School Consolidation as Viewed by Michigan Public School Superintendents

Dennis Owen McMahon

Western Michigan University

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SCHOOL CONSOLIDATION AS VIEWED BY MICHIGAN PUBLIC SCHOOL SUPERINTENDENTS

by
Dennis Owen McMahon

A Thesis
Submitted to the
Faculty of The Graduate College
in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the
Degree of Doctor of Education
Department of Educational Leadership

Western Michigan University
Kalamazoo, Michigan
April 1986

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SCHOOL CONSOLIDATION AS VIEWED BY MICHIGAN
PUBLIC SCHOOL SUPERINTENDENTS

Dennis Owen McMahon, Ed.D.
Western Michigan University, 1986

This study was conducted to determine the attitudes and opinions of Michigan public school superintendents toward school consolidation.

Data analysis provided an accurate description of the K-12 public school superintendent's attitudes regarding school consolidation and demographic information relative to selected characteristics of the respondents and their districts.

The population for this study was all 529 K-12 Michigan public school superintendents. The sample size determined was 106. Of the 106 superintendents selected 103 or (97%) participated in the study.

The research instrument, a questionnaire of 25 questions was administered by telephone by the researcher.

The analysis provided: (a) a description and discussion of the responses regarding each survey question, (b) a discussion of the responses to the research questions and examined the relationships between the superintendents' attitudes toward consolidation and the demographic variables, and (c) cross tabulations between selected sets of variables.

The following conclusions were supported:

1. Over sixty-three percent (63.1%) of the Michigan public
1. Over sixty-three percent (63.1%) of the Michigan public school superintendents believe more school consolidation should take place. However, only 44.7% of the superintendents would support consolidation in their own district.

2. The primary concerns superintendents have regarding consolidation are: legislative involvement in consolidation; the idea of the state mandating consolidation in districts where state standards are not being met; finances; whether financial incentives would be provided to encourage consolidation.

3. Superintendents believe the major advantages of consolidation would be: course offerings; staffing; facility usage; administrative efficiency; and co-curricular activities.

4. Superintendents would favor a consolidation plan that includes recommendations developed by the State Department of Education and incentives to encourage consolidation. The organization plan superintendents favored is school districts consolidating to form larger K-12 districts.

5. The superintendents did not perceive significant support levels for consolidation among various groups in their districts.

6. The characteristics of a school district that may influence a superintendent's decision on consolidation are: state equalized valuation; size of the district to be merged with; geographic distance of the proposed district; and the economic make up of the proposed district.

7. Superintendents involved in consortia see the consortium concept as a viable alternative to consolidation.
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DEDICATION

This book is dedicated

-- to my wife Nancy, who has made many sacrifices to enable me to achieve this goal and other career goals. Your love and support have made this dissertation and this degree possible.

-- to Tim and Julie, who are such fine children! Through your understanding, you have made it possible for me to take the time necessary to complete this dissertation.

-- to my parents, Owen and Janet, for the constant encouragement you have given me, from my initial efforts to obtain a bachelor's degree, and as I worked for this degree. Your support will always be remembered and appreciated.

I owe each of you an enormous debt for the sacrifices you have made that have allowed me to achieve my goal and complete this degree.

Thank you.
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Dennis Owen McMahon
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CHAPTER I

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Consolidation (combining of two or more school districts into a single, larger administrative unit) of school districts has been occurring in the United States since 1843 (Abel, 1923). Some school district consolidations have been forced by economic realities, some by state official actions.

Even though school consolidation could aid in solving a number of serious educational problems faced by small school districts, there have been only three school consolidations in Michigan over the past five years. It is difficult to understand why more school consolidations have not taken place in Michigan when one considers the state-wide surveys done over the past three years, with randomly selected citizens of Michigan, that have indicated that a majority of Michigan residents support school consolidation (Michigan Department of Public Instruction, Analysis of the Revenues and Expenditures for 1983, 1984, 1985).

Officials of the State Department of Education and State Superintendent Runkel have stated more school consolidation needs to take place in Michigan (Education USA, 1985). However, no effort has been made to determine how superintendents in the state of Michigan see the issue of school consolidation nor to discover under what circumstances, if any, they could or would support more consolidation. Information needs to be obtained from superintendents
to see if, in their opinion, more should be done to encourage school consolidation and, if so, when it should be accomplished.

Much theorizing and hypothesizing has been done by legislators and Department of Education officials as to school superintendents' views of consolidation (Education USA, 1985). It is surprising that no effort has been made to obtain the views of those leaders of school districts on this critical issue.

The results of this study will provide the opinions and views of school superintendents on the issue of school consolidation. Using these data, strategies can be developed to better promote school consolidation. These data will be useful in the development of a state-wide plan for school consolidation in our state.

This study is the first conducted in Michigan and the United States that attempts to determine school superintendents' attitudes and opinions on school consolidation. This study also yields demographic and personal data that will enable this researcher to examine the relationship between the superintendents' attitudes and opinions toward consolidation and selected demographic variables.

School districts with smaller student enrollments cannot offer the proper adequate educational program for their students according to Conant (1967), Osburn (1970), Schultz (1959), and Smith (1963). School districts with large enrollments cannot involve most in extra curricular activities, according to Barker and Gump (1964), Morgan and Alvin (1980), and Sher and Thompkins (1976). Therein lies the issue.

The size of a school district has an effect on many phases of the
schooling process: finances, staffing, building utilization and curriculum. Decisions regarding these issues are left to individual districts. School superintendents have to deal with the effects of the potential problems small and large school enrollments can cause in a school district.

Many school buildings currently in use were built to handle the post World War II "baby boom" and are now being operated at less than capacity. The operational expenses for these buildings have not decreased but have, in fact, increased with the cost of energy in recent years. Consolidation is considered to be a solution for districts highly impacted by large enrollment declines.

Consolidation or reorganization has been seen as one way to get schools to operate more efficiently and to better provide a well-diversified curriculum for their students.

Others oppose school consolidation citing a loss of community identity, and loss of individual attention for individual students if districts consolidate (American Association of School Administrators Commission, 1965). Others cite probable loss of extra-curricular opportunities (Barker and Gump, 1964).

Educational leaders, legislators, and citizens in Michigan have little disagreement over the desire to provide equal education opportunities for all children in our state (Education USA, 1985).

Although some school districts in the United States have developed consolidation plans, this process has not met with much success in Michigan. In fact, in the past three years, only two school districts, Battle Creek Public and Battle Creek Springfield,
have gained voter approval for a school consolidation plan. Even though it appears the public favors the concept of school consolidation and reorganization, the Michigan Department of Education has not developed a state-wide master plan for school consolidation, nor has the state offered any recommendation of other possible ways to reorganize school districts to make them more educationally effective and cost efficient.

It is reasonable to believe that unless the local superintendent (the legitimizer) is willing to openly support local school consolidation with another district, such a consolidation has very little, if any, chance of passing. It is, therefore, important to know and understand superintendents' attitudes and opinions on this consolidation question before more efforts are made to adopt consolidation models or push for more school consolidation state wide.

Sergiovanni and Starratt (1983) define power as "one's ability to influence the decision making process" (p. 105). The superintendent by virtue of his position of authority can influence opinions and decisions of the community and the school district staff.

Leadership to encourage and promote school consolidation occurred from the State Department of Education for many years. Many consolidations occurred prior to 1965, but very few have occurred since that time and school consolidation and reorganization have virtually come to a halt in our state (Michigan Department of Public Instruction, Report of the Superintendent of Public Instruction, 1881-1985). Why is this? One possible explanation is that school
superintendents, a group with great influence on this issue, are against consolidation. This study will address the question: What are the attitudes of public school superintendents in Michigan toward school consolidation?

Research Objectives

The purpose of this study is to attempt to ascertain the current attitudes and opinions of Michigan public school superintendents toward school consolidation in the state of Michigan and to determine:

1. If public school superintendents are in favor of or opposed to more school consolidation in the state of Michigan.

2. What specific characteristics superintendents believe are important for other school districts to have to make them attractive for possible school consolidation with their own school district.

3. What superintendents believe would be the advantages and disadvantages for the district if they were involved in consolidation and do the superintendents' responses vary if the superintendent was previously involved in consolidation.

4. What superintendents believe would be the effects of more school consolidation in the state on the costs of education, the quality of course offerings, the use of facilities, staffing, co-curricular activities, and administrative efficiency.

5. Whether a superintendent's age; number of years as a superintendent; size of district; or the school district's financial status affects the superintendent's support or lack of support for
consolidation.

6. What type of consolidation plan superintendents would support if the State Department of Education were to draw up a consolidation plan, and what groups the superintendents believe should be involved in drawing up consolidation plans for the state.

7. What superintendents believe would be the support level for consolidation by their teaching staff, support staff, board members, community members, students, administrators, and themselves.

8. If superintendents believe the state should mandate consolidation for school districts where state standards for curriculum/staffing/facilities are not being met.

9. What primary concerns superintendents have regarding consolidation.

10. If superintendents' attitudes and opinions toward school consolidation vary if: (1) course offerings in the district are limited due to the size of the district, (2) the course offerings in the district have been affected by school district finances; and (3) declining enrollment has affected course offerings.

Definition of Terms

K-12 School District—A public school administrative unit in Michigan which offers thirteen years of education from Kindergarten through twelfth grade.

Consolidation—the legal procedure enabling two or more school districts to join together to form a larger district.
Assumptions and Limitations of the Study

Assumptions

1. Superintendents will have informed opinions about school consolidation and its effects on school districts. They are well versed on issues.

2. Respondents to the questionnaire will express their true opinions and not provide the "politically acceptable response".

Limitations

1. Findings and descriptive assertions from this study, although generalizable to the state of Michigan, are not necessarily generalizable to other states because of the special features of Michigan's educational system. Other states have school districts established by different criteria. Louisiana, for example, establishes all school districts by county area.

2. School consolidation can be impacted by many factors in the educational system: the legislature, the Department of Education, boards of education, parents, students, and citizens. Because of the limitations of time, money, the requirements of delimiting a topic, and the leadership position of the school district superintendent, only the superintendents are being surveyed in this study.

Overview

Following this introduction to the study, related readings and research will be reviewed in Chapter II. In Chapter III, the author
will report the methodology utilized in the study with various summaries of the collected data appearing in Chapter IV. Implications of these data and recommendations for future action will be considered in Chapter V. A bibliography and various appropriate appendices will conclude the study.
CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

In Chapter I, the research problem and objectives for the study were presented. In this chapter a review of existing knowledge and theory will be reviewed. In particular, the following aspects of the problem are addressed:

1. Studies related to the history of school consolidation in the United States.
2. Studies related to the history of school consolidation in the State of Michigan.
3. Studies related to optimum size of schools and school districts by level.
4. Studies related to school district size and cost effectiveness.
5. Studies related to comparisons of course offerings related to school district size.
6. Studies related to comparisons of the quality of teaching staff related to school district size.
7. Studies related to differences in student achievement related to school district size.
8. Other studies related to reorganization and consolidation: how school reorganization occurs; problems in gaining support for school consolidation; reasons for reorganization involvement; transportation changes effect on reorganization; obstacles to
reorganization; advantages and disadvantages of reorganization; arguments against reorganization and results of reorganization.

