington, D.C.: National Institute of Education, National Services Division, 1979.

Mullins, C. "School District Consolidation: Odds are 2 to 1 It'll Get You." American School Board Journal, November, 1973, 23-27.

National Education Association Research. Statistics, 1982-83. Washington, D.C.: National Education Association, 1983.

North Central Association of Colleges and Secondary Schools. "An Overview of the Alleged Strengths and Weaknesses of Small Schools." Report by the Committee on Small Schools, Chicago, Illinois, 1974a.

North Central Association of Colleges and Secondary Schools. "The Small School: Returning to the Human Dimension." Report on the Project of the Committee on Small Schools. Occasional Paper No. 2, Chicago, Illinois, 1974b.

Norton, T. J. The Constitution of the United States: Its Sources and Its Applications. New York: Committee for Constitutional Government, 1974.

O'Brien, J. E. "School Consolidation, School Size, Travel Time, Student Self-Concept, and Student Achievement and Their Relationship to Student Participation and Student Satisfaction." (Unpub. doctoral dissertation, Boston University School of Education, 1981.)

Ohio Education Association. "The Relationship Between Academic Achievement of Students in College and the Size of High Schools From Which They Were Graduated." Report of the Educational Council, Columbus, Ohio, 1959.

Oklahoma State Department of Education. Administrator's Handbook for Elementary, Middle, Junior High and High Schools. Oklahoma City: Department of Education, July, 1985.

Oklahoma State Department of Education. Annual Statistical Report for 1983-84. Oklahoma City: State Department of Education, 1984.

Parker, J. "Report of House of Representatives Committee on Education: School Finance." (Paper read at the 1980 State Legislature Session, Oklahoma City, 1980.)

Rajpal, P. L. "A Study of Relationship Between Expenditure and Quality Characteristics of Education in Iowa Public Schools." (Unpub. doctoral dissertation, University of Iowa, 1967.)

School Laws of Oklahoma. (Authorized by Title 70 O.S. 1971, 13-107.) Oklahoma City: State Department of Education, 1984.

Sewall, G. Necessary Lessons: Decline and Renewal in American Schools. New York: Free Press, 1983.

Sher, J. P. Public Education in Sparsely Populated Areas of the United States. Washington, D.C.: National Institute of Education, 1977.

Sher, J. P. and Tompkins, R. B. Economy, Efficiency, and Equality: The Myths of Rural School and District Consolidation. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1976.

Sizer, T. R. Horace's Compromise: The Dilemma of the American High School. Boston: Houghton-Mifflin, 1984.

Smith, F. W. "An Analysis of the Relationships of Size of Arkansas High Schools and the Achievement of College Bound Seniors." (Unpub. doctoral dissertation, Arkansas State University, 1961.)

Summary of Research on Size of Schools and School Districts. Arlington, Virginia: Educational Research Services, 1974.

Stephens, M. S. "Educating the Country: Managerial Reform and the Promise of Rural Schools." (Unpub. doctoral dissertation, Duke University, 1982.)

Tesconi, C. A. and Hurwitz, E., Jr. Education for Whom. New York: Harper and Row, 1974.

Turner, C. C. and Thrasher, J. M. School Size Does Make a Difference. San Diego: Institute for Educational Management, 1970.

Wadlington, D. L. "A School District Reorganization Plan for Creating Greater Access to Equal Educational Opportunity in the State of Missouri." (Unpub. doctoral dissertation, Northern Illinois University, 1980.)

Ware, B. B. "An Analysis of Oklahoma School Fianancing in Relationship to Student Population From 1971 Through 1982 and Comparisons of Funding Formulas of 1972, 1981, and 1982." (Unpub. doctoral dissertation, Oklahoma State University, 1982.)

White, F. and Tweeten, L. "Optimal School District Size Emphasizing Rural Areas." American Journal of Agricultural Economics, February, 1973, 45-53.

Wisconsin State Department of Public Instruction. School District Reorganization, 1963-65. Madison, Wisconsin: Department of Public Instruction, 1965.

Wyoming Governor's Committee on Education. Summary of Recommendations. Laramie, Wyoming: Committee on Education, 1964.

APPENDIXES

APPENDIX A

RESEARCH INSTRUMENT

SURVEY

This survey/interview is being conducted to collect relevant data concerning your district. You will also be asked questions which are designed to collect your thoughts on district consolidation as perceived from your role as a district superintendent.

