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A SCHOOL REORGANIZATION STUDY
OF HARRISON COUNTY, IOWA

A Field Project
Presented to the
Department of Education
and the
Faculty of the Graduate College
University of Nebraska at Omaha

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Specialist in Education

by
Arnold L. Bradley

August, 1970

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Accepted for the faculty of The Graduate College of the
University of Nebraska at Omaha, in partial fulfillment of
the requirements for the degree Specialist in Education.

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CHAPTER I

THE PROBLEM AND DEFINITIONS OF TERMS USED

Education for all youth has been the optimum philosophy of education in our modern society. Society has an obligation to provide the minimum services necessary for educational opportunities to be available to youth in all areas of the country.

In order for education to meet the individual and group needs of youth today and tomorrow, the educational process must use all organizational resources available.

The search for the type of school organization that meets a specific area need must be continually evaluated and related to the philosophical and educational needs of the area and the individuals involved.

I. THE PROBLEM

Statement of the Problem. It was the purpose of this project to study the existing school districts located in Harrison County, Iowa, in reference to existing school organization and possible reorganization of these school districts. Specific areas that were studied and evaluated included: (1) population studies and trends, (2) educational services available and needed, and (3) possible reorganization patterns that might facilitate improved educational practices

in the future. The assumption was that the present approved school districts in the county may require future reorganization in order to perform the future educational needs that may be required or desired.

Importance of the Study. Education in Iowa is currently based largely upon local initiative and desire. Minimum state standards are necessary for basic approval and currently all high school districts in Iowa meet this approval.

The 63rd general assembly refused to take any action regarding a suggestion to study school reorganization at the state level.

The State Department of Public Instruction does maintain a staff for the purpose of providing information and guidance in studying local problems dealing with school organization. The interest expressed by state department personnel indicates such studies need articulation at all levels in order to accomplish desirable educational organizational patterns.

Any school reorganization movement in Iowa at this time must come from the local school district. The importance of basic planning for the future at local levels cannot be minimized if progress is to be made in the near future.

This study of the school districts located in Harrison County reflect this need for local planning. In order for the County Board of Education and the local school districts to plan for the future, some "springboard" of reference is necessary for any successful beginning of a larger comprehensive study.

The only purpose of any school organization is to meet the needs of the school population within the framework of the communities' financial limitations and philosophical desires.

II. PROCEDURES

The procedures used in this study involved the following:

First, a review of school reorganization in Iowa and basic requirements for an adequate educational program was discussed from related information obtained through literature and Iowa State Department of Public Instruction information.

Second, a detailed analysis of population trends was made for Harrison County. These general trends have considerable emphasis upon any future educational problems because of the various educational services often based upon average population figures.

Third, discussions with the school administrators

in the county, analysis of state department reports, and briefings with state department personnel revealed some basic assumptions about educational improvement in the county that would be desirable if financial capabilities were present.

III. LIMITATIONS

The information and analysis of information was limited to the available information accessible from official reports and personal observation or discussion.

Some detailed information was not available due to different reporting procedures of the districts involved and the lack of interest in cooperating in such a venture.

The study excludes any portion of school districts adjoining present districts in Harrison County, although reorganizing they may be important in a larger reorganization plan.

IV. DEFINITIONS OF TERMS USED

Harrison County School Districts. Harrison County School Districts refers to all school districts located in Harrison County whose central administrative office uses the county superintendent's office as administrative center.

Unit of Credit. Unit of credit refers to credit given for completion of a subject taught five periods a

week for eighteen weeks.

Attendance Centers. Attendance Centers refers to pupil centers of attendance within any given school district area, regardless of grade level.

Offerings. Offerings refers to the entire range of curricular or extracurricular courses and services found in a school district.

V. SOURCES OF DATA

In order to obtain information necessary for the study, the services of the local superintendents of schools, the county superintendent of schools, and personnel from the state department were utilized. Printed materials and required reports from the Iowa State Department of Public Instruction were studied in addition to other published materials.

CHAPTER II

A REVIEW OF SCHOOL REORGANIZATION

Discussions of school reorganizations in Iowa are not new. The first major effort in Iowa began around 1913 and after a peak of activity in 1920 it came to nearly a complete halt in 1930.

The arguments given against reorganizing the rural schools of the early 1900's were similar to those educational leaders heard fifty years later. The biennial report of the State Superintendent in 1901 listed common arguments against consolidation as follows:

1. First, and in almost every instance, bad roads.
2. Fear that the expense will be greater than under the present system.
3. That the children are kept too long on the road and too long from home. It is said that children who live farthest from the central school would have to leave home before daylight and would not return until after dark in the Winter time. Mothers feared that children would suffer from these long rides.
4. Careless drivers may be employed who will not attend to the comfort of the children, and whose influence upon the children will not be good.
5. The people object to the removal of the little schoolhouse from the neighborhood, since it furnished in many places, the only public meeting house. They say it will break up the Sunday school, the literary society and other neighborhood gatherings. There is a sentiment concerning the little schoolhouse that object to its obliteration from rural life.
6. Many farmers think that the closing of the school near their farm and the location of a central school several miles away would greatly increase the value of real estate near the central school and reduce the value of the farms farthest removed from it.

7. In some places it is claimed it will take the older boys out of school earlier than if they could attend nearer home where they would have more time nights and mornings to help about the farm.

8. The objection is often made that the children are wanted at home before and after school to help "do chores," and that if they must start early for a distant school and return late they will not be able to render this assistance, and will miss learning much of the practical work of the farm which they should acquire when young.

9. That the evil influences will be much greater in the central school with its large numbers of pupils of all ages and conditions, because they will not have the close supervision of the teacher which they received in the little district school.