Definition of Terms

These terms are used extensively in the literature on consolidation. An understanding of these terms facilitates understanding of the review of the literature.

Annexation—The legal procedure enabling one school district to join or be attached to another school district.

Consolidation—The legal procedure enabling two or more school districts to join together to form a larger district.

County Unit—A school district that is organized as an administrative unit coterminously with the political lines of the county.

K-12 School District—A public school administration unit in Michigan which offers thirteen years of education from kindergarten through the twelfth grade.

Local Control—The administration and operation of a school district under a governing body composed of local residents.

Non-High School District—A school district that operates less than a kindergarten or first grade through twelfth grade program.

Receiving District—A district which accepts and provides education services for pupils from one or more districts.

Reorganization—The formation of new school districts by the alteration of boundaries of established school districts, and the dissolution of established school districts through or by means of
any one or combination of methods.

Reorganization Legislation—Legislation establishing the procedures for reorganization of school districts.

School District—A legally recognized school system under the state school code.

Sending District—A school district which sends some or all of its pupils to other districts for educational services.

History of School Consolidation in the United States

To understand the school consolidation issue, it is necessary to review and study the history of school consolidation in the United States.

Prior to 1859, no actual discussions of consolidation were held. The educational concern at that time was that schools should be organized to provide a system of basic education. The population of our country was still predominantly rural and most areas of the United States were sparsely settled. Education to most people at that time meant simply providing basic instruction in the reading and math arts (Illinois Committee on School Organization, 1974).

The yearly formation of school districts was shaped and determined by social and cultural conditions prevalent at that time. During the early stages of school district development, most children attended school for three or four years and then generally attended only during the winter months when they were not needed for work on the farms. The curriculum was largely limited to the teaching of reading, writing, and arithmetic. Small school districts created in
the early 1900s were able to provide these limited programs. They were also well adapted to the existing status of travel, communication, and population distribution in those times.

Most of these earlier districts operated one-teacher schools located within walking distance of the children attending. The need for these small school districts diminished as roads were improved, school bus service became available, and the geographic size of communities expanded. The one-teacher school was a functional unit in 1900 (Domain and Olson, 1957).

Apparently the first reorganization of local school districts took place in 1843 when the city of Detroit consolidated a large number of separate districts into one city district under a single board of education (Abel, 1923).

The history of the growth of the consolidation of schools in our country may be divided into four well-defined periods.

From about 1840 to 1880 was a period when the principle of centralization of schools was established in urban communities.

Eighteen hundred eighty to 1894 was a period of very slow expansion of the consolidation process.

Eighteen hundred ninety-four to 1910 was a period of awakened interest in rural schools and generally rapid enactment and improvement of consolidation and transportation laws.

Nineteen twenty-three to 1945 was a period in which the principles of state assistance for school district reorganization and consolidation of attendance units became established with financial support from state sources for school bus transportation and capital
outlay.

The period from 1945 to the present has been characterized by the use of county-wide surveys to determine the best arrangement of the area within the county into school districts. The procedure used included: (a) submission of a proposed plan by the county survey group, (b) the approval of the plan by a state agency, and (c) ratification of the plan by popular vote by the citizens involved (Abel, 1923).

Between 1850 and 1900 most of the school consolidation took place in the northern states, but around 1900 the southern states began efforts to consolidate school districts. Northern school districts that had consolidated were visited by southern schools to evaluate their success and the methods they had used to consolidate their schools (Maxey, 1976).

According to Monahan (1965) the first school consolidation for the definite purpose of securing better educational opportunities for the children appears to have occurred in Montague, Massachusetts, in 1875. The second was probably established in Concord, Massachusetts, in 1879. A central building was constructed to replace several one-teacher schools.

The major benefits to be gained by consolidation during this period were best summarized by Smith (1938).

1. The consolidated school would provide better equipped teachers and more adequate supervision and administration for the schools.

2. More adequate school plants located on school grounds, more
centrally situated and more suitable for school purposes, would be erected.

3. The school terms would be lengthened.

4. The consolidated school would serve as a natural social center.

5. A widened acquaintance group would be forced by the children.

6. The plan would hasten provisions for the extension of work to high school level.

7. An inevitable tendency to increase school attendance, and the services of agriculture colleges and normal schools would result.

8. A better program of studies would be provided, based on the social needs of the children and the nature of their mental and physical growth.

9. The consolidated school would furnish the number of pupils necessary to supply wholesale competition and stimulus in school work, to carry through adequate grading, to develop groups and project work, and to organize many socially significant types of extra-curricular activities.

10. The education of the adults of the community would be fostered.

11. The health of the children would be safeguarded.

12. The improvement of roads would result because of the necessity of transporting the children to school.

There were three plans or types of consolidation considered in the early 1900 period township, multiple-district county, and county organization. The township plan involved abandonment of all district
schools. Students attended school in the center of the township. Transportation to school was provided by the township. School districting in Ohio was the prime example of this plan in the early years of consolidation.

The multiple district county plan was developed in Minnesota at the turn of the century. The county commissioners of any county, on petition of twenty-five percent of the residents, appointed a school commission of seven. One member of the commission was then appointed to be county superintendent of schools. This commission studied the geographical, educational, and social conditions of the county. Based on recommendations made by the school commission, proposals would be made to divide the county into consolidated school districts ranging from four to six miles square. Proposals would then be presented to county residents for a vote. Upon approval, consolidated schools would replace the scattered rural schools. The county plan which was quite prevalent in the south is based on the county being the unit of administration for the schools (Cubberly, 1914).

Other variations of school reorganization that were used in consolidation plans were the utilization of contractual negotiated agreements between school districts which remained autonomous to educate their children together.

Another mixed-type arrangement had each district provide its own elementary education and either contract with other districts for high school education or set up a high school cooperatively with other districts on a regional basis (Wayland, 1973).
Orchestration of these plans varied but the primary goal was to streamline rural education through the aggregation in some fashion of larger numbers of students. This, in turn, would facilitate the development of benefits to rural schools which were cited earlier.

The fundamental aim of the consolidation movement in America was to make life more satisfying to the residents of rural areas. The consolidation movement brought about a rejuvenation of hope for the rural resident (Lindstrom, 1960; Taylor, 1968).

Between the years 1918 and 1928 over one thousand school districts consolidated in our country. It was not until 1918 that the United States Office of Education started collecting data on consolidation (Covert, 1930).

The closing of the early rural schools was a serious and emotional question for the patrons of those schools that were considered for closing. The rural officials charged with conducting the final closings of country schools experienced harassment, vandalism, and threats as they performed their school closing and school consolidation duties. Local people were upset that "the pin that held their rural communities together was being taken away" (Judge, 1982, p. 134).

School district consolidation evolved as a structure to facilitate the educational process. Its primary purpose was to provide the programs and services considered to be important by the people of the state and local school district. One-room schools were fine at one time, but as needs changed, more technological knowledge was needed and more skill training. As a result, a reorganization of
schools became a necessity as the small one-room schools were unable to meet those needs (Schroeder and Turner, 1969).

The fear of local patrons was "the dissolution of their community" and in most cases that is what happened (Judge, 1982, p. 8). In addition to losing their community concept, schools, especially in the south were concerned that the good rural values taught their children would be lost when schools consolidated and became larger (Maxey, 1976).

In the early years of school consolidation in the southern states, legislation forcing schools to consolidate was used as a last resort. A genuine effort was made to show rural schools and especially farmers "problems caused from past education sins" (Maxey, 1976, p. 171). The sins were poor facilities and programs. Officials attempted to demonstrate to farmers how, through better education, students would be better prepared for modern farming and the changes in the economic world (Maxey, 1976).

The first major state legislation to require consolidation occurred in Illinois in 1945, but this legislation was declared unconstitutional two years later (Judge, 1982).

There were 127,530 administrative school units in the United States in 1931-32 according to the Rural School Survey Report (U.S. Department of Health Education and Welfare, 1959). Many of these districts were not very large. Twenty-five thousand of these districts or one-fifth had been reorganized into larger districts. Twenty-five years later, in 1953, nearly half the original number had gone. Five years later, in 1958, the total number of administrative
units had been reduced to 48,036. In the twenty-six years from 1932 to 1958, nearly two-thirds of all school districts had been consolidated or reorganized.

In 1930 there were 149,282 one-teacher schools in the United States. This number had declined by 23.9% to 113,600 by 1940.

By 1952 there were 50,742 one-teacher schools remaining, a decline of 66% since 1930. There were only 35,000 one-teacher schools left by 1956.

In 1948, the United States had 89,000 school districts, by 1958, 55,000 school districts, and by 1961, 31,000 school districts. By the fall of 1972, there were only 16,555 school districts in our country. In fact, during the past quarter century, no fewer than 73,000 school districts have been consolidated in the United States (Mullins, 1973).

The research division of the National Education Association pointed out that the records compiled by the United States Office of Education indicate that there have been significant changes in sizes of schools and school district units from 1930 to 1952 (National Education Association, 1949).

The greatest period of school district reorganization occurred during the five year period from 1948 to 1953 when the total number of school districts was reduced by 36.7%. Another period of time, when a significant number of small districts were eliminated occurred from 1953-58. There was a reduction of 28.4% of school districts during that five year period (United States Department of Health Education and Welfare, 1959).
McIntyre (1954) conducted a survey in 1951 that indicated there were 72,637 basic school administrative units in the United States. Two years later in another survey McIntyre found that there were 65,294 administrative units in America. This was a reduction of 7,343 administrative units since the 1951 survey (McIntyre, 1954).

It should be noted that the reduction of administrative units that was occurring did not necessarily result in administrative units that were adequate in size. Even though a 7,000 school administrative unit reduction occurred for the period from 1952 to 1954, it was not nearly as great as the 15,000 school administrative unit reduction that occurred from 1949 to 1951 (McIntyre, 1954).

A study done by Dawson and Isenberg (1955) found there was a total of 3,292 proposed reorganizations of all types during a three year period from 1955 to 1958. Ninety-six percent of these reorganizations were comprehensive and 2,962 were partial. Eighty-one percent of all the proposals were adopted by the voters or designated officials, 86.4% of all proposals for comprehensive reorganization were adopted and 80% were adopted that were concerned with partial reorganization (United States Department of Health Education and Welfare, 1959).

Bruce (1960) found that during the 1959 to 1960 period, there was very little reduction in the number of school districts in our country. Bruce indicated there was a need in all states, especially those with medium sized and large cities, for a complete reorganization and consolidation of school districts.
Trends in Consolidation and Reorganization in Individual States

Many educational researchers have conducted studies of individual states that have shown how the trend in various states compares with the national trend of enlarging the size and decreasing the number of school districts.