All data and comments will be kept confidential and no reference will be made to either the district or yourself. A code system has been designed and implemented which will guarantee anonymity to the best of this researcher's ability.

Some questions require short concise answers. Should you require additional space to respond, please complete your response on the back side of the page. Number any additional response you might make on the back side to correspond with the relevant question.

When completed please return immediately in the stamped self-addressed envelope. Your help in this important request is deeply appreciated. Thank you for your time and consideration in this project.

1. Please list the following information:

   Number of years of experience as a superintendent of schools _____

   Number of years of experience as an administrator _____

   Number of years as superintendent in your present location _____

2. Approximate number of students currently enrolled. KINDERGARTEN _____

   GRADE 1 _____ GRADE 2 _____ GRADE 3 _____ GRADE 4 _____

   GRADE 5 _____ GRADE 6 _____ GRADE 7 _____ GRADE 8 _____

   GRADE 9 _____ GRADE 10 _____ GRADE 11 _____ GRADE 12 _____

3. Do your students attend an area vocational educational school? ___ YES ___ NO

   If Yes, please check the school to which your students are transported.

   ___ ALVA ___ FAIRVIEW ___ O. T. AUTRY ___ WOODWARD ___ OTHER_____

4. What is the approximate mileage (one-way) traveled _____, length of time (one-way) to travel to the vo-tech school your students attend _____.

5. Which of the following programs do you offer at the elementary, middle or junior high level, and high school level. Check appropriate programs.

	FRGN. LANG.	L.D.	SPEC. EDUC.	GIFTED	EMH	ART	COMP. SCI.	VOCAL MUSIC	INST. MUSIC
ELEM.									
JR.H.									
H. S.									

Page 2 - Survey

6. Does your district currently offer any of the following programs or have intentions of implementing them in the next two years:

	DO NOT HAVE	DO HAVE	INTEND TO HAVE
PRE-SCHOOL			
TRANSITIONAL 1ST GRADE			
TRANSITIONAL 2ND GRADE			

7. Does your district have a satellite dish for receiving educational programs or telecommunications? _____YES _____NO

8. If the answer to question 7 was No, do you perceive your district as having a need for this type of equipment? _____ YES _____ NO

9. Please list the number of administrators and classroom teachers your district currently employs.

Supt. _____ Asst. Supt. _____ H.S. Prin. _____ Jr.H. Prin._____

Elem. Prin. _____ Other Administrators (List) _____

Elem. Teachers _____ Jr. H. Teachers _____ H. S. Teachers _____

10. Does your district currently incorporate computers into the curriculum and at what level?

ELEM.	JR. H.	H.S.	
			YES
			NO

11. Does your district currently offer any of the following computer related areas in your curriculum and at what level?

ELEM.	JR. H.	H.S.	
			COMPUTER LITERACY
			COMPUTER PROGRAMMING
			AUTOMATED ACCOUNTING
			BUSINESS COMPUTERS
			OTHER (Please List)

Page 3 - Survey

12. Given your current school curriculum what do you perceive as important points of concern for your district's curriculum structure for the next three years?

13. Has your district experienced problems in the area of employment of qualified personnel for any level or area? _____ YES _____ NO
If YES please list _____ _____

_____ _____

14. Please list the bus routes your district currently has in operation by district name or title you use for identification and give the approximate miles in each route and average time traveled to and from school.

_____ _____

_____ _____

_____ _____

_____ _____

_____ _____

15. In your best estimate, approximately how many additional students could your district serve with your present facilities without adding new buildings?

ELEMENTARY _____

MIDDLE OR JR. H. _____

HIGH SCHOOL _____

16. Given your knowledge and understanding of the state and local situations critical to your school district, where, in your opinion, would be the most viable site for district consolidation in your geographical area?

Page 4 - Survey

17. Based on your expertise in school administration, and knowledge of school organization, what would you consider to be the advantages and disadvantages of district consolidation for schools in Oklahoma. Please give your response below.

ADVANTAGES

DISADVANTAGES

APPENDIX B

CORRESPONDENCE

Box 96
Carmen, OK 73726
April 22, 1985

Dear Superintendent:

I am currently a doctoral candidate at Oklahoma State University in Educational Administration. I am conducting the research for my dissertation and would like to enlist your assistance in securing data for my project.