10. That this centralization of schools will remove the school from the people and will be a step away from democracy toward paternalism.

11. That many teachers will be thrown out of employment. It is even suggested by some of the superintendents that some of the little district schools are kept in operation to furnish jobs for relatives and friends of directors.

12. That the children receive less individual attention in the large school than they receive in the small district school, where the teacher has time to give private instruction to nearly every pupil.

13. That it is doubtful if the graded school is better than the ungraded school.

14. That the children must wear better clothes when they attend the large central school than they would have to wear in the little district, thus adding to the burdens of parents.

15. That there will be greater danger of spreading contagious diseases where all the children in a township are brought together.

16. That children will suffer from having to carry cold lunches to the central school.¹

¹Richard N. Smith, Development of the Iowa Department of Public Instruction. (Des Moines: Department of Public Instruction, 1969), p. 106.

Table I² indicates the number of consolidations that became reality during the years of 1896 and 1925. It indicates no interest in this movement after 1923.

Throughout Iowa's educational history, the problems and solutions of school problems and their relationship to reorganization has been discussed both objectively and emotionally.

Continued interest in reorganization with the strengthening of the State Department of Public Instruction and demands by a thinking public seeking new and better educational organizations have encouraged more evaluation of school organization.

During 1955-1959, Iowa led the nation in the reduction of the number of school districts³ but State Superintendent Wright stated that town pride, fear of teachers losing their jobs, higher taxes, and the desire to have local basketball teams were reasons for continuing small districts.⁴

Nevertheless, some progress in school reorganization has been accomplished in more recent times. Table II indicates the pattern of school reorganization in Iowa

²Ibid., p. 106.

³Ibid., p. 113.

⁴Ibid.

TABLE I
CONSOLIDATION OF SCHOOL DISTRICTS BY YEAR
1896 THROUGH 1925

Year	No. of Cons.	Year	No. of Cons.	Year	No. of Cons.	Year	No. of Cons.
1896	1	1907	2	1914	37	1921	15
1901	1	1908	0	1915	55	1922	2
1902	1	1909	1	1916	59	1923	2
1903	1	1910	4	1917	29	1924	0
1904	0	1911	3	1918	20	1925	0
1905	1	1912	8	1919	53		
1906	0	1913	14	1920	77		

between 1955 and 1968. A marked decrease in the total number of districts is apparent as the total number of school districts in Iowa decreased from 4,142 to a new total of 474 districts.

The Iowa Code specifically states in Chapter 257, paragraph 8 that the State Board is required to do the following:

Adopt a long-range program for the State system of public education based upon special studies, surveys, research, and recommendations submitted by or proposed under the direction of the state superintendent of public instruction.⁵

This makes it quite clear that continuous responsibility for studying reorganization rests with the State Department of Public Instruction and its governing board.

Thus, many approaches to the problems have been investigated. Some studies of possible reorganization have been initiated by and for local educational units while others have been the result of county boards of education. The actual studies range from rather simple cooperative planning to extensive surveys completed by personnel from the State Department or University consultants.

⁵Leonard C. Abels (ed.), School Laws of Iowa. (Des Moines: State Department of Public Instruction), p. 74.

TABLE II

NUMBER OF SCHOOL DISTRICTS IN IOWA
DURING THE PERIOD 1955-1968

School Year	Non H.S. Dist.	H.S. Dist.	Total
1955-56	3,334	808	4,142
1956-57	2,903	788	3,691
1957-58	2,578	745	3,323
1958-59	2,085	694	2,779
1960-61	1,013	562	1,575
1961-62	881	510	1,391
1962-63	762	469	1,231
1963-64	701	463	1,165
1964-65	639	459	1,098
1965-66	598	458	1,056
1966-67	47	455	502
1967-68	19	455	474

The latest major study of reorganization was the Great Plains Study as it related to Iowa.

Organization of school districts has been studied, discussed, debated and promoted for years in various educational journals and by educational experts from all areas of the country. Much of the past study of the problem was incorporated in the Great Plains study in order to serve as a springboard for an Iowa plan that would solve Iowa problems.

Some assumptions are made with regard to reorganization that seem to apply equally well to all states. They are as follows:

1. Size, in and of itself, is not necessarily important. Size acquires relevance in relation to many related factors.
2. Size, in and of itself, will not provide quality education. It must be related to the objectives upon which a state school system organization is based.
3. Size is an important factor to consider when a state undertakes the task of organizing its school districts into units which will make possible the attainment of the educational results the citizenry expects in return for its investment in public education.
4. Size becomes significant when related to the tasks for which numbers are important to meet educational objectives adequately, efficiently and economically.
5. School districts can be both too small and too big.
6. There is a significant relationship (as reported in related research studies) between size and: per pupil costs-pupil achievement-program breath and quality-teacher preparation and certification-support-

ing educational services-educational leadership.⁶

The local school district size based upon student population reflects a wide difference of opinion. These opinions are usually based upon the many factors that affect the ability to attain a certain size.

Despite these wide differences of opinion and the geographical or demographic reasons for not attaining some sizes in some areas, certain trends are beginning to crystalize. Studies made by various persons in many different parts of the country reflect some similarities. Table III⁷ indicates some studies that have been completed regarding size of local school districts.

As stated earlier, size of the local school district alone cannot insure quality or guarantee to meet the needs of the community involved.

Size does seem to have a relationship to the expressed needs of a modern comprehensive educational opportunity suitable for all youngsters of a given area.