One of the most dramatic reductions of school districts took place in Nevada as described by Norman (1964). One hundred eighty-six school districts were abolished in 1956 and in their place the Nevada Assembly created 17 county districts. Norman found there were numerous problems connected with the reorganization, but he also found that education was generally improved by the change.

In a study done in Illinois by Hamlin and Sumption (1951), they found that, in 1945, Illinois had about 12,000 school districts. Over 8,000 of those districts provided one-room schools as the only facilities for education. They also found there were over six hundred high school districts that provided secondary educational opportunities for elementary graduates of that school administrative unit. Also over two hundred community unit districts had been created. Creation of the community unit districts caused over 5,000 existing districts to be eliminated. The enrollment in these new districts ranged from 200 to over 4,500 pupils.

According to the Maine School District Commission, school reorganization in Maine had resulted in the reduction of a large number of small high schools. It was reported that, of the ninety-two schools with fewer than one-hundred pupils in operation in 1957,
only forty-seven schools of this size existed by 1963 (Wood, 1967).

In Ohio, Campbell and Garafalo (1954) found that in 1953 there were 1,354 school districts. 934 of these districts offered both elementary and high school programs. Of the remaining 420 school districts, 404 districts had no high school and sixteen districts provided their children with education by sending them to neighboring districts. Due to state legislation, school district reorganization was considered by every county in the state.

The trend in school reorganization occurred most slowly in the states of California and Oklahoma. The California Commission on School District Organization (1962) indicated that there were 1,683 school districts in 1960 in that state.

705 of the districts had less than 200 units of average daily attendance and 527 had less than 100 units of average daily attendance. By July, 1963, there were 155 unified districts serving approximately 51% of the pupils in California for kindergarten through twelfth grade.

It was explained by Kerr (1950) that some elimination of districts resulted from state laws in the early part of Oklahoma history. Kerr felt that the principal results have been obtained through annexation by local elections in recent years. The largest number of school districts in Oklahoma at any one time was 5,880 in 1914. Forty-nine years later that number had been reduced to 1,160.

School district consolidation in Michigan has also followed an interesting pattern. The Rural Michigan Commission described Michigan's school district organization in 1942. The number of
school districts in Michigan had gradually increased from 55 in 1835 to a maximum number of 7,362 in 1912.

The number of school districts in Michigan decreased each year after that date (Michigan Department of Public Instruction, Rural Michigan, 1942).

In 1953, the Michigan School Facilities Survey described Michigan school districts in the following manner.

1. Ninety-two percent (92%) of the public school children in the state were being educated by less than 11% of the school districts.
2. Almost 40% of the existing school buildings were erected prior to 1900 and only 6.4% were built between 1945 and 1951.
3. Over one-fifth of the public school children of the state were attending school in overcrowded, make-shift or otherwise unsatisfactory buildings.
4. Twenty percent (20%) of the school districts in Michigan had closed their schools and were purchasing their children's education elsewhere.
5. Over half of Michigan's school districts, 53.6%, were operating one-room schools enrolling less than 6% of the states' public school children.
6. Two-thirds of the local school service areas of Michigan by February 1, 1953, were in the process of studying the need for adequate facilities (Michigan Department of Public Instruction, Report of the Superintendent of Public Instruction, 1953).
Recent Reorganization Plans

It was reported recently in Education U.S.A. (1985) that the effort to promote school consolidation is still continuing and in some ways with even more emphasis than in the past. It was stated that this past legislative season had seen some proposals--and some inactions--more drastic than those which produced the wholesale reorganization of school districts in the 1950s. "It's finances again," says Joseph Newlin, executive director of the Rural Education Association (p. 289). And the tactics are most subtle, says Key Hubel, leader of a new association of rural schools in Minnesota (Education U.S.A., 1985).

In Illinois, on May 10, 1985 the State Superintendent called for a major school reorganization to provide a minimum enrollment of 500 in high schools. This would require 55% of the state's high schools to consolidate.

In Nebraska two-thirds of its school districts could potentially be eliminated under the state's new consolidation legislation. By 1989 the 666 rural elementary districts must merge with districts having high schools. It should be noted, however, that school districts may choose to "affiliate," thus retaining their own school boards and levies, and that the residents must approve any school closings.

The legislature in Arkansas passed the Quality Education Act of 1983 which has resulted in the consolidation of twelve districts. The Arkansas legislature offered financial incentives to the states'
362 school districts, most of them rural, to consolidate.

As of June 1987, any Arkansas school district not meeting the new state standards, such as providing kindergartens, art programs, and counseling, must be annexed to a qualified district. Rich Sanders of the Arkansas Department of Education anticipates many more school consolidations because very small districts with limited resources won't be able to meet the standards (Education U.S.A., 1985, p. 289).

County Units

Many states in our country have school districts organized according to the lines of their county governmental unit. It has proven to be an effective method of organizing school districts.

The county unit school district has a history dating back to well before the beginning of the twentieth century. It began in the Southern states where the county has been, from the beginning of this country, a strong unit of local government. The development of the county unit school district has been gradual in most states that permit it. Most of the states that adopted it could not afford the extravagance of the inefficient common school district so highly prized by the people of the more affluent states.

The county unit school district has long been advocated as the most effective unit of school administration by some of the recognized, professional people in school administration. Other professional experts have condemned the county unit school district for neglecting community aspects of school organization. Regardless of their opinions, the opponents of county units have been fighting a
losing battle as the number of school districts organized as county units have continued to increase (American Association of School Administrators, 1965).

Some states that operate under county units are as follows:

1. The school districts of Alabama were organized into county and city administrative units under mandatory legislative procedures in 1903 (Wood, 1967).

2. Prior to 1947, Florida had the "county unit" system insofar as school boards, financial administration, and supervision of instruction were concerned. Each county still had, as late as 1946-47, a number of school districts; a total of 650 for the state. In 1947, all districts within each of the 67 counties were abolished and one district established, co-extensive with the boundaries of the county itself.

3. Georgia's state constitution of 1945 did away with all school districts in the state, with the exception of independent city systems, and made the county the unit of administration. There has continued a trend in the state toward merging of the independent systems with the county school system (Wood, 1967).

4. The state of Kentucky has a combination of some county school districts. There has, however, been a gradual trend in the state toward county units (Wood, 1967).

5. The organizational structure of Louisiana's public school system, as provided in constitutional and statutory provisions, require that the parish (county) school board serve as the administrative unit of the public schools operated within the legally
established boundaries of the parish (county). School boards serve as the administrative unit of the public schools operated within the legally established boundaries of the parish (Louisiana Department of Education, 1964).

6. All the school districts in the states of Mississippi, Nevada, North Carolina, Utah, Virginia, and West Virginia are organized within the boundaries of the county-units of government (Wood, 1967).

Summary of School Reorganization Process in the United States

There are great variations in the type of reorganization legislation adopted by the states within the United States. Most state reorganization legislation contains the following features:

1. It provides for county or other local committees to make studies of redistricting needs and to develop proposals for new districts, which are submitted to the voters for ratification.

2. It emphasizes systematic planning based on local conditions and needs.

3. It provides for a state administrative agency which is empowered to develop policies and procedures (Wood, 1967).

The goal in every state that is conducting reorganization activities appears to be to reduce the number of school districts in an effort to improve educational opportunities. Many states have set minimum standards for their school districts.

A substantial amount of reorganization legislation is directed at consolidating elementary and secondary school districts rather than
maintaining them as separate administrative units.

A great effort is being made to eliminate closed school districts, i.e. districts that have no school, educate their students elsewhere but maintain their board and their taxing power.

Although some states have limited reorganization legislation, they are conducting extensive state-wide studies in an effort to improve their school district organizational structure.

The county unit school district is advocated more than any other as the most effective unit of school administration. Several states have reorganized their school systems as county units.

Many states have had their school districts effectively reorganized through using permissive legislation, but others have found it necessary to use mandatory school district reorganization legislation.

Several states have had no problem with school district reorganization because the original organization of their school districts, or early reorganization legislation, provided satisfactory administrative units for their educational programs. Others have numerous problems concerning school district reorganization but have not solved them expediently.

History of School Consolidation in Michigan

It is important to understand the history of consolidation of schools in our country, but it is crucial to this study to gain an understanding of the consolidation process in the state of Michigan. It is necessary to know the background and history of school
consolidation in the state to understand the current status of school consolidation in the state.

When Michigan was admitted to statehood, there were already fifty-five school districts operating in the state. The legislature in 1837 had adopted a plan conceived by John D. Pierce, first State Superintendent of Instruction, which authorized each township board of school inspectors, later the township board, to divide the township into nine school districts of approximately four square miles. The boundaries for these primary school districts could be changed by the township inspectors when they felt change would be necessary. There are still many districts in operation today that were formed under the program and their boundaries remain essentially the same.

In 1837, it was recognized that primary districts were too small to support secondary education and the county was made the unit for the secondary school (Michigan Department of Public Instruction, Historical Sketches of Education in Michigan, 1881).

The new legislation resulted in the formation of new school districts whenever an additional school was needed. The state had over 3,000 districts by 1850 and by the year 1880 Michigan had over 6,000 school districts. The peak number of school districts was reached in 1912 when the total rose to 7,362. The total number of school districts did not drop below 7,000 until the early 1920's (Fitzwater, 1953).

Due to the rapid increase in population in many districts, especially in villages and cities, it became necessary under the
original law, which provided for the employment of one teacher in each district, to divide the district in order to employ a sufficient number of teachers. The people did not favor such divisions, so the legislature gave authority to the inspectors to form union school districts having an enlarged board. The process ultimately resulted in the graded and high school law which was enacted in 1859 (Michigan Department of Public Instruction, Historical Sketches of Education in Michigan, 1881).

Even though the first graded school district was established in the city of Detroit in 1842, the legislature waited until 1859 to pass the General Graded Act which, when passed, established graded school districts throughout the state. This Act stated that a district having more than one hundred children between the ages of five and twenty years was empowered to organize a graded school district and to elect a board of six trustees.

Communities soon found that districts organizing school districts under the provision of the Act gained greater powers than could be exercised under the more simple organization. At a later time, these graded school districts were also authorized to operate a high school (Michigan Department of Public Instruction, Historical Sketches of Education in Michigan, 1881).

Special Act School Districts

In almost all of the incorporated cities of the state and several of the larger villages, the schools were organized during later years under special enactments which made provision for the government and
management of schools in cities and villages as seemed best adapted to their immediate needs. These various enactments are so dissimilar in character that no general description of their provisions could be made in the study (Michigan Department of Public Instruction, *Historical Sketches of Education in Michigan*, 1881). It should be noted that all but five of these Special Act districts were repealed by July 1, 1966.

From the annual report of the boards of school inspectors (Michigan Department of Public Instruction, *Report of Superintendent of Public Instruction*, 1881), the statistics for Table 1 were compiled indicating the total number of school districts, that were reported each year from 1836 to 1880.