My research project deals with the implications of reorganization of school districts in Oklahoma. As we all know, this is a topic of immediate importance in most schools across our state. Because of the importance of this research, I am asking the leaders in our state schools to help me obtain certain data.

Enclosed you will find a survey instrument containing various questions dealing with school organization. The questions are structured to take a minimum amount of time and also to obtain your perceptions on areas related to my research.

If you would take a few minutes from your busy schedule and complete the survey and return it to me, your time and consideration in this request will be greatly appreciated.

Thank you for your assistance. Should you ever need my help, please feel free to contact me.

In Education's Best Interest

Pat Jenlink

Encl.

Dear :

As we discussed earlier, I am in the process of collecting data for my doctoral dissertation.

Realizing our busy schedules and how important your time is, I am sending my survey/interview instrument to you before the personal interview. Your help and consideration in completing this survey will be greatly appreciated.

As mentioned in our initial conversation, I would like to come on your campus and visit with you about particular questions. The on-site interview will be limited to thirty minutes or less.

I will contact you in the next few days to set a time for the interview. With your assistance, a large portion of the data collection will be completed. I sincerely appreciate, and would like to thank you for, your willingness to participate in this project.

Sincerely,

Patrick M. Jenlink

Box 96
Carmen, OK 73726
May 20, 1985

Dear :

I would like to take this opportunity to extend my sincere appreciation for your help and cooperation concerning my research project. Your time and efforts in completing the survey/interview instrument have proven invaluable to the research.

Should the opportunity avail itself for my help to be of service to you, please do not hesitate to call or come by. Thank you again and have a pleasant summer.

In Education's Best Interest,

Pat Jenlink

APPENDIX C

TRANSPORTATION DATA

TABLE XVII

TRANSPORTATION DATA FOR 1983-84 SCHOOL YEAR

	NUMBER OF BUSES	ROUTE MILES	AVERAGE DAILY HAUL	TOTAL STATE AID EXPENDITURES FOR TRANSPORTATION	TOTAL DISTRICT EXPENDITURES FOR TRANSPORTATION
ADAIR	74	512,719	3,172	382,369.88	850,374.49
ALFALFA	31	278,853	543	112,761.77	271,871.03
ATOKA	44	353,577	1,944	289,474.08	482,727.15
BEAVER	47	404,028	698	168,690.24	493,678.83
BECKHAM	49	397,536	1,889	230,467.73	624,132.74
BLAINE	47	328,900	1,158	206,743.67	555,511.99
BRYAN	80	669,050	3,304	360,782.54	641,871.78
CADDO	123	927,706	3,890	515,171.47	1,269,890.12
CANADIAN	120	835,964	7,131	539,429.22	1,653,075.85
CARTER	109	857,450	5,160	449,261.55	883,533.98
CHEROKEE	82	714,213	3,885	465,280.37	965,690.14
CHOCTAW	44	364,956	1,557	235,464.20	433,983.72
CIMARRON	14	184,163	213	64,649.69	210,411.28
CLEVELAND	188	1,454,194	15,863	976,000.43	2,341,979.75
COAL	22	142,046	721	121,428.29	238,190.90
COMANCHE	169	1,312,375	7,432	612,329.01	3,908,765.64
COTTON	21	168,002	439	88,836.39	151,643.78
CRAIG	42	349,711	1,489	219,868.16	451,481.14
CREEK	145	952,560	7,915	664,512.66	1,323,387.11
CUSTER	56	362,285	2,063	276,743.52	603,133.44
DELAWARE	85	707,548	4,017	476,483.94	957,225.48
DEWEY	39	406,667	670	155,638.65	413,953.15
ELLIS	27	236,512	484	121,788.90	274,171.35
GARFIELD	99	695,689	3,667	379,384.79	1,033,910.11
GARVIN	84	731,321	3,249	416,626.14	898,932.59
GRADY	124	811,242	5,067	490,678.27	1,383,956.29
GRANT	34	278,250	521	121,136.98	309,156.23
GREER	18	96,523	309	62,584.65	114,961.19
HARMON	13	89,614	189	46,276.18	120,135.83
HARPER	24	224,611	400	113,419.95	232,789.94
HASKELL	34	274,371	1,320	196,261.39	330,228.98
HUGHES	40	333,484	1,428	219,830.83	412,955.43
JACKSON	62	254,740	1,410	182,705.72	407,583.48
JEFFERSON	25	219,729	642	123,432.85	262,093.71
JOHNSTON	37	276,147	1,429	215,741.55	326,123.98
KAY	76	559,656	2,537	331,991.47	776,725.40
KINGFISHER	56	419,204	1,672	265,061.89	591,378.37
KIOWA	37	245,802	791	152,915.69	351,289.90
LATIMER	31	317,674	1,286	179,011.36	319,913.66
LE FLORE	123	736,348	5,664	642,893.93	1,153,026.49