Many position papers written and researched by an extensive staff involved in the preparation of background

⁶Guidlines for School District Organization (The Great Plains School District Organizational Project. Lincoln: The State Department of Education, July, 1968), p. 82.

⁷Ibid., p. 94.

TABLE III

SIZE RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE LOCAL
ADMINISTRATIVE DISTRICT

Individual/Organization	Minimum	Optimum
National Commission of School District Reorganization	10,000	
Howard Dawson, Department of Rural Education Assoc. (1948)	1,600	9,800-12,000
Harlan Beem, Midwest Educ. Research Center		11,000
Edgar L. Morphet, University of California	1,200	10,000
R.M. Eyman, Ohio County Superintendents Assoc.	2,500	10,000
Inst. of Adm. Research, Teachers College, Columbia University (1961)		20,000-50,000
William P. McClure, University of Illinois	5,000-6,000	
Organizations of School Systems in Georgia (study by George Peabody College, 1965)	10,000	15,000-20,000
Master Plan for School District Organization in Ohio (1965)		
some programs & services	3,500	10,000
comprehensive programs & services	15,000	25,000-35,000
State Board of Ed. Study in Vermont		2,000- 6,000
Stephen Knezevich, AASA Connecticut Department of Education	5,000 for reorganized school districts	

material for the Great Plains Project indicated educational opportunities are usually enhanced by the following:

1. A balanced, flexible, and articulated program, preschool through grade 12.
2. An elementary school curriculum which includes:
 - a. A language arts program, with emphasis on oral and written expression; listening; spelling; handwriting; literature; a second language.
 - b. A social studies program that enables the child to understand the historical developments of our nation, its form of government, our economic system, and the relationship of our nation to others in the world.
 - c. A science program that enables a child to know and appreciate science; to perform simple experiments; to interpret, record, and report accurately; to distinguish between truth and superstition; and to associate and apply science to daily living.
 - d. An arithmetic program with emphasis on the usefulness of arithmetic and its practical and scientific applications.
 - e. A health, physical education, and recreation program.
 - f. A fine arts program in which the child learns to express himself through music, art, and language.
3. A secondary school curriculum with a broad program of studies and activities including:
 - English, language arts, and literature
 - Two or more foreign languages
 - Vocational Education:
 - Agriculture
 - Business Education
 - Homemaking
 - Distributive education
 - Trade and industrial education
 - Physical education and health
 - Drama and speech
 - Mathematics
 - Sciences
 - Art
 - Creative writing
 - Music
 - Humanities

4. The provisions of special programs and services which include:

- a. A school media program
- b. Pupil personnel services including;
 - Guidance
 - Placement
 - Psychological services
 - Attendance personnel
 - Learning diagnosticians
 - Health services
- c. Special education programs for at least the following areas:
 - Gifted
 - Visually impaired
 - Accoustically handicapped
 - Speech and language impairment
 - Orthopedic handicaps and special health problems
 - Cerebral dysfunctions
 - Mentally retarded
 - Deliquent
 - Emotionally disturbed
- d. Pupil transportation services
- e. School lunch services including:
 - Breakfast program
 - Lunch program
 - Milk program
 - Special assistance programs to needy
 - Non-food assistance programs
 - Government commodity program
- f. Adult and continuing education program

Aslin, in summarizing a defensible minimum program for a comprehensive educational program, reported the need for a curriculum offering the following units:

Mathematics 5-6	Foreign language 4
Business Ed. 5-6	Industrial Arts 2-3
Science 5	Home Economics 2
Social Studies 6	Communication skills 6-7
Health & P.E. 2	Art and Music 5
Vocational trade areas 4 or more	
Total units - in excess of 60. ⁸	

⁸Ibid., p. 104-105.

Any sound decisions regarding school reorganization patterns must evolve around educational programs that are defensible and necessary as minimum community requirements. The enrollment and size of the various districts are immaterial except in the sense that certain enrollments and geographical patterns enable minimum programs to be offered with some sense of fiscal responsibility.

Studies of the curricular offerings of schools in Iowa made by Maxey and Thomas reveal the following items:

- As school enrollment increases, more different course offerings are available to students.
- As school enrollment increases, the areas of foreign language, business education, vocational education, and technical education, show the greatest increase in curricular offerings.
- Some smaller size categories present a complete void in some subject areas, this is especially true in the areas of special education, distributive education and technical education.
- As district enrollment increases, courses in homemaking appear less frequently.
- Very few schools, large or small, have more than two course offerings in the "Health" category.
- The greatest breadth in curricular offerings is consistently found in school districts enrolling in excess of 3,000 students.⁹

The evolving of school organizations from several thousand to less than 500 has been an emotion-laden task that has been accomplished through legislative requirements,

⁹Ellis G. Hanson and Ralph D. Purdy, A Design for Educational Organization in Iowa (Des Moines: State Department of Public Instruction, June, 1968), p. 60.

State Department of Public Instruction guidelines, and needs and aspirations of the various local communities as they attempted to provide better educational opportunities.

In the absence of mandatory requirements, which seems unlikely in the near future, any new organization of school districts will depend upon the initiative of the local or area school district's patrons and personnel.

The key to future school organizations will rest upon the philosophy of educational thinking that resides in the various school districts as they study their own needs.

It is clear that size alone is not the most important factor of consideration, particularly at the local level. It is clear however, that community needs are vitally important.

The needs of the local district to furnish an adequate educational offering for all youngsters should reflect future reorganization plans.

Any future reorganization must reflect some improvement in course offerings, special services, or financial gains to substantiate any local effort to move toward additional reorganization.

If communities are willing to look objectively at the services needed and offered in their area, it will become relatively easy to develop a school district organi-

zation that will enable schools to accomplish the stated and necessary goals within the framework of the existing financial structure.