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Michigan Department of Public Instruction, Report of the Superintendent of Public Instruction, 1881

Union School Districts

The early school districts of Michigan were all ungraded. This was a necessity and no effort was made for several years, after the organization of the school systems of the state, to introduce the grading of schools. The legislature in 1843 passed legislation for the grading of schools providing for the formation of union school districts. This law provided that whenever the board of school inspectors of any township deemed that the interests of any of the school districts would be best promoted by so doing, they could form
a single district out of any two or more districts therein. Furthermore, they could classify the pupils in such districts into two or more classes according to their proficiency and advancement in learning. They could require that such pupils be taught in district schools or departments as classified by them. Such districts could have the same number of school houses, if necessary, and raise the amount of taxes which the original districts could have raised if not united. The first schools to be organized under the provisions of that law were the schools of Jonesville, Flint, Coldwater, Marshall, and Battle Creek (Michigan Department of Public Instruction, Historical Sketches of Education in Michigan, 1881).

**Graded School District Act**

Cities soon discovered that the provisions of the state law concerning school districts were limited as to the power granted school districts. As a result, several cities felt forced to seek and get approval from the legislature for special enactments. This fact and the experience gained over a period of living with the existing law over a sixteen year period, prepared the way for the law of 1859, which allowed any school district having not less than two hundred children between the ages of four and eighteen authority to organize as a graded and high school district. The legislature granted to districts that might so organize far greater powers than were available under the previous general law. The law also stated that two or more adjoining districts could be united to form a graded school district.
In 1861, this law was changed so that districts having at least one hundred children between the ages of five and twenty might be organized under the provisions of this act.

With the passing of this law, graded school districts in the state increased rapidly until there were nearly four hundred by 1880 (Michigan Department of Public Instruction, Historical Sketches of Education in Michigan, 1881).

Continued Progress

In his report of 1862, the State Superintendent of Public Instruction recommended substitution of the township school system in the place of the district system. Legislation was introduced, but not passed. The superintendent further recommended permissive reorganization laws for township and town schools (Michigan Department of Public Instruction, Report of Superintendent of Public Instruction, 1862).

The State Superintendent reported in 1865 that there were 132 graded school districts which contained 76,033 children (Michigan Department of Public Instruction, Report of Superintendent of Public Instruction, 1865).

Further Consolidation

The legislature on February 7, 1867, with an act that took immediate effect, established a new school district out of parts of three old ones, in the same township, and provided that a tax, levied in the latter districts for 1866 should be collected in the same
manner as though they had remained autonomous. The former districts, with the new one, were respectively entitled to certain relative portions of the whole tax. The township school inspectors opposed this Act but the Michigan Supreme Court held that the action was legal (Michigan Department of Public Instruction, Report of Superintendent of Public Instruction, 1868).

The number of school districts reported in 1868 was 4,843. Of these 3,703 were whole districts and 1,140 were fractional, that is situated partly in two or more townships. The State Superintendent suggested that many problems had resulted because of this organization of districts in two, three, and sometimes four townships and that it should be avoided as much as possible (Michigan Department of Public Instruction, Report of Superintendent of Public Instruction, 1861).

Recommendation for Consolidation

Due to a desire of people to be near school houses, there was a tendency in Michigan to divide the territory into smaller districts. This process continued through the 1870's. The results of this concept, according to the state superintendent, were feeble districts, able to build only small school houses and employ inferior teachers at a cost for each pupil of twice, or more that twice, the cost per pupil. The state superintendent further explained that there was a need for a limit to the division of territory into districts, beyond which it was not profitable to go, even if it might be convenient. This state superintendent also stated that the best
method of districting the state was to make the township constitute the school district. He also stated that further formation of small districts should not be encouraged (Michigan Department of Public Instruction, Report of Superintendent of Public Instruction, 1871).

Upper Peninsula Township Act

The Graded School Act made no provisions for secondary education in the more sparsely settled, rural areas of the state. When the secondary school situation became particularly serious in the upper peninsula, the legislature in 1891, approved the Township School District Act. This law permitted township school districts in the upper peninsula (Thaden, 1957).

The state superintendent in 1900 offered several reasons for the consolidation of school districts. He stated there were too many school districts, and therefore too many schoolhouses and too many teachers employed. He stated that, as the counties had grown older, the forests and swamps had disappeared, the roads had become better, and means of transportation easier. This was all occurring as school facilities had greatly increased and the number of children of school age in many districts had constantly decreased. In many school districts where there had been fifty school children thirty years before, there were scarcely half the number. Also there was little possibility that the schools would regain their enrollment unless the territory of the district was greatly enlarged (Michigan Department of Public Instruction, Report of Superintendent of Public Instruction, 1889).
Recommendations for Standard

In 1900, the State Superintendent for Public Instruction proceeded to make definite recommendations concerning school consolidation. Under normal circumstances, he stated that no township should contain more than six school districts; eight should be the maximum. A county school of only ten or a dozen pupils was considered too small to benefit the students.

It was stated in the superintendent's report that there were currently 1,115 school districts in those counties when 900 would have been sufficient.

It was suggested that school districts should be reorganized and many of them abandoned. Township boards of inspectors were told to enlarge districts instead of making new ones. The legislature was asked by the state superintendent to repeal that part of the school law limiting districts to nine section of land (Michigan Department of Public Instruction, Report of Superintendent of Public Instruction, 1900).

There were 671 districts in the entire state in 1889. At the time of the passage of the law of 1891 for the organization of township districts, there had been only eight township districts in the entire state of Michigan. In 1893, sixty-seven townships had been reported as organized into single school districts, and that number constantly grew until in September 1898 there were 115 township districts with ninety-two in the Upper Peninsula, and twenty-three in Lower Michigan. All but four of the 136 districts in
the Upper Peninsula were organized under the 1891 Act.

The state superintendent took a strong stand for school district consolidation in 1906:

One of the serious economic questions of the day is that which considers the alarming fact of the great congestion of our population in the large cities and the consequent depopulation of our rural districts. The causes of this are many, but among them is the fact that in increasing numbers our boys and girls are clearly recognizing, as they should, that their generation will, in a more emphatic sense than is true at present, be an educated generation, and if they are to maintain themselves they must have better training than is afforded by the ordinary district school. As a result of this some are going out from the country homes to the cities and towns to seek a high school education.

In the opinion of many, the remedy lies in the consolidation of districts and the establishment of central schools.

Three methods have been suggested by which the central school idea may be realized.

First, it is suggested that the smaller and weaker districts shall be consolidated and that the number in each township shall be reduced to four. A fifth district will be made at the center of the township and a high school building erected large enough to accommodate the children of all grades living in the district and all the high school pupils from the entire township. A second plan, known as the Ohio Plan, consists of the abandonment of all the district schools in a township and the massing of all the pupils into one central school...a third plan is that suggested by the law passed at the last legislature of Michigan known as the Humphrey Rural High School Bill. This law is only applicable to townships in which there is not already existing a village or graded school.

The central school high school would eventually become the social center of the consolidated district. In its assembly room could be given courses of lectures and there might be held teachers' and patrons' meetings, debates, concerns, etc. The Farmers' Club also might gather at this central point for natural consultation as to wages and means of making life better. The mental and social horizon of every man, woman, child would thus be enlarged, and life take on a deeper and more blessed meaning.

One thing more should be said. There is no disposition on the part of this department to influence the people to do something which their own best judgments will not, to the fullest extent, commend. The whole matter is very properly in the hands
of the people themselves and no man or set of men can carry out any reform without their approval. Laws bearing on the subject should contain the referendum. The purpose of this department will be accomplished when the facts have been placed before the people for their consideration.

Tax for Transportation and Tuition

In 1903 legislation was enacted that allowed school districts formed under the Township Unit Act to vote a tax for the transportation of pupils to and from school and that the district could use the funds derived from the mill tax for the purpose of transporting students.

The legislature also made provisions in this Act whereby a district could vote a tax sufficient to pay the tuition and daily transportation of qualified students to any high school which the school board might select. This made secondary school instruction possible but avoided the necessity of establishing a rural high school. As far as legal authority was concerned, consolidation of schools, rural high schools, transportation of pupils, and high school transportation were provided, and to a great extent the children to rural communities had achieved somewhat equal educational opportunity (Michigan Department of Public Instruction, Report of Superintendent of Public Instruction, 1900).

A total of 146 township units had been established by 1909, under the 1891 law which permitted formation of township school districts in the Upper Peninsula. In 1909, legislation was enacted which permitted formation of such districts anywhere in the state (Jackson, 1926).
School districts formed under this act were generally unsatisfactory, both educationally and sociologically. The township was an artificial land surveyor's unit and rarely had any relation to the natural community (Fitzwater, 1957a).

**Important Legislation**

The state legislature passed two very significant acts concerning school reorganization in 1911. One amended the Township's Unit Law by providing that women could vote on the questions of organizing under the law and sign petitions for it, and also provided that grade districts having a population of 900 or less could be included in a township unit district. Act 61 provided that township boards could change the boundaries of primary districts organized by special act of the legislature (Michigan Department of Public Instruction, *Report of Superintendent of Public Instruction*, 1911).

Michigan had, in 1914, over two hundred high schools with a total enrollment of fifty thousand. More than three-fourths of these were in small cities and villages. They served communities that were distinctively agricultural or that were surrounded by agricultural territory. Approximately one-third of the high school pupils in the state were non-residents of the high school district they attended and nearly all came from the rural districts. These facts, according to the state superintendent, were gratifying to educators because they indicated that parents recognized the value of an education above that prescribed by law and in advance of that given by the high schools. The superintendent's report recommended the 7-12 and K-6
plan of organization as well as specific courses for each grade

In 1917 the legislature enacted the Rural Agricultural School District Act, which permitted consolidation of three or more contiguous rural districts into a single administrative unit. This was an attempt to adopt the local rural school district structure to changing economic, education, social, and fiscal needs. The act provided specifically for the merger of three or more adjoining districts with a total assessed valuation of not less than $700,000 or a total land area of not less than eighteen sections (Thaden, 1957).

A summary (Jackson, 1926) of the reorganization activity and the state superintendents under which it occurred from 1842 to 1918 is given on the following pages:

- **Sawyer 1843** Legislation permitted Detroit to organize one school district.
- **Comstock 1843** Legislature extended the above provision to any township containing a city or village.
- **Comstock 1844** Favored consolidation of districts in cities and villages.
- **Comstock 1846** Legislature permitted the districts in any township to consolidate.
- **Mayhew 1847** Advocated the establishment of union schools in every county of the state.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Action</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dearman</td>
<td>1850</td>
<td>Stressed the preparatory function of the union school.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mayhew</td>
<td>1857</td>
<td>Defined the term union school.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gregory</td>
<td>1859</td>
<td>Legislature enacted the high school law.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gregory</td>
<td>1860</td>
<td>Recommended the township unit plan.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gregory</td>
<td>1861</td>
<td>Defined the term union school. Outlined a course of study for union schools. Enumerated the advantages of the township unit plan.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gregory</td>
<td>1864</td>
<td>Urged the township unit plan.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bosford</td>
<td>1866</td>
<td>Urged the township unit plan.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Briggs</td>
<td>1873</td>
<td>Urged the township unit plan.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gower</td>
<td>1880</td>
<td>Enumerated the values of the township unit plan.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gass</td>
<td>1883</td>
<td>Presented arguments for the township unit plan.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Estabrook</td>
<td>1888</td>
<td>Recommended that voters be given the opportunity to express themselves with respect to adoption of the township unit plan.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fitch</td>
<td>1891</td>
<td>Legislature permitted townships of the Upper Peninsula to organize on the township unit plan if so desired.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fall</td>
<td>1901</td>
<td>Aggressively advocated school consolidation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wright</td>
<td>1908</td>
<td>Township unit plan a means of solving the</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
rural school problem. Constitutional revision extended act of 1891 to the entire state.