TABLE XVII (Continued)

	NUMBER OF BUSES	ROUTE MILES	AVERAGE DAILY HAUL	TOTAL STATE AID EXPENDITURES FOR TRANSPORTATION	TOTAL DISTRICT EXPENDITURES FOR TRANSPORTATION
LINCOLN	85	744,813	3,371	421,530.61	870,176.02
LOGAN	68	1,250,685	3,224	274,583.31	816,850.98
LOVE	21	186,632	960	143,524.91	278,621.24
MAJOR	31	292,003	761	142,730.48	474,546.75
MARSHALL	34	475,517	1,417	185,579.70	277,145.32
MAYES	73	555,676	3,556	408,010.36	730,001.96
MC CLAIN	67	501,264	3,344	311,485.13	636,742.92
MC CURTAIN	126	1,038,405	4,002	760,144.24	1,138,415.70
MC INTOSH	49	356,897	1,713	248,676.05	509,857.18
MURRAY	26	211,000	1,002	138,134.56	231,575.74
MUSKOGEE	104	973,064	7,012	577,477.07	1,349,494.11
NOBLE	41	308,125	766	142,311.78	494,675.17
NOWATA	33	248,692	912	147,266.25	281,261.32
OKFUSKEE	43	294,824	1,206	191,072.68	367,642.31
OKLAHOMA	656	5,808,185	47,861	2,886,457.32	9,782,975.08
OKMULGEE	86	650,652	5,068	444,124.68	715,941.51
OSAGE	83	646,279	2,297	380,374.20	774,608.84
OTTAWA	69	447,121	2,747	275,995.84	615,834.96
PAWNEE	52	373,334	1,785	224,956.86	551,673.75
PAYNE	97	639,987	5,503	443,742.19	953,758.36
PITTSBURG	93	778,515	3,952	507,220.95	953,199.03
PONTOTOC	95	650,819	4,313	381,529.77	863,711.94
POTTAWATOMI	127	811,535	6,918	525,728.16	1,381,950.62
PUSHMATAHA	45	1,781,163	1,633	303,834.39	461,148.16
ROGER MILLS	37	290,885	612	151,766.56	338,914.16
ROGERS	150	814,652	7,721	590,120.85	1,214,634.64
SEMINOLE	83	523,563	3,648	387,398.29	729,133.58
SEQUOYAH	92	775,384	5,474	527,770.93	952,579.44
STEPHENS	100	636,319	4,087	441,456.97	814,197.57
TEXAS	57	423,717	755	201,824.78	575,790.59
TILLMAN	24	141,049	524	111,086.09	147,172.80
TULSA	586	5,637,046	37,594	2,270,028.17	9,631,558.22
WAGONER	59	389,369	3,672	254,783.42	710,882.30
WASHINGTON	58	556,379	4,768	354,771.59	600,088.87
WASHITA	55	460,382	1,526	217,756.68	537,573.10
WOODS	35	319,998	616	147,810.53	395,142.26
WOODWARD	45	358,175	1,902	243,398.44	560,688.32
STATE TOTALS	6160	50,837,525	297,440	28,241,095.19	71,744,013.24

Source: Oklahoma State Department of Education, Annual Statistical Report for 1983-84 (1984).