The difference between inadequate and adequate schools in Iowa appears to be dependent more and more upon the local patrons philosophy of good educational practice.

The concept of local control could not be more apparent as the state legislature refuses to accept more responsibility for local educational agencies. The outcome of school organization will affect youngsters for several generations and will provide arguments for many years relative to the success of centralized versus decentralized control of educational opportunities.

CHAPTER III

POPULATION TRENDS

Harrison County, Iowa, is located in Western Iowa adjacent to the Missouri River and immediately north of Pottawattamie County which includes the metropolitan area of Council Bluffs.

The County is referred to as a part of Iowa Region 13 by the State Office for Programming and Planning.

The major portion of Harrison County land area is devoted to agriculture production or is vacant. This area accounts for approximately 95% of the county land area. Approximately 1% of the county land area consists of incorporated communities.

There are currently five Community School Districts in the County.¹⁰ They are: Dunlap Community School, Dunlap, Iowa; Lo-Ma Community School, Logan, Iowa; Missouri Valley Community School, Missouri Valley, Iowa; West Harrison Community School, Mondamin, Iowa; and Woodbine Community School, Woodbine, Iowa.

In addition to the public schools, an elementary Parrochial School is located in Missouri Valley.

¹⁰Although some districts involve other counties, the central administrative office is in Harrison County.

The economic base of the county is influenced by agriculture and its related industry and the close proximity to the metropolitan area of Omaha-Council Bluffs.

During the period of 1950 and 1960 the county experienced a net decline of 731 jobs or 10.5 percent of the total employment.¹¹ The principal cause was the reduction of 1220 jobs in Agriculture.

The pattern of change during this ten year period is consistent with the patterns established in other midwestern areas dependent upon agriculture and other farm related products.

On the other hand, persons living in Harrison County may find additional employment within commuting distance due to the nearby metropolitan areas.

Table IV indicates the change in employment patterns during the years of 1950 and 1960.

As Agriculture continues its predictable decline, the distribution of employment force will provide additional contrast. The future employment growth and distribution of employment will depend upon three factors:

- (1) suitable adaptation to the changing needs and demands of the agriculture industry, (2) the effect of the Omaha SMSA on Commuter employment

¹¹Stanley Consultants, Part A - Economic Factors for Planning (Muscatine: Urban Planning Grant Project No. Iowa P-146), p. A-1.

TABLE IV*

EMPLOYMENT DISTRIBUTION, 1950 AND 1960
HARRISON COUNTY, IOWA

Industrial Group	1950	1960	Per Cent Change 1950-1960
Agriculture	3198	1978	- 38.0
Mining	14	78	+458.0
Construction	410	493	+ 20.0
Manufacturing	162	417	+158.0
Transportation			
Comm. & Utilities	499	427	- 14.5
Wholesale & Retail			
Trades	1103	1261	+ 14.2
Finance, Insurance			
Real Estate	129	192	+ 14.9
Business & Repair			
Services	192	86	- 55.4
Personal Services	306	263	- 14.0
Entertainment,			
Recreation Services	48	18	- 62.5
Professional Services	451	611	+ 35.5
Public Administration	176	201	+ 14.5
Not Reported	163	93	- 43.0
Totals	6851	6120	- 10.5

*Source: U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, Census of Population, 1960.

from the County, and (3) the extent to which the additional export or basic industry can be developed.²

Further investigation of the age composition of the labor force available in Harrison County during 1960 reveals a pattern different from other areas of the county.

Table V indicates the total per cent of labor force from the age group 18 through 44 to be 45.8% while Iowa during that period, in the same age group, had 54.2 per cent and the U. S. as a whole had 49.9 per cent.

The general decline in employment opportunities indicates that persons in their highly productive years are leaving Harrison County for employment purposes and produces a net loss of certain age groups.

These same persons are the ones that would normally be expected to provide the basis for school population predictions since these are also the reproductive years for most American families.

The general decline in job opportunities within the County shows no evidence of discontinuing. The general predictions for less agriculture manpower in the foreseeable future indicates a continued decline in Agriculture related employment opportunities.

¹²Stanley Consultants, Part A - Economic Factors for Planning (Muscatine: Urban Planning Grant Project No. Iowa P-146), p. A-18.

TABLE V*

AGE COMPOSITION OF THE LABOR FORCE, 1960
HARRISON COUNTY, IOWA AND
THE UNITED STATES

Age Group	Harrison County Per Cent Total	Iowa Per Cent Total	United States Per Cent Total
14-17	5.4	4.7	9.3
18-24	8.7	12.1	12.5
25-34	16.9	20.4	18.2
35-44	20.2	21.7	19.2
45-64	40.9	34.5	28.9
65-and over	7.9	6.6	11.9
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0

*Source: U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of
Census, Census of Population, 1960.

The general population factors in Harrison County, Iowa, have a direct relationship to educational costs for certain minimal programs as well as costs for "pilot" or "innovative" programs designed to provide future opportunities for the youth of the county.

The county has experienced a steady decline in population from 1940 to 1960. The population decline has averaged about 1.3 per cent per year over the last twenty years as the total declined from 22,767 persons to 17,600 persons.¹³

Table VI indicates that Harrison County is not only declining in population faster than the United States in general, but it is also showing more net decline than the remainder of Iowa Region 13.

Harrison County's incorporated communities showed a total decrease of 1,554 persons between 1940 and 1960. During this period none of the ten incorporated communities showed a net increase in population. The communities reflected the following losses:¹⁴

¹³Stanley Consultants, Part B - Population Factors for Planning (Muscatine: Urban Planning Grant Project No. Iowa P-146), p. B-1.