Johnson 1918 Asked for reorganization of schools through consolidation as a means of solving the problem of the rural school (Jackson, 1926, pp. 118-126).

Establishment of Rural Agricultural Districts moved slowly at first. By 1920 only six had been formed, but in 1925 there were forty-eight, and in 1930, eighty-one. As of 1930 there were 6,159 districts of primary grades and 673 high school districts for a total of 6,832 school districts in the state (Fitzwater, 1957a).

In 1931 it became possible for any primary school district in any township, regardless of location, to be annexed to any township school district after each district had voted in favor of annexation. Also, the board of education of a rural agricultural school or township school was given authority to pay tuition and provide transportation for any or all pupils to a nearby graded township, city or rural agricultural school district. Such sending schools were entitled to receive the regular state aid for transportation of pupils as was provided for rural agricultural schools (Michigan Department of Public Instruction, Report of Superintendent of Public Instruction, 1931).

The rural agricultural school district occupied a unique position as a special type of school district in Michigan. By the 1940-41 school year the rural agricultural school districts had increased to

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Formation of Community School Districts

The superintendent's report for the 1937-39 biennium stated that the major changes in school districts had, for the most part, been made to establish community school districts. The state superintendent recommended studying carefully several factors for the organization of a sound comprehensive educational program which could be operated economically. Following are the factors he listed as having a direct relationship to the program of community school district reorganization:

1. Knowledge of the history of the community
2. Population, data, trends, and locations
3. Roads
4. Land use
5. Curriculum needs
6. School organization within the proposed district
7. Transportation needs
8. Budget, surveys, maps, miscellaneous data
9. Public relations and social interpretation

He further stated that the question of determining the boundaries of enlarged school districts, the type of such district to be maintained, and the location of these schools are a problem for the people within the local area to decide (Michigan Department of Public Instruction, Report of Superintendent of Public Instruction, 1937, 1939).
The state superintendent, in 1940, explained that reorganization programs were being more generally accepted because it was possible to offer more complete instructional programs at less unit cost. However, the savings made were usually absorbed by the demand for more complete community programs of education. It was pointed out that reorganization programs did not necessarily require the transportation of children to some central spot. In fact, it was often much more desirable to educate the elementary children relatively close to their homes and thus avoid the high costs of transportation.

The number of pupils attending high schools from districts not maintaining grades beyond the eighth for whom the state paid tuition grew from 33,620 in 1933-34 to 46,641 in 1939-40, notwithstanding the fact that the number of rural schools in the state had been reduced by the legal organization of community schools during that period. Out of every 100 on the school census in primary school districts, 9.3 went to high school in 1933, but that number had increased to 15.4 in 1939-40, an increase of sixty-five percent (Michigan Department of Public Instruction, Report of Superintendent of Public Instruction, 1948).

The state superintendent, in his 1940 report, requested a law which would allow debts to be paid by the property upon which it was originally levied following reorganization. Districts were hesitating to consolidate because of an existing debt for which they had no responsibility (Michigan Department of Public Instruction, Report of Superintendent of Public Instruction, 1940).
In 1942, Michigan had a total of 6,274 school districts. Of the 6,274 school districts, 108 were urban districts centered around incorporated places of 2,500 or more inhabitants. The other 6,166 were rural districts. Of these, 159 were township districts; 173 were agricultural school districts; 134 districts in suburban areas; and 102 districts were centered around villages with less than 2,500 inhabitants (Michigan Department of Public Instruction, Report of Superintendent of Public Instruction, 1940).

Michigan Public Education Study Commission

A comprehensive study of the educational system in Michigan was carried out by the Michigan Public Education Study Commission, which reported its recommendations and findings in 1942 (Michigan Department of Public Instruction, Rural Michigan, 1942).

These recommendations and findings were summarized by Thaden (1957) as follows: All currently organized districts of less than 10,000 population should be reorganized (a) around relatively self-sufficing and permanent natural centers of population, (b) with at least three million dollars of state equalized real and personal property valuation with possible exceptions where population density is low, and (c) capable of adequately serving a minimum enrollment of 360 students from the seventh through the twelfth grades.

School district maps showed possible reorganizations of districts that would meet the three major provisions just stated. About one-half of the 533 twelve-grade school districts existing in 1944 did not meet all three of the provisions.
Fitzwater (1957a) reporting the same commission's recommendations, points out that the 6,239 districts existing in 1942 would be reduced to 253. The commission recommended that a nine-member county committee should be created in each county to assist in the organization of school districts. Each committee would study the commission's preliminary reorganization proposals for the county and within two years submit a report of its recommendations to the state superintendent. The state superintendent was expected to implement the proposals.

Although the commission's recommendations were not incorporated in new legislation, they did stimulate reorganization activity. During the next four years, from 1944-45 to 1948-49 school year, the total number of districts in the state was reduced by 966. This was a rate of reduction nearly four times that of the previous four-year period. The number of rural agricultural districts increased from 189 to 242 and township districts from 171 to 186.

Primary Districts

In 1943 there were 1,117 primary districts that closed their schools completely. In most instances the pupils were transported to districts with twelve grades rather than to adjoining primary districts which did not offer a complete eight-grade program but closed one or more grades. Their pupils also were usually transported to districts with twelve grades (Michigan Department of Public Instruction, Report of Superintendent of Public Instruction, 1948).
An area studies program was passed by the legislature in 1949. It had the following provisions:

1. Area studies based on a county, a portion of a county, portions of two or more contiguous counties, or on two or more entire counties were to be authorized by the State Superintendent of Public Instruction upon receipt of a petition and plan for the proposed study.

2. A petition and plan for an area study could be initiated in three ways: (a) by the county board of education, (b) by the county superintendent of schools, or (c) by local citizens numbering at least five percent of the total vote cast within the proposed area in the last preceding general election.

3. All proposals for setting up an area study were to be subject to the approval of the state superintendent. He was also required to prescribe the procedures for the establishment and termination of area studies.

4. The proposed plan had to designate the membership of the area study committee. The members selected were to be proportionately representative of urban and rural areas as nearly as practicable.

5. The functions of an area study committee included (a) making of a comprehensive study of educational conditions and needs of the area, and recommending changes in school district organization which, in the judgment of the committee, would afford better educational opportunities, more efficient and economical administration of public
schools, and a more equitable sharing of public school support; (b) conferring with school authorities and residents of school districts of the area, holding public hearings, and providing information about educational conditions and needs to school officials and to the public generally; and (c) making a report of the state superintendent within two years. This report was to deal with educational conditions and needs of the area and was to include a map or maps showing boundaries of existing school districts, the location of school lands and buildings, school transportation routes, and the boundaries of recommended school districts.

6. Area study committees were empowered to accept contributions toward the cost of making area studies, and such contributions might be in money, services or materials (Fitzwater, 1957a).

An analysis of the reports of counties conducting area studies indicated much more extensive reorganization activity occurring than other counties. In nineteen counties having an area studies program the total number of districts was reduced by one-fourth. Two counties reduced their districts by more than half, and another had a reduction of nearly one-half (Thaden, 1957).

In the 1947-48 school year, there were 5,186 districts in the state. Of this number, more than 4,000 were primary districts. Slightly over 1,000 districts that year were sending their pupils to other districts (Michigan Superintendent of Public Instruction, Report of Superintendent of Public Instruction, 1947, 1948). Several of these 1,000 were closed districts and sent all their pupils to other school districts.
In 1950, the state superintendent reported there were still 1,000 closed school districts in the state, each retaining a board of education and having a budget, but hiring other school districts to do the work of education for which they were originally created. He recommended that the closed districts be annexed to neighboring operating districts (Michigan Department of Public Instruction, Report of Superintendent of Public Instruction, 1950).

Reorganization Progress

As of January 1, 1951, the superintendent's report indicated there were 4,860 school districts in Michigan. Consolidation of a group of contiguous districts into one district had resulted in the unification of 123 former districts into sixteen new districts during the year from July 1, 1948, to June 30, 1949, and of sixty-five former districts into nine new districts during the year from July 1, 1948 to July 1, 1950. During the corresponding periods, fifty-seven districts and sixty-two districts, respectively, were annexed to other districts. Thus, at that time, consolidation and annexation remained the two general procedures by which reorganization of school districts could be accomplished (Michigan Department of Public Instruction, Report of Superintendent of Public Instruction, 1951).

The School Facilities Survey published in 1953 indicated that as of March 1, 1951, there were 4,810 individual school districts existing in the state. Of this total, 858 (17.8%) were educating 91.7% of the public school children. The remaining pupils were being served by 2,986 separate school administrative units. In addition,
one-fifth of the school districts, 966, had closed their doors and were operating no school at all.

The 1952-54 biennial report of the Superintendent of Public Instruction indicated that 300 K-12 school districts were consolidated with other districts to create more efficient and effective school operating units during that two year period. This was the greatest progress ever made in school district consolidation in the history of the state. The report recommended legislation that would eliminate closed school districts as a major step in the improvement of the educational structure.

From the previous biennial report total of 4,249 school districts, the number had been reduced to 3,491 as of July 1, 1956. This indicated a decrease of more than one school district per day during the two-year period. Eighty-two percent of all children on the school census were residents of K-12 districts. However, only 542 of the state's 3,491 school districts were of the K-12 type. Again the state superintendent recommended legislation to encourage the development of school districts large enough and strong enough to provide sound educational programs through at least grade twelve (Michigan Department of Public Instruction, Report of Superintendent of Public Instruction, 1952-54).

Mandatory Legislation

The Michigan Legislature's first departure from permissive legislation came in 1955 when it passed a law to legislate closed school districts out of existence. The law provided that within two
years every district that did not operate a school would be attached to an operating district. This law was Michigan's first departure from permissive legislation and resulted in the elimination of over 200 school districts in the state of Michigan.

Both the township district and the rural agricultural school district were embodied in the Fourth Class School District Act of 1955. The legislature provided that each school district organized as a graded township or rural agricultural school become a school district of the fourth class (Thaden, 1957).

In 1959 there were 2,360 individual school districts in the state of Michigan. This was 193 fewer than the 2,553 districts existing on July 1, 1958. In terms of grades operated, 545 school districts were classified as twelve-grade districts. The remaining 1,815 administrative units provided no educational program at all (Michigan Department of Public Instruction, Report of Superintendent of Public Instruction, 1958-1959).