APPENDIX D

ADDITIONAL DATA

RESPONSES TO SURVEY/INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Question One - Administrative Experience

	A	B	C
R1	12	14	4
R2	13	18	7
R3	5	11	5
R4	26	36	1
B1	1	12	1
B2	4	8	4
B3	2.5	3	2.5
B4	2	7	2

Question Two - Student Enrollment

	K	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	Total
R1	17	12	10	16	14	9	14	9	16	16	10	15	18	257
R2	34	33	31	32	30	38	31	31	30	35	29	21	34	409
R3	8	13	16	10	13	19	13	19	19	20	18	19	14	201
R4	22	27	23	21	25	18	19	22	32	18	24	17	22	290
Sub	81	85	80	79	82	84	77	81	97	89	81	72	88	1076
B1	85	87	88	87	82	67	81	85	93	95	76	94	81	1101
B2	19	21	22	24	23	18	24	19	28	31	20	24	24	297
B3	7	12	4	11	12	7	10	5	14	8	15	13	10	128
B4	12	13	8	19	14	12	10	8	17	18	8	13	12	164
Sub	123	133	122	141	131	104	125	117	152	152	119	144	127	1690
Total	204	218	202	220	213	188	202	198	249	241	200	216	215	2766

Question Three - Seven of the eight schools attended vo-tech schools outside their home district. One school does not participate in any form.

Question Four - Distance to vo-tech school and time traveled.

	Miles	Time
R1	0	0
R2	19	25
R3	37	45
R4	33	45
B1	2.5	10
B2	25	30
B3	28	35
B4	26	30
Total	170.5	220

Question Five - Programs Offered.

Five of the eight schools offer foreign language at the high school level, with no offering at the elementary or junior high level.

Five of the eight offer L. D. K-12, with two offering at the K-6 level and one a the K -8 level.

Three of the eight offer special education at the K-12, one at the elementary and one at the elementary and high school level.

Eight of the eight offer gifted programs in all levels.

One of eight offer EMH at all levels, one at the elementary and junior high level, and one at the junior high level.

One of the eight offer art at all levels, two at the high school level only and one at the elementary and high school level.

Six of the eight offer computer science at all levels, at the junior high and high school level, and one at the elementary level only.

Eight of the eight offer vocal music at all levels.

Five of the eight offer instrumental music at all levels.

Question Six - Programs Offered

	DO NOT HAVE	DO HAVE	INTEND TO HAVE
Preschool	8		
Transitional 1st Grade	7	1	2
Transitional 2nd Grade	8		

Question Seven - Two of the districts have satellite dishes and six do not.

Question Eight - Six districts felt a need for satellite dishes and two did not.

Question Nine - Number of Administrators and Teachers

	SUPT.	ASST. SUPT.	H.S. PRIN	JR.H. PRIN	ELEM. PRIN	ELEM. TCH.	JR.H. TCH.	H.S. TCH.	TOTAL PERS.
R1	1		1			9		11	22
R2	1		1		1	21		21	45
R3	1		.5		.5	12.5		9.5	24
R4	1		1		1	7	6	14.5	30.5
B1	1	1	1	1	3	41	15	29	92
B2	1		1		1	12	5	16	36
B3	1		1		1	8.5		7	18.5
B4	1		1		1	9		12	24

Question Ten - Computers in the Classroom

	ELEM.	JR. HIGH	H.S.
Yes	6	6	8
No	2	2	

Question Eleven - Computer Courses Offered

	ELEM.	JR. HIGH	H.S.
Computer Literacy	6	4	7
Computer Programming		1	6
Automated Accounting			
Business Computers			5
Gifted & Talented	1	1	
Computer Science			1

Question Twelve - Curriculum Concerns for the Future

District

R1 - Increased requirements caused decreased enrollment in music, industrial arts, art, etc. Need flexibility in teacher's minor assignment to cover comprehensive curriculum with minimum staff.

R2 - May need additional foreign language teachers.

R3 - Increased applications and student familiarity with computers. Clearly articulating expected student outcomes in basic skills. Maintenance of qualified, competent teachers.

R4 - Supplementation of foreign language classes.
Greater emphasis on English and grammar.
Greater emphasis on vocational training.

B1 - Ability to offer "high technology" and computer-oriented coursss and curriculum offerings.

B2 - Financial shortfalls causing several quality teachers to leave the profession. A shortage of math and science teachers caused by an increased need by the larger districts. Enrollment in nonrequired courses.

B3 - Offering enough advanced math and science courses to adequately prepare students for college or technical training where these subjects are needed. Being able to continue to offer foreign language (Spanish). Adding computers for use on the high school level.