¹⁴Ibid., p. B-3.

TABLE VI*

POPULATION 1940 - 1960 IN HARRISON COUNTY, IOWA REGION 13,
IOWA, AND THE UNITED STATES

Year	Harrison County	Iowa Region 13	Iowa	United States (000)
1940	22,767	180,083	2,538,248	132,000
1950	19,560	180,709	2,621,073	152,000
1960	17,600	177,443	2,757,537	182,000
Annual Rate of Growth (1940-60)	-1.3%	-0.1%	+0.4%	+1.6%

Note: Iowa Region 13 includes Harrison, Pottawattamie, Cass, Shelby, Montgomery, Mills, Fremont and Page Counties.

*Sources: U. S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, Census of the Population, 1940, 1950, and 1960.
Iowa's Population, Special Report #47, Iowa State University, 1966.

<u>Community</u>	<u>Per Cent Change in Population 1940-60</u>
Logan	- 5.6%
Missouri Valley	-10.8
Magnolia	-11.2
Woodbine	-11.3
Pisgah	-13.6
Persia	-18.5
Dunlap	-19.1
Modale	-28.4
Mondamin	-28.5
Little Sioux	-32.0

A comparison of the period 1950-60 indicates some change regarding the population losses for the twenty year period. Ranked according to their growth the Harrison County communities include:¹⁵

<u>Community</u>	<u>Per Cent Change in Population 1950-60</u>
Pisgah	+4.9%
Magnolia	+3.6
Logan	+3.5
Missouri Valley	+0.6
Woodbine	--
Modale	-2.4
Dunlap	-10.1
Mondamin	-11.0
Little Sioux	-12.1
Persia	-13.6

From comparing the two previous sets of figures, no firm prediction as to the reasons for population decline and growth may be ascertained although the communities avoiding decline are located on U. S. Route 30. It may be significant that future decline of the communities in Harrison County

¹⁵Ibid., p. B-4.

will have some relationship to highway traffic and access to metropolitan areas in the Omaha-Council Bluffs region.

The population statistics on table VII indicates the net change of population in Harrison County for the 1940-60 years.

The fact that the decline in the incorporated communities totaled 1,554 persons reveals that only 30.0 per cent of the total county decline may be accounted for by the decline in incorporated areas. Thus, 70.0 per cent of the loss, or 3,613 persons, occurred in rural areas.

The population variations have produced a noticeable shift in the remaining county population. The figures on table VIII indicate the population is no longer rural and the change to urban is continuing at an accelerated rate.

In addition to the general population trends affecting the county, it is apparent that out migration produces population characteristics that have implications for planning. The comparison of age composition on table IX reflects the high proportion of older age persons, and the corresponding low proportion of the early working age persons in the county.

Another way of expressing the general age composition of the local population, for ease of comparison with other units of government, is through the use of a "dependency ration". This figure relates the proportion of the population in a generally dependent status, under age 15 and over age 65. By use of these figures, we note that Harrison County's 1960 population was considerably more dependent, 45.5 per cent, than either the state, 43.0 per cent, or the nation, 34.0 per cent.

TABLE VII*

POPULATION IN INCORPORATED PLACES
HARRISON COUNTY, IOWA
1940-60

Incorporated Places	1940	1950	1960	Net Change 1940-60	Per Cent 1940-60
Dunlap	1,550	1,409	1,254	-296	-19.1
Little Sioux	434	349	295	-139	-32.0
Logan	1,700	1,550	1,605	- 95	- 5.6
Magnolia	242	207	215	- 27	-11.2
Mondamin	610	489	436	-174	-28.5
Missouri Valley	3,991	3,546	3,567	-424	-10.8
Modale	385	283	276	-109	-28.4
Persia	395	373	322	- 73	-18.5
Pisgah	397	327	343	- 54	-13.6
Woodbine	1,467	1,304	1,304	-163	-11.3
Total Incorporated Places	11,171	9,837	9,617	-1,554	-13.9

*Source: Stanley Consultants, Part B - Population Factors for Planning. (Muscatine: Urban Planning Grant Project No. Iowa P-146), p. B-5.

TABLE VIII*

HARRISON COUNTY POPULATION RESIDENCE

Place of Residence	Per Cent Harrison County Population		
	1940	1950	1960
Urban (Missouri Valley)	17.5%	18.1%	20.3%
Rural Non-Farm (9 Smaller Towns)	31.5	32.2	34.4
Rural Farm	51.0	49.7	45.3
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

*Source: Stanley Consultants, Part B - Population Factors for Planning. (Muscatine: Urban Planning Grant Project No. Iowa P-146), p. B-6.

TABLE IX*

POPULATION BY AGE GROUPS IN HARRISON COUNTY, IOWA

Age Group	Per Cent Total Population 1960		
	Harrison County	Region 13	Iowa
			United States
Under 5	10.2%	10.9%	11.1%
5 - 9	10.6	10.5	10.6
10 - 14	10.6	9.7	9.4
15 - 19	7.1	7.0	7.3
20 - 24	3.6	4.8	5.6
25 - 44	21.3	23.7	23.7
45 - 64	22.3	20.8	20.5
65 - and over	14.3	12.6	11.8
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

*Source: Stanley Consultants, Part B - Population Factors For Planning.
(Muscataine: Urban Planning Grant Project No. Iowa P-146), p. B-1C.