At the end of December, 1961, there were 552 high school districts, but only 537 of them offered a K-12 program. The 552 high school districts had over ninety-one percent of all pupils in membership and had over ninety-one percent of the state equalized valuation. On the other hand, the remaining 1,355 districts had less than nine percent of the state equalized valuation and less than nine percent of all pupils in membership. There were 1,907 school districts in the state (Michigan Department of Public Instruction, Report of Superintendent of Public Instruction, 1967).

On May 5, 1962, there were 1,824 school districts in the state of
Michigan. This number was 136 less than the total existing on March 1, 1961, the date of the last superintendent's report. Of the total of 1,824 school districts, 553 were classified as twelve-grade districts; the remaining 1,271 districts provided less than a complete twelve-grade program.

In the 1962 report, the State Superintendent recommended that attention be focused on the problem of the small high school. It was explained that 130 of the 136 school districts having less than 200 secondary students could be eliminated through reorganization without causing pupils to have long distances to travel. The superintendent further recommended that extensive regional reorganization studies be initiated and encouraged and that small districts be counseled to work cooperatively with their neighbors (Michigan Department of Public Instruction, Report of Superintendent of Public Instruction, 1962).

On June 30, 1963, there were 1,590 school districts of all types in the state of Michigan. This was 205 fewer than existed on the same date one year previous. Of the 1,590 school districts existing at that time, 554 offered programs from kindergarten through grade twelve.

Although the vast majority of mergers consisted of the annexation of primary districts to K-12 districts, other kinds of reorganization were taking place.

During the preceding year, fourteen primary districts were annexed to other non-K-12 districts forming larger elementary administration units. In twelve cases, large fourth class non-K-12
districts were annexed by K-12 districts, thus unifying total program administration. In three instances, existing K-12 districts were annexed to other K-12 districts in order to provide a more adequate administrative unit and offer a more comprehensive program.

Through the consolidation method, four mergers took place involving two K-12 districts in each case. Two new consolidations for elementary purposes were completed, and one new K-12 district was established by this method.

Public Act 289

In 1964, the Michigan legislature passed Article 289 Public Act of 1964 which assigned responsibility for developing plans for improved school district organization to the county. Under this legislation, reorganization studies were made mandatory. The intent of these studies was not only to incorporate all non-high school districts into existent K-12 programs, but also to combine effectively any existing small K-12 districts into units capable of offering a comprehensive educational program through the twelfth grade. At the time of the passage of Article 289, Michigan had 545 school districts classified as K-12 and 893 non K-12 districts (Michigan Department of Public Instruction, Report of Superintendent of Public Instruction, 1964).

Article 289 provided for a state committee to be appointed by the governor and composed of seven members one of whom represented the Upper Peninsula, another the Lower Peninsula, and the remaining six represented the rest of the state.
This committee was charged with the responsibility to develop policies and procedures for a state-wide reorganization program which would enable all areas to become part of a K-12 grade school system. This state committee was directed to submit a final report to the legislature on or before September 1, 1968.

A committee of eighteen registered electors was formed in each intermediate district in the state. These committees held public hearings to consider school reorganization in their intermediate area (Michigan Department of Public Instruction, Report of Administrative Services Division, 1961).

In 1945, Michigan had 5,823 school districts and by September 1, 1967, the number had been reduced to 743 local units (Michigan Department of Public Instruction, Report of Superintendent of Public Instruction, 1945, 1967).

As of June 30, 1962, there were 1,795 school districts in the state of Michigan. During the two-year period from June 30, 1962, to June 30, 1964, the number of school districts had been reduced to 1,437, a reduction of 358 school districts or a reduction of nearly 207 of the districts in the state at that time.

As a result of the passage of Act 289 of 1964 by the state legislature, known as the School District Reorganization Act, all of the intermediate districts arranged consolidation studies. The purpose of these studies was to prepare an intermediate district-wide plan by which all school areas could, by a vote of the people, become a part of a K-12 district. The Superintendent for Instruction, Lynn M. Bartlett, stated in his report that he felt this
The act provided for workable methods for providing K-12 districts of adequate size of all Michigan students.

As a result of these consolidation studies the number of school districts in Michigan was greatly reduced.

In 1945 Michigan had 5,823 school districts and by September 1, 1967, the number had been reduced to 743 local units (Michigan Department of Public Instruction, Report of Superintendent of Public Instruction, 1945, 1967).

Consolidation then proceeded in Michigan, occurring occasionally as the necessity demanded.

Table 2

Three Decade Comparison of Selected School District Data

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<tr>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Number of Districts</strong></td>
<td>4,841</td>
<td>1,989</td>
<td>624</td>
<td>579</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(The Fifties)</td>
<td>(2,052)</td>
<td>(1,365)</td>
<td>(45)</td>
<td>(Reorganized)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Reorganized)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Number of Teaching Positions</strong></td>
<td>38,688</td>
<td>63,271</td>
<td>90,672</td>
<td>90,312</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(The Sixties)</td>
<td>(24,503)</td>
<td>(27,401)</td>
<td>(360)</td>
<td>(Decrease)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Increase)</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Average Salary for Teachers</strong></td>
<td>$3,536</td>
<td>$5,898</td>
<td>$11,034</td>
<td>$16,445</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(The Seventies)</td>
<td>(22,362)</td>
<td>(25,136)</td>
<td>(55,111)</td>
<td>(Increase)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Increase)</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Student Membership</strong></td>
<td>1,068,071</td>
<td>1,767,404</td>
<td>2,178,745</td>
<td>2,023,944</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(The Fifties)</td>
<td>(607,533)</td>
<td>(502,341)</td>
<td>(154,801)</td>
<td>(Decrease)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Increase)</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: Michigan Department of Public Instruction, Analysis of Revenues and Expenditures (Bulletin 1011), 1976, p. 73.

By June 30, 1983, the number of school districts in Michigan has decreased to 573. Even with this lower number there are still 87
school districts in the state with less than 500 total students K-12, ninety-two (92) districts with less than a thousand (1,000) students, and eighty-seven (87) districts with 1500 or less students K-12.

In summary, school consolidation in Michigan paralleled the other states in it's history and development. Schools were begun to provide education for the children of early settlers. As the population grew, schools and school districts grew and evolved.

The current status of the school districts in the state reflect the results of the school districts' attempts to meet the demands placed on them and the state legislature and the State Department of Education's efforts to provide quality economical education.

Optimum Size of Schools, by Level, and School Districts

It is important to review and understand the research on optimum school and school district size.

Elementary School Size

In 1934, Dawson after reviewing all available research concluded that an elementary school should contain at least 242 students.

The National Education Association (1949) said the ideal elementary school should contain 475 students as this provides for economy of operation as well as provisions for offering a complete program for elementary students.

The National Association of Elementary Principals in 1954 created a policy statement that the recommended school size for elementary schools was 500 students (p. 73).
In a survey of superintendents done by *Nation's Schools* (1954), the majority of superintendents interviewed favored elementary schools that contained between 350-500 pupils.

721 elementary principals were also surveyed by the National Educational Association Research Division and the median response favored elementary schools of 421 pupils as the most desirable size (Robinson, 1961).

In a study of Georgia School Systems and schools done by George Peabody College (1965), the results indicated that enrollment in elementary schools should be 240 with one teacher per section. The optimum elementary school size would be 500 to 720 pupils with 3 sections per grade (George Peabody College, 1965).

Purdy (1967) in a study of Ohio elementary principals found that 300 students would be minimum size of elementary schools and 500 students the maximum.

In a policy statement in 1974 the American Federation of Teachers stated that the optimum size for an elementary school was 500 pupils (American Federation of Teachers, 1974).

Sollars (1963) in a survey of both principals and teachers found that they favored elementary schools with between 300 and 499 pupils.

**Middle and Junior High School Size**

Maltby (1972) after completing his research stated that 400 to 500 pupils was the ideal size for a middle school.

Englehardt and Boyd (1967), in a study they conducted regarding facilities, staff, and instructional programs of middle schools,
determined that 600 pupils was the minimum number a middle school should have to operate effectively.

The American Federation of Teachers (1974) in a policy statement said the optimum middle school contained between 750 and 800 pupils (American Federation of Teachers, 1974).

Dawson (1934) after reviewing educational research and summaries of professional opinion on the size of junior high schools decided that the minimum size of a junior high school should be 245 pupils.

The National Commission on School District Reorganization (1947), after reviewing state studies and commission deliberations, concluded that 300 is the minimum number of pupils that should be in a junior high. They further found that there should be 75 students in each age groups and at least 12 full-time teachers.

The National Association of Secondary School Principals Committee on Junior High Education after surveying junior high principals concluded that junior high schools should contain between 750 and 1,100 pupils (Vars, 1955).

Street, Powell, and Hamblem (1952) after a study in Kentucky concluded that the minimum number of students in a junior high school should be 300.

Morphet, Johns and Reller (1967) also concluded that the minimum number of students in a junior high school should contain is 300. They further recommended that the maximum size of a junior high school should be 900.
High School Size

The educational research and professional opinions as to the size student populations should be in high school are far more extensive than in the elementary, middle school and junior high areas.

As early as 1934, Dawson stated a high school should contain at least 175 pupils in order to make certain proper curriculum offerings are available for students.

McLure (1947) studied per pupil costs and curriculum offerings in Mississippi high schools and found that a minimum of 700 students may be necessary to provide all desired services to students.

The National Commission on School District Reorganization (1947) after reviewing various state studies decided the minimum size of a high school should be 300 pupils or 75 in each age group.

In a study done by surveying education experts and superintendents and principals familiar with schools, Oliver (1949) found that the recommended high school size was between 500 to 700 pupils.

Gray (1950) in studies done of 40 Iowa public secondary schools ranging in enrollment from less than 150 to more than 1000 pupils found that at the minimum a high school should contain at least 400 pupils.

Woodham (1951) in a study of Florida high schools completed in 1951 said high schools must have at least 300 students to have proper curriculum offerings and to be cost effective.

The Commission on Illinois Schools (1953) studied 60% of the high
schools and recommended at the conclusion of its study that high schools have a minimum of 300 students to be cost effective.

Jackson (1966) studied 4,773 senior high schools in Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, and Virginia ranging in size from 13 to 4,169 pupils. He concluded the proper high school size for 9-14 high school is between 890 and 1,250 students. This allows districts to have proper teacher certification, proper preparation of teachers and the necessary curriculum offerings.

Barker, Barker, Campbell, Willems, Frieser, LeCompte, and Mikesell (1962) concluded that the optimum high school should contain from 750 to 900 pupils. Their research showed that schools of this size were large enough to plan a full-time specialist in each subject field and operate at a low cost per pupil and provide an excellent extra-curricular program.

Another major criticism of small secondary schools according to Conant (1959) is the scope and depth of class offerings are limited.

Dickson states scholarly students have little choice in selecting their programs in small high schools and may be required to take courses in which they have little interest. Dickson says this is particularly true in the vocational area where a school is not able to spend money on special equipment such as Home Economics and Industrial Arts (Dickson quoted in O'Neal and Bechner, 1980).