Question Thirteen - Five of the eight felt they had experienced problems in the area of employing qualified personnel. Areas of concern included:

R1 - Math
R2 - None
R3 - Vocal Music
R4 - Vocal Music
B1 - None
B2 - Foreign Language
B3 - High School Math
B4 - No Response

Question Fourteen - Bus Route Data (Red Districts)

District	Route	Miles	Minutes	Mile/Minute
R1	1-NW	30	45	1.5
	2-W	18	45	2.5
	3-SW	20	35	1.75
	4-E	30	50	1.66
	6-SE	30	55	1.83
TOTAL		128	230	9.24
AVERAGE		25.6	46	1.8
R2	1	35	60	1.7
	2	37	60	1.6
	3	42	60	1.42
	VO-TECH	44	60	1.5
	K	30	45	1.5
TOTAL		188	285	7.72
AVERAGE		37.6	57	1.5
R3	SE	41	50	1.2
	SHUTTLE NORTH	52	70	1.35
	EAST	43	50	1.2
	N/TOWN	29	40	1.4
TOTAL		165	210	5.15
AVERAGE		41.25	52.5	1.28
R4	2 SUBURBAN	18	40	2.2
	3 SUBURBAN	18	50	2.7
	1 SUBURBAN	16	40	2.5
	3	20	50	2.5
	4	27	60	2.2
	5	21	50	2.3
TOTAL		120	290	14.4
AVERAGE		20	48.3	2.4

Question Fourteen - Bus Route Data (Blue Districts)

District	Route	Miles	Minutes	Mile/Minute
B1	1 IN TOWN	4	42	10.5
	2	6	45	7.5
	3	30	75	2.5
	4	15	60	4
	5	12	45	3.75
	7	9	40	4.4
	8	22	60	2.7
TOTAL		98	367	35.35
AVERAGE		14	52.4	5.05
B2	28	28	50	1.8
	23	58.5	95	1.6
	22	52.5	85	1.36
	26	28	45	1.6
	24	36.5	65	1.7
	21	12	40	3.3
TOTAL		215.5	380	11.36
AVERAGE		35.9	63.3	1.9
B3	1	46	70	1.5
	2	33	55	1.6
	3	32	55	1.7
	4	44	70	1.5
	5	29	40	1.4
TOTAL		184	290	7.7
AVERAGE		36.8	58	1.5
B4	1	7.25	35	4.8
	2	34	45	1.3
	3	18.25	35	1.9
	1A	10.5	20	1.9
	2A	10.5	20	1.9
	3A	10.5	20	1.9
TOTAL		91	175	13.7
AVERAGE		15.2	29.2	2.3

Question Fifteen - Additional Students

	ELEM.	MIDDLE OR JR. H.	H.S.	TOTAL
R1	15	10	20	45
R2	56	20	75	151
R3	80	N/A	100	180
R4	15	25	100	140
B1	125	200	115	440
B2	35	15	50	100
B3	40	15	20	75
B4	20	20	30	70
TOTAL	386	305	510	1201

Question Sixteen - District Consolidation Site for County

R1 - County seat

R2 - Central location that has the best possible supportive education Advantage

R3 - County seat

R4 - Home school

B1 - B1 would be the core school in Blue county

B2 - Our district would need to be divided into three parts. Most of our students would need to be sent to B1. Those students living Southeast, across the river, would need to be sent to the school West of us. Those North of the river would need to be sent to the county South of us.

B3 - B1 would be the core school in Blue county. We are so isolated that any consolidation would be a real transportation problem. We are 26 miles from any other community. However, if a school could be built between two current districts, that would be the most acceptable location. A more likely solution could probably be to bus all students to the county seat, if they had existing facilities large enough to accommodate everyone.

Question Seventeen - Advantages and Disadvantages of Consolidation

ADVANTAGES

R1 - Financial pooling to ensure adequate funding of necessities. Enough population (students) to have wider range of class offerings and noncurricular type activities.

R2 - Broad tax base for providing many of the obvious supportive factors for educational improvement and move toward excellence.