The planning implications of a largely dependent population are many. Not only do housing, recreation and public facility requirements change with the age of the population but also publicly financed improvements are frequently more difficult to secure when a large proportion of the population lives on relatively small, fixed incomes.¹⁶

The median family income in the county in 1960 was \$3,990, which was approximately 85 per cent of the regional median income of \$4,686, and approximately 78 per cent of the statewide median family income of \$5,069.¹⁷

The present and past population statistics of Harrison County, Iowa have provided a base for employment opportunities and have necessitated the previous planning that has been done in each community regarding public facilities.

There have been many studies and surveys recently in the county relating to population predictions in the future. Many individual incorporated towns have had professional assistance in planning and analyzing needs for the future and currently the entire county wide planning project conducted by Stanley Consultants, Muscatine, Iowa, reveals interesting predictions.

The information offered by Stanley Consultants,

¹⁶Ibid., p. B-10.

¹⁷Ibid., p. B-13.

after studying the predictions and information of Consultants in Real Estate, Inc.; Henningson, Durhan, and Richardson; Hansen Planning and Urban Design Consulting Company; and population trends of Harrison County over the last twenty years, is summarized in table X.

It would appear that any further planning of facilities or organizations within the county would reflect needs based upon the past and predicted population trends within the various communities and their surrounding rural areas.

The evidence suggests nothing dramatic in the way of population growth or other new community functions but does indicate a remarkable relative stability of the larger towns located in Harrison County.

TABLE X*

COMMUNITY POPULATION FORECAST
IN HARRISON COUNTY

Town	1970	1980	1990
Dunlap	1184	1191	1190
Little Sioux	273	253	218
Logan	1744	1927	2182
Magnolia	217	210	204
Mondamin	415	408	402
Missouri Valley	3796	4152	4644
Modale	278	269	271
Persia	305	305	304
Pisgah	366	402	437
Woodbine	1370	1464	1621

*Source: Stanley Consultants, Part B - Population Factors for Planning. (Muscatine: Urban Planning Grant Project No. Iowa P-146), pp. B-24 through B-35.

CHAPTER IV

THE STUDY

The current organizational structure of present school districts in Harrison County, Iowa have not changed since the mandatory legislation that required all school districts to become a part of a high school district by July 1, 1967.

As a result of this, the fine public school districts in the area have each established their own programs and facilities to meet the individual district needs and to enable each to satisfy the minimum state requirements for approval.

In addition to all schools being state approved, three of the high schools are also accredited by the North Central Association. Only one has recently been evaluated by a visitation team at this date.

The elementary attendance centers are naturally more numerous than secondary. All centers of attendance may be located on the county area map located in the appendix.

Each school operates a number of school buses that provide the necessary pupil transportation services and serves as a method of transporting students and staff members involved in extra curricular activities.

Each district has successfully devised and planned

for the pupil transportation system with only the normal difficulties expected when involved with several attendance centers and large numbers of pupils that must be transported.

The elementary program offerings are quite similar and stable in all school districts. The major differences are largely in terms of special personnel. Some districts provide special teachers at the elementary level for art, music, and physical education in varying degrees depending upon local desires.

Much of the special education at the elementary level and all at the secondary level is handled through a cooperative arrangement with the County Board of Education.

The high school programs are rather typical of small rural Iowa high schools. The programs are based upon a sound general preparation that enables successful students to enter college and electives in special or vocational courses which are generally limited.

The fact that all schools in the county are currently reaching the approval level required by the State Department of Public Instruction is a credit to the present and past administrations and Boards of Education. Each year these programs are maintained and many graduates of these high schools enter colleges and subsequently graduate.

The successful operation of these districts in the past and present, as it is reflected by their programs of

units offered, services provided, and community involvement, does not automatically mean they do not have room for some desirable improvements nor that they will remain as successful in the future as general educational costs continue to rise and standards for approval become more developed and the needs of the community change.

The changes in rural Iowa are apparent to all who survey the economic and population patterns that are emerging.

The changes in educational requirements for the remaining and future student population will not decrease in terms of need even if the overall student population declines slightly.

Present evaluation of the current districts by school administrators and State Department consultants reveal almost universal acknowledgement of the outstanding job these schools have done since mandatory reorganization, but there are also many accepted and desired programs and services that cannot not be offered under the present organizational structure.

An immediate need is the providing of some special personnel or the addition of special personnel.

The overall total county enrollment of pupils indicates a need for additional psychological services, the addition of speech and hearing clinicians, special education program im-

provements, and perhaps additional personnel to plan and evaluate curriculum and other special or academic areas.

The programs in these areas are very minimal or nonexistent at this time due to the limitations of the existing organizational structure. Each of these special programs requires central administrative leadership and numbers of pupils large enough to justify the increased expenditure.

Although most of the existing programs are now county coordinated, the use of a different type of administrative structure could conceivably result in increased utilization of the administrative portion of the funds expended for such programs and result in increased programs more responsive to the direct pupil needs of the county.

Although most secondary schools are now offering enough units to provide for college entrance, it is agreed that all are not making a wide elective program available and that non college bound students are particularly short in course offerings at all levels.

The number of total units offered by the high schools are as follows:

Dunlap Community-----	37 $\frac{1}{2}$
Logan-Magnolia Community-----	45 $\frac{1}{2}$
Missouri Valley Community-----	49 $\frac{1}{2}$
West Harrison Community-----	41 $\frac{1}{2}$
Woodbine Community-----	40

Although these minimum units meet or exceed all state requirements, they do not meet the defensible units required figure of 60.

It may certainly be debated whether 60 units is a minimum or ideal number, or in fact, if a lower number is better.

School administrators will agree however, that the present number of units offered in their schools do not provide the most desirable high school program for the youngsters of their community.