School District Size and Cost Effectiveness

According to Sher and Thompkins (1976) who studied transportation
costs as they affected Oklahoma schools, "cost economies in instruction and attendant functions accrue from larger numbers of students but cost diseconomies from transportation rise as more students must be brought to school" (p. 36).

In a study by Cohn (1968) evidence was produced demonstrating instructional costs would multiply in the following manner - the actual pupil-teacher ratio in schools under 200 were 20:1; in schools over 200, it was 24:1.

A National Education Association Report of 1950 reported by Sher and Thompkins (1976) indicates that personnel costs, which comprise the bulk of any school operating budget, were considerably lower in one teacher schools.

Harrow and Dzrieban (1972) found their reorganization studies in Florida that smaller school districts had greater administration costs.

The American Association of School Administrators and Department of Rural Education Association (1962) in their study found excessive costs in high schools with fewer than 10 teachers. The cost per pupil in schools with fewer than 100 pupils was about twice the cost of those with more than 200 pupils. Some degree of inflated costs continued until enrollment of about 500 pupils were reached.

McLure (1948) found that the per capita cost of education was directly related to the size of schools when schools were compared on the basis of similar program, it was found that the smaller the high school, the higher the per capita costs. Also the per capita cost decreased rapidly to approximately 200 pupils and decreased less
rapidly up to nearly 700 pupils. The cost per pupil of a given program remained fairly stationary between school sizes of from 700 to 3,000 pupils and tended to increase when the size went above 3,000 pupils.

Butterworth and Dawson (1952) found that in high schools the cost per pupil decreased rapidly up to 200 pupils and continued to decrease but less rapidly up to 500 pupils. Without exception these writers said it cost more per pupil to provide a program in a small high school.

Smith (1963) studied the relation of high school size to 21 selected cost, pupil, teacher, administration, and instructional factors. He found that schools with fewer than from 200 pupils were paying a premium for an inferior program. When all factors were considered a size range of from between 800 to 1,200 appeared as one at which favorable factors were maximized and unfavorable factors minimized.

Purdy (1967) in a study done on administrative costs found that administrative costs were least in large districts, considerably higher in median districts and on an average had increased 3 to 10 fold among the smaller school districts.

Dean (1982) wrote "consolidating into a larger district could make many schools more efficient, because there would be reductions in administrative staff, better utilization of buildings and teachers, and increased savings due to bulk purchasing and combined transportation costs" (p. 8).

In 1965 a survey report of the Organization of School Systems in
Georgia by the Peabody College for Teachers studied school size and cost relationships. The consensus was that excessive costs were usually found in districts with fewer than one teacher per grade and that pupil cost decreased rapidly up to 100 pupils.

Sabulao and Hickrod (1977) found that expenditures per student decreased as size of the school increased up to a certain enrollment level at which the greater complexity of the school increases expenditures.

In summary, a number of studies have been done at the various levels to determine the optimum or ideal size of schools and districts. The key issue in each study appeared to be the optimum size based on costs per pupil, i.e., what size, based on per pupil cost, was the most economical. Expenditures per pupil decrease as size increases up to a certain level at which expenditures increase.

Comparisons of Course Offerings Related to School District Size

It has been demonstrated through educational research that the size of a school district can have an effect on the educational opportunities offered to students.

Turner and Thrasher (1970) did a research study that indicates there is a definite relationship between school size and the following educational factors: (a) number of subjects and courses offered, (b) special services and enriched programs and (c) counseling and library programs. As a result of this research they believed larger schools gave children a broader, wider, higher quality educational opportunity at a lower cost per pupil.
The Governor's office in Massachusetts formed a commission on School District Organization and Collaboration that studied and conferred during the 1973-1974 school year. Using data from commonwealth reports, they concluded that curriculum breadth was less in smaller schools (cited in O'Neal and Bechner, 1980).

Bar, Church, Stapley, and McHueney (1959) in their investigation of Texas high schools found that schools with 200 pupils had 11 course offerings; high schools with 201 to 500 students had 18 course offerings; and high schools with over 500 people had 27 course offerings.

Woodham's (1951) study of secondary schools in Florida showed that course offerings increased at a rapid rate in schools as they grew to 450 pupils and continued increasing in courses offered between 450 to 700 students, but little increase in course offerings took place after 750.

Swanson (1966) conducted a study of school districts in New York and found that size of the school district population was directly related to curriculum offerings.

One legislative commission in Ohio found in a study they conducted that high schools with fewer than 400 students were characterized by fewer available class offerings and limited vocational offerings (U. S. Office of Education, Bureau of Elementary and Secondary Education, 1959).

The recently released national study, *A Nation At Risk* (National Commission on Excellence in Education, 1983) makes strong recommendations for higher level academic classes to be offered in
our nation's schools. This recommendation is a problem for smaller districts unable to offer such programs due to enrollment and financial constraints.

Burke (1945) found that school size was a very important factor determining the number of special services provided by high schools. When expenditures per pupil were equivalent, high school with fewer than 100 pupils provided relatively few services. As size increased up to 500 pupils the number of services increased. High schools with more than 500 pupils usually provided the most enriched programs.

A report from the National Institute of Education (1976) concluded that larger schools have sufficient numbers of students to justify specialized classes, employ better teachers who are more qualified, and generally offer a range of classes and co-curricular activities (cited in Sher and Thompkins, 1976). Fonstad (1973) attempted to find evidence to support these claims. He examined 137 studies on this subject and found that 90% of those studies that considered such factors as per pupil costs and curricular offerings favored large school districts. These studies also indicated that teachers with extensive experience and training in specialized areas were more likely to be found in large school districts than in small districts.

Comparisons of the Quality of the Teaching Staff to School District Size

Using pupil population as one variable, the literature says the following about school population size. Harrow and Dzrieban (1972)
found from their reorganization studies in Florida that smaller school districts had greater difficulty attracting and retaining qualified personnel.

It has been demonstrated by educational authors and researchers that the size of a school has an effect on the quality of teaching staff available to teach in that school.

Patterson (1965) in a study of high schools in nine states found that the larger the high school the greater the probability that students will be taught by experienced teachers who are teaching in their major field with at least a masters degree.

The Committee on Small Schools of the American Association of School Administrators reported after a study that teachers in small schools are often asked to teach in areas in which they have little or no competence or experience (cited in O'Neal and Bechner, 1980).

One legislative commission in Ohio said that high schools with fewer than 400 students were characterized by:

1. Teachers with fewer hours of preparation.
2. More teachers teaching outside their major field.
3. Teachers being paid lower salaries.

The same study found that high schools with 1,000 students:

1. Paid higher salaries.
2. Assigned teachers to teach in major teaching fields.
3. Had lowest teacher turnover.
4. Had high availability of academic courses.
5. Had more completeness of programs.
6. Were the only schools to have meaningful vocational programs.
It was clear to legislators that, in spite of money spent, small school districts still resulted in lower quality programs (U. S. Office of Education, Bureau of Elementary and Secondary Education, 1959).

To summarize, the studies indicate that the size of the school district has an effect on the quality of the teaching staff available. In general, the findings are the larger the high school, the more qualified the staff.

Comparisons of Student Achievement Related to School District Size

A study by Feldt (1960) discovered a definite relationship between achievement as measured by the Iowa Test of Educational Development and school size. Pupil achievement in a high school of 100 or fewer pupils was lower than that of larger high schools.

Project Talent conducted one of the most extensive studies ever made of secondary education in which they did a follow-up study of graduates at intervals of 1, 5, 10, and 20 years after graduation. One result was that high school students from small rural schools were found to be decidedly inferior in advanced mathematics and in the sciences.

The conclusion was drawn in this project that the reasons these students were inferior were: (a) the larger high schools had teachers who were more competent in the sciences and mathematics, (b) the larger high schools had more adequate course offerings and facilities (Flanagan, 1962).
Feldt (1960) studying the relationship between pupil achievement and high school size demonstrated that attendance in a small elementary school was a handicap that persisted throughout the pupils high school courses and that the detrimental affect of the earlier school would never be completely overcome.

The best test performances were obtained from pupils who attended both a larger elementary school and larger high school (George Peabody College, 1965).

Research available regarding the outcome of consolidation is generally positive. Kreltlow (1971) made a comparative study of academic concerns among districts with reorganized school districts. Boys and girls in reorganized districts had greater learning opportunities than did those in non-reorganized districts. The students from reorganized districts outperformed students from non-reorganized districts in the area of academic achievement.

Hieronymous (1937) reported an extensive investigation of the relationship between achievement in the basic skills and size of schools. The Iowa Basic Skills Testing Program was administered to all 6th, 7th, and 11th graders in more than 1,000 school systems. The study investigated the relationships between size and qualitative and quantitative factors in high schools in Iowa. The five factors used were student achievement, college enrollment, counseling, and library services, extra-curricular activities, program and cost of the secondary school programs. According to Gray (1950) there appeared to be an increase in quality as school size increased. Schools with fewer than 150 pupils were definitely poorer in quality.
Schools of from 400 to 999 pupils placed highest on all five factors.

Tests were concerned exclusively with the basic skills acquired in the elementary schools in reading, vocabulary, methods of study, mechanics of current writing and arithmetic. The results demonstrated that a steady increase of achievement occurred with the increase of the size of the school system.

This was true for all areas tested with the most pronounced differences occurring in reading. This relationship held not only for median scores but also when pupils at various levels of achievement were compared from one enrollment class to another. Test results favored schools with enrollments of 91 or more per grade (Hieronymous, 1937).

Sher and Thompkins (1976) studied the relationship between school size and academic achievement. They found a positive relationship between large schools and student achievement. Conant (1967) concluded that unless a graduating class contained at least 100 students it was very difficult to offer classes in advanced subjects to students.

Turner and Thrasher's (1970) research showed there was a definite relationship between school size and quality as measured by the percentage of graduates who enter colleges. They stated that a conclusion of their research was larger schools gave children a broader, richer, higher-quality educational opportunity.

In summary, it appears students who attend larger high schools do better academically and receive a broader, richer educational opportunity.
Finally, in reviewing the related literature, several related questions should be addressed:

**First: How in the Past has School District Reorganization Occurred?**

In some cases according to Havinghurst (1968) state and federal policies have been enforced that compelled schools to reorganize so that the schools would be racially and economically balanced.

Campbell notes that various provisions for modifying school district reorganization have taken effect. As these provisions are enacted, severe political battles normally occur in enacting and/or modifying the statutes governing school district reorganization. These battles or potential battles cause state legislators to be reluctant to act arbitrarily in the alteration of existing districts or in the establishment of new districts. The existence of hundreds of small school districts throughout the United States is evidence of this (Educational Cooperative Services, 1977).

Campbell in his studies of reorganization found that school district reorganization is usually classified as permissive, semi-permissive, or mandatory. These classifications are as follows:

1. **Permissive legislation** - permits districts to merge, consolidate or to reorganize. Local school board action on petitions signed by a specified number of the electors in a local area may begin procedures for the joining of two or more districts on the way to final approval or rejection by the voters. Usually no overall planning for an adequate district is required.