ADVANTAGES (Continued)

R3 - Increase curricular and activity choices by student.
Broader social opportunities to find a group student would be willing to identify with.
Opportunity to better serve the needs of exceptional children.
Potential for increasing career, vocational, college data base of students.
Potential for real, functioning Health Services for students.
Potential for better utilization of tax dollars by economy of scale.
Examples:
1. Library-Media Center better developed
2. Progressive computer labs
3. Science program could afford some exotic equipment
4. Less labor per plate in cafeteria
5. Less energy dollars per cubic feet per student
6. Reduces staff requirements per geographical area
7. Reduce administrative cost per unit
8. Business machine investment less per geographical area
Greater ability for some exotic equipment

R4 - Possible broader curriculum

B1 - Central purchasing
Reduce number of schools and better utilize school plants

B2 - I think in many instances the cost effectiveness of consolidation would warrant its implementation. Many schools are too small and many that are too small are located just a few miles from larger high schools where a wider variety of courses are offered.
Fewer administrators and teachers would possibly mean better salaries. Better salaries could raise the quality of teachers and administrators in the profession.
More cost effective.
More classes at optimum size.
Wider variety in curriculum.
Better salaries.
Better quality.

B3 - Our students could be offered a more varied selection of courses. Specifically, advanced math courses, foreign languages, computer science, and more social studies electives.
I believe that larger classes and more offerings would allow for more competition among students and would lead to higher student achievement.

DISADVANTAGES

R1 - No savings under present financial conditions.
Loss of local identity:

DISADVANTAGES (Continued)

Further deterioration of community life
Economic disaster for "closed" communities
Loss of convenient choice in where to live

Less opportunity for most (average) students to participate in wide range of learning opportunities.
Less individualized help--reduction of familiar atmosphere and pride in home school--distance and loss of community atmosphere creates organizational barriers to school events.
No evidence to say what size institution is best to prepare a child for the future.

R2 - Less individualized attention from teachers to students.

R3 - Possible loss of relaxed atmosphere of small school.
Increase bureaucracy and decreased humanism. Students conform to organization rather than organization conforming to students.
Less need for superintendents.
Longer bus rides.
Potential for less interpersonal relationships between adults and children.
Would destroy the financial structure of the athlete's association because of loss of revenue to small school basketball playoffs.
Could increase desirability of teacher groups to be more active and agggressive.
Will cause cost of education to go up. Students with needs have been isolated--now they are gathered and have enough numbers to warrant attention.

R4 - Much longer periods of time for students on buses.
Less student-teacher personal relationships.
Larger classes.

B1 - Remove school, you destroy small town.
School bus route could be too lengthy.
Create need to build additional schools.
Consolidation could remove local school support to core school.

B2 - Many schools are isolated.
Many school districts are divided by a river or some other barrier to transportation.
Smaller classes tend to promote more individualized instruction. Larger classes may reduce individualization of instruction.
Students have a better change to actively participate in extracurricular activities.

B3 - Many students in our area could conceivably be on a bus between 1-1/2 and 2 hours, both morning and night.
Most existing school plants are not large enough to accommodate a very large influx of students. The expense of building new or expanded facilities would offset most savings that consolidation might bring.

VITA

Patrick M. Jenlink

Candidate for the Degree of

Doctor of Education

Thesis: THE IMPLICATIONS OF SCHOOL DISTRICT REORGANIZATION FOR SELECTED COUNTIES IN OKLAHOMA

Major Field: Educational Administration

Biographical:

Personal Data: Born in Cherokee, Oklahoma, October 10, 1950, the son of Mr. and Mrs. Glenn E. Jenlink.

Education: Attended elementary and high school at Cherokee Public Schools, Cherokee, Oklahomna, and graduated in 1968; received Bachelor of Science degree with major fields in Biology and Sociology from Northwestern Oklahoma State University in May, 1972; completed requirements for standard certification in Social Sciences from Northwestern Oklahoma State University in December, 1974; received Master of Education degree with major in Counseling Education from Northwestern Oklahoma State University in May, 1977; completed requirements for Doctor of Education degree at Oklahoma State University in July, 1986.

Professional Experience: Grades 7-12 Science Teacher and K-12 Counselor, Vilas, Colorado, 1975; grades 7-12 Science and High School Social Sciences Teacher, Gage Public School, Gage, Oklahoma, 1975-80; High School Counselor and High School Principal, Gage Public Schools, Gage, Oklahoma, 1978-80; High School Principal, Carmen-Dacoma Public Schools, Carmen, Oklahoma, 1980-83; Superintendent of Schools, Carmen-Dacoma Public Schools, Carmen, Oklahoma, 1983 to present.