In addition, it is apparent that students from this county will be forced to compete in the labor market with students from urban areas where minimum units of course offerings often far exceed the minimum of 60 suggested by Aslin.¹⁸

Any objective analysis of the present curricular offerings indicate some areas that should be expanded. Unfortunately larger numbers of pupils must be available if course offerings are to be expanded to any degree.

In this day of high level educational expenditure, it is not practical or feasible for each of the present high schools in operation to provide what may be the absolute

¹⁸Guidlines for School District Organization (The Great Plains School District Organizational Project. Lincoln: The State Department of Education, July, 1968), p. 105.

minimum program of the future.

It is possible to determine that education and educational requirements are expanding at a rapid rate and will probably continue to require additional offerings in both courses and services in the future and that present organizational patterns in the county are limited in numbers of potential pupils and fiscal potential to provide these services.

In addition to the present curricular short comings with the present student population, it may become a greater problem as school populations decrease. The changing demographic patterns in Iowa and the reduction of live birth rates give no evidence of general student population increases in rural areas.

The evidence that the present school districts in Harrison County are offering minimal programs may have more far reaching problems in the future than at present.

Indications that general population trends are not expanding in the county will undoubtedly pose a greater educational dilemma in a few years if standards continue to be raised and programs expanded.

The school census for school districts in the county support the conclusions of other population studies that reveal possible enrollment declines. The 1968-1969 official school census for the various schools is revealed in table XI.

TABLE XI

RESIDENT CHILDREN
1968 CENSUS

School	Under					Between 5 & 21		Total 1 thru 21	
	1 year	1 yr.	2 yr.	3 yr.	4 yr.	5 yr.	Boys		Girls
Dunlap	33	32	36	46	38	42	424	408	1017
Lo-Ma	37	40	32	41	44	58	507	450	1151
West Harrison	40	33	44	43	36	59	453	443	1092
Woodbine	20	29	41	45	47	44	531	512	1225
Missouri Valley	58	67	75	87	109	90	846	859	1705

These census figures certainly do not indicate any pattern of growth for the future student population within the county and may indicate a continued decline of school enrollments.

School enrollments in the immediate past have also indicated some startling facts.

The West Harrison school district has experienced an enrollment decline of 105 pupils between the 1967 and 1969 school years. During the last nine year period, the total district enrollment has declined by 165 students.

Logan-Magnolia School District enrollment has declined by 192 students during the same nine year period and there are no indications of any permanent trends in the opposite direction.

The Woodbine School District experienced some growth during the same nine year period and rose to a high of 887 students in 1967-70 to a point of 773 students which is lower than the original 804 students in 1961-62 at the start of the nine year period.

Since the parochial school in Dunlap closed, the public school system shows a corresponding increase in enrollment. The total enrollments of both groups have fluctuated but the general trend has shown a decline.

The Missouri Valley Community School District is the only district in the county which has experienced a

general increase in enrollment since the 1961-62 school year. The most recent enrollment figures indicate a leveling off of student population and little growth can be forecast in the public school enrollment with the exception of the possible increase of children who currently attend an elementary parochial school.

The total school enrollment in Harrison County fluctuated during the 1961-69 period with a net decline of 252 students.

Some type of readjustment in the school organizational structure must be provided as a matter of economic necessity if the current and past trends are an accurate prediction of the future.

At the present time, all attendance centers are served adequately by bus transportation and shuttle service that enables a central high school to function in each district.

Each of the high schools are well connected by adequate highway systems should some of these high school centers be combined. The amount of estimated time necessary for any increased distance should not create a problem if a like number of transportation vehicles are used.

It may be that no additional time would be required, depending upon the location of attendance centers and the reduction of some shuttle service now required in some

local districts.

The organization of the present grade structure in each district seems largely dependent upon the number and location of present buildings. If some type of reorganization were to occur, better usage of existing buildings at the elementary level might prove advantageous in relation to transportation and general economic conditions.

At the present time however, it appears that most elementary programs and services could be strengthened with a larger central administrative unit despite the present or future locations of the elementary attendance centers. It might be advisable to retain the present elementary attendance centers until a future long range plan could be developed within the framework of a new administrative unit.

Decisions regarding future location of elementary attendance centers could best be made after full development of the needed and necessary elementary services that could logically be offered with a larger administrative unit.

Any change in administrative unit size or structure would probably not reduce the number of professional persons needed in the district. The quality and types of services undoubtedly would improve however, and the result should be increased educational opportunities at the elementary level without an increase in educational expenditure.

The most immediate need in the county in addition to these special services is the improvement of offerings at the secondary level in order to provide a more complete educational offering.

It is immaterial whether we use Aslin's minimum unit standard of 60 offered units or Conant's basic requirement of consistently graduating 100 seniors, or any other recommended standard of excellence that has been suggested to provide a basis for some minimal educational organization. One thing remains very clear when observing the various high schools in Harrison County. Not one of the present organizational patterns, if population patterns continue, will be able to offer a sound and required program necessary in the future at a level of economic feasibility that will be compatible with the needs and desires of the communities.

Since several schools in the county are reviewing building plans and future building plans, it is highly important that considerable study be done. It would appear to be reasonable to plan buildings with the thought of future reorganization in mind.

Although no one at the present time may completely predict economic and population predictions with accuracy, the trends of the past and present have been established and should be taken into consideration.

Undoubtedly it would be helpful to expect that future secondary schools will not be as numerous as today and their attendance centers will encompass larger areas.

The fact that attendance center boundaries may change is not justification for not providing for today's needs now.

The overall age of many buildings now in use throughout the county gives evidence that some new construction would be logical in planning for the future consolidation. It should be remembered that several attendance centers at the elementary level will always be required and planning should require that these centers be of high quality. Thus, in planning present needs for future use it would be appropriate for any current buildings being planned or anticipated to have adaptability as a built in requirement. Because building requirements may change, the planned buildings should easily be converted into elementary attendance units.

The financial expenditure for operating today's schools at minimum levels is quite apparent to many school patrons. Although many patrons do not seem interested in discussing or planning for future reorganization of school districts, the facts indicate no other logical method of maintaining a quality educational program in the face of declining enrollments and the continued high cost of providing educational programs.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATION

Education for all youth is a responsibility of our society.

Any school organizational pattern is merely a vehicle for providing a means of providing education in any given community. Although the type of school organization is a necessary part of any basic educational function, the organization itself is not the most important segment of the entire educational process.

The school organization must be used to implement the philosophy and desires of a community -- not restrict or inhibit educational opportunities. Any basic school organization must be based upon community needs and desires to provide at least minimal programs for youngsters.

It must be recognized that minimal programs change from time to time based upon community awareness, state requirements, and the general advancement of society. This is necessary and inevitable.

This study of organizational structure in Harrison County was accomplished by personal observation and discussion with school administrators and guidance from previous studies and publications concerning school organization in Iowa.

It is important to conduct a study of this problem due to the changes in educational programs and the financial expenditure necessary to carry out appropriate programs. The needs -- both educational and financial, will increase -- and will require changing organizational patterns to meet these needs. At this point in time, these changes, if successful, must come from local leadership.

For purposes of this study, the organizational structure was limited to Harrison County.

A great deal of the analysis of future organizational needs was based upon population statistics and predictions and the present and future educational needs reflected by special services and units of course offerings.

Historically, school reorganization has been emotional and often awkward to accomplish successfully due to the attitudes of some communities toward the center of their social life and the personal needs to feel associated with a particular attendance center.

The improvement of educational opportunities is apparent in Iowa since the early 1900's and much of the improvement is undoubtedly a result of well planned school organizational structures.

The present programs, although currently meeting standards, are in many ways only minimal programs that must

be improved in the future if all youngsters are to be provided educational opportunities.

The declining population patterns in Harrison County and the general increases necessary to operate educational organizations simply mean the communities of Harrison County must face up to the fact that future school reorganization is necessary and desirable.

Thus, the question that must be solved is what type of future organizational pattern will best fit the needs of the community.

The needs at the elementary level are generally reflected in services that could normally not be provided unless the total school population of the county could be in one administrative unit.

If the entire student population of the county were in a single administrative unit, the many special services such as psychological services, special education, speech and hearing clinicians, and special curricular consultants could be justified and would enhance the total program opportunities for all youngsters.

Special exploratory elementary programs could be initiated if desired and elementary in-service or innovative programs could become a reality.

The secondary organizational structure poses additional problems due to the population patterns of the county

and the need to provide minimal course offerings of approximately 60 units of credit with consistent graduating classes of 100 or more students.

The secondary school pattern is further complicated by the practical nature of things. Each community now operating a high school relates with that school and despite the educational limitations may not be anxious to eliminate certain activities such as athletic teams. Thus, to some extent, the lack of educational opportunities for youngsters may be less important to some patrons who express an emotional attachment for certain spectator activities they deem necessary.

Regardless of this emotional attachment, it is apparent that a minimum number of 60 units of secondary offerings and the graduation of 100 or more seniors each year can never be accomplished without some reorganization.

The problems concerning the location of population centers must enter into the picture however, the largest and most stable population center is Missouri Valley which is located at the south edge of the county. The remainder of the communities are more nearly equal in size and geographically spread throughout the remainder of the county.

If community patterns and desires are taken into consideration, it would appear that most school patrons

desire a good educational program while maintaining as much opportunity for secondary youngsters to participate in extra curricular activities as possible.

Thus, these two factors, population centers and community aspirations preclude the formation of only one secondary attendance center in the county.

The logical solution appears to be a compromise between elementary needs, secondary needs, and community desires and acceptance.

In order to accomplish all these with some semblance of order, it will be necessary to provide for a single administrative unit for the entire county. This single unit could be administered by one chief executive and one local board of education representing all the school patrons of the county. Undoubtedly this would require a seven member representative board of education.

As a central county size administrative unit the administration and board of education would have the authority to establish attendance centers. The secondary attendance centers should be located in the towns of Missouri Valley and Woodbine. Each with a separate building principal. Each could easily expand with the available secondary enrollments to provide the minimal 60 units of course offerings and yet provide adequate opportunities for

all youngsters to participate in a full range of curricular and extra curricular activities without losing their individual identities.

This arrangement has further flexibility in that special programs such as advance classes would be shared easily with one highly trained instructor that would conserve personnel and funds.

Additional special programs would not necessarily need to be duplicated in all instances at both centers. Some students might conceivably cross regular attendance lines to participate in these special programs.

The overall advantage for central operation of special administration would also provide better use of the supply and maintenance expenditure and provide for more equal educational and financial programs within the county.

The very fact that one administrative unit is established eliminates the need for any other administrative tax unit such as the present county superintendent's office.

This organization pattern offers the further flexibility of providing a workable pattern of establishing future attendance centers on the basis of needs centered around program requirements and population patterns.

The flexibility of one single unit cannot easily be discounted. The curricular patterns could easily be expanded

or changed as student needs change. If population patterns change, the attendance centers may change or fluctuate as the need arises.

The county size unit would provide for a central unit of continuity and identification while providing for individual pupil needs of the present and future within the framework of an existing financial structure.

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APPENDIX

STATE OF NEBRASKA