2. **Under semi-permissive legislation** local districts are free to
reorganize with written limits incorporated in the law. Reorganization acceptable to the state must be proposed within a specified number of years.

3. Mandatory legislation is imposition of the will of the state. Local communities must select committees and follow specific time schedules for the submission of reorganization proposals to the state agencies for review, recommendation, appraisal and for a vote of the people. Financial incentives for reorganization are incorporated and financial penalties are levied upon small inefficient units that fail to reorganize (Educational Cooperative Services, 1977).

Some educational researchers have strong opinions on who should be making the decisions on consolidation.

Hinrich (1983) believes state boards should be empowered to order consolidation to take place. Hinrich says state boards and state legislators must consider concerns at the state level such as equity and efficiency and that these concerns should outweigh local control.

The Rural Education Subcommittee (1971) believes state legislators should establish written criteria for the organization and administration of school systems rather than merely pass permissive legislation.

The United States Office of Education helps state departments of education develop sample plans to demonstrate to rural communities how to maintain their identity while reorganizing their school systems. The United States Office of Education can also aid state departments of education in encouraging small districts toward consolidation.
Jackson (1966) said it is not reasonable to expect local groups to take the initiative to promote consolidation. He believes state leadership is the key. State boards of education should be authorized to define uniform criteria to determine adequacy for school districts and to administer school district reorganization on a statewide basis.

Jackson further states that because of the opposition to consolidation states should specify standards of adequacy for school districts and withhold financial assistance from those districts that do not meet the standards.

In a very real sense, according to Jackson, some states are contributing to the continuation of substandard conditions as they do not require improvement efforts to be made.

The Rural Education Subcommittee (1971) recommended that the state departments of education should receive federal funds to help provide technical assistance to aid districts going through the consolidation process.

Schroeder and Turner (1969) believe a representative school district reorganization committee should be organized by the state on a county intermediate or area basis to study consolidation.

The Northwest Regional Laboratory Study (1967) made the following recommendations concerning consolidation:

1. State Board of Education and State Departments of Education should define criteria for deciding if a small rural high school is "remote and necessary." The criteria should include such considerations as geographic location, topography, climactic conditions and proximity to other high schools in the geographic area.
2. Surveys should be made by State Departments of Public Instruction to determine which small rural high schools meet the criteria for being considered "remote and necessary." Those schools which satisfy the criteria should be designated "remote and necessary" for purposes of State Department of Public Instruction evaluation and financial support.

3. Small rural high schools which do not meet the criteria to be designated "remote and necessary" should be encouraged through all possible means to consolidate as soon as it is feasible.

4. State Departments of Public Instruction should provide consultants and financial support for planning by two or more high school districts aimed at consolidation (Ford, Hite, and Koch, 1967, p. 36).

Others e.g., (Sher, 1977) do not favor compulsory redistricting. They support the idea that additional aid will be provided by the state to geographically isolated districts and that other small districts may continue to operate schools if the residents of such districts are willing to provide additional local support. Morphet, Kingsley, and Howsam (1951) recognized this fact.

The law should provide that...if inadequate districts choose to continue as separate districts...the taxpayers in those districts would bear the extra expense involved in providing adequate school services and facilities for the children of the district.

Under no conditions should the taxpayers of the entire state be expected to care for the extra expense of operating inefficiently organized districts nor should the children in those districts be penalized because of the decisions of the electorate to continue such districts (p. 320).

Cushman (1963) pointed out that education is a function of the states. If there are valid reasons for consolidation of school districts the state should communicate to local communities that they must consolidate.

To summarize, school reorganization has occurred in a variety of ways: enforcement of policies that compelled schools to reorganize
for racial and economic balance; legislation (permissive, semi-
permissive or mandatory); state leadership; and economic necessity
among others.

Also there appears to be general agreement that since education
is a function of the states, direction and support should be provided
by the states.

Second: Why isn't More Consolidation Taking Place if it Would
Benefit Educational Offerings and Quality?

According to the American Association of School Administrators,
inadequate school districts are allowed to continue because people
usually don't realize the school district is inferior. Communities
need to have some measurable way to determine the adequacy of their
school district (Blanke, 1950).

According to Hawley and Zimmer (1966) in most states the
procedure for reorganization of school districts has been cumbersome
and difficult to set in motion. With few exceptions, a favorable
vote has been required in each of the districts to be merged. This
procedure alone has been sufficient to keep reorganization at a
snail's pace. According to Conant (1959) more leadership needed to
come from state governments to support school consolidation. Conant
also believed that state governments needed to look for possibilities
where reorganization is best for communities and then provide
financial incentives for districts that do merge. Hawley and Zimmer
(1966) pointed out that if more towns and cities would consider
consolidation it would be easier to convince school districts to
Consolidate.

Conant (1967) says that school districts with small student numbers would consolidate if convinced change would improve quality and opportunity for students.

Superintendents who are failing to act in the face of declining enrollment for fear of offending the staff and/or community are derelict in their duty and heading for disaster (Bishop, 1979).

Among groups resisting consolidation might be school employees who fear reorganization because it may require fewer administrators and teachers or require more highly qualified staff than the separate consolidating districts (Educational Research Service, 1971).

Educational Research Service (1971) observed that the strongest deterrent to reorganization may be community resistance.

Isenberg (1954) found the most commonly expressed reason for opposing consolidation was that of taking control away from the local people.

In a study by Rogers and Shoemaker (1971), mayors of communities were surveyed as to their position on fluoridation of water. Where mayors favored fluoridation of water, the issue passed 61% of the time, but where mayors were opposed to fluoridation or took a neutral stand, the issue passed in only six cases. "It may be possible for the initiators to proceed successfully without consulting the legitimizers in a social system, but this decreases the chances of securing adoption of the collective innovation. Usually the legitimizers can kill an idea if they are not consulted" (Rogers and Shoemaker, 1971, p. 38).
In summary, some of the reasons more consolidation is not taking place are: people do not realize the school district is inferior—communities have no means to judge school districts; some leaders fail to act for fear of offending staff or community; school employees fear consolidation will cost jobs; and fear of loss of local control.

Third: What are the Reasons for Reorganization Involvement?

Population growth and increased demand for education are considered as the causes of school district reorganization.

Changes in social and economic life created demands for longer school terms, greater number of years spent in school, enrichment and expansion of curriculum which lead toward larger units of school administration (Dawson and Reeves, 1948).

When the tremendous concern of the people of Ohio to provide better education for their children was recognized, school district reorganization was given great impetus (Campbell and Garafalo, 1954).

The American Association of School Administrators School District Reorganization Committee (1958) indicated there had been an insistent demand to add depth, breadth, and quality to the educational program, and that school district reorganization has been maintained in every state for the fundamental purpose of dealing wisely and well with this and other administrative problems.

The concept of "Education for All" coupled with the tremendous birth rates forced school district reorganization in many areas. The committee referred to the fact that students stayed in school longer
than ever before in history. At the turn of the century only 10 to 11 percent of children of high school age were enrolled in public schools while about 80% of that age group were enrolled in 1956.

School district reorganization is not a cure-all; it does not carry with it an unconditional guarantee of good schools, but sound reorganization can be counted on, according to McIntyre (1954) to remove many obstacles that rob a large percentage of America's children of their right to receive a model education.

Financial support is a most important consideration in school district reorganization. The National Commission of School Reorganization (1947), Campbell (1953), and others did in-depth studies of the impact of school finance programs on school district reorganization.

Data was gathered from Illinois, Iowa, Kansas, Minnesota, Missouri and Washington by Campbell (1953). He evaluated six finance factors related to school district reorganization: (a) general aid, (b) equalization aid, (c) capital-outlay costs, (d) payment for transportation, (e) payment of tuition for non-resident pupils and (f) disposition of the assets and liabilities of former districts.

There was agreement on five findings of a general nature regarding the relationship between a state and local finance program and the reorganization of school districts.

Chisholm (1957) describes these relationships:

1. The program of state and local support for the schools has a close relation to school district reorganization. It is apparent therefore, that the school finance program should be geared to the need for achieving the proper school district organizational structure.
2. State support systems, by certain features they contain, often help the poorly organized, inefficient school districts to the extent than an undesirable structure of local school district organization frequently is perpetuated.

3. The effects of a finance factor on redistricting depend almost entirely on the specific nature of the legislation pertaining to this factor and its relation to the total program of state and local support for the schools.

4. In many cases, the amount of money appropriated for a given feature of the school finance program is at least as important as the particular feature itself.

5. Although the findings are not entirely conclusive there seems to be a relation between the percent which state funds are of the total school cost and the progress made in school district reorganization, the progress tending to be greatest in the states in which the state aid is the highest (p. 6).

According to Strolle (1955) no other factor has a greater influence on the reorganization of school districts than the financing of the local program. He recommended that the pattern of school districts in Michigan should be changed to make it possible to better use the financial resources of the state.

The effect of reorganization on taxes was considered in numerous studies. An Illinois study indicated that one aspect of the trend in the formation of community unit districts is that more and more attention has been given to pupil population and to an adequate tax base. Hamlin and Sumption (1951) agreed, as they indicated that reorganization meant raising taxes in some areas and lowering them in others, but the net result was a more nearly fair distribution of the school tax burden and the elimination of a number of "protected" districts. The Rural Michigan Commission concluded that an entire community had a greater right to the tax revenues from real estate, oil wells, power dams, and other public utilities than any small
section of a community (Michigan Department of Public Instruction, *Rural Michigan*, 1942). Kerr (1950) took somewhat of a different view, as he concluded that one of the strongest reasons for opposition to school reorganization was fear of additional taxes for new buildings and transportation facilities.

There is a great deal of agreement among writers that school district reorganization provides more efficient expenditures. The Maine and Minnesota District Commissions both stated that human resources are much better prepared in larger schools and the cost per pupil is less (Maine School District Commission, 1953). The Wisconsin Committee Report stated that the legislature attempted to solve tax problems caused by low valuation and small pupil enrollments through reorganization legislation (Milwaukee County School Committee, 1950). Benton (1965) explained that one of the major reasons for school reorganization legislation in Missouri was to provide better financing for schools, and Chisholm (1957) agreed as he listed one of the objectives of reorganization as making possible an efficient expenditure of the taxpayers' money.

Campbell and Garafalo (1954), and others agree that school administrative units that fail at any one of several points, including school finance, are indications that organization is not satisfactory and improvement is needed.

Bickley (1958) reached the following conclusions concerning school support from his study:

When the highest adjusted assessed valuation per resident pupil is twice the lowest adjusted assessed valuation within a county
school district, reorganization is deterred. Total adjusted assessed valuation variations between the highest and lowest total adjusted assessed valuation within the counties do not significantly deter school district reorganization.

In summary, the reasons for involvement in reorganization are: population growth and increased demand for education; the concept of "Education For All"; seeking fairer distribution of the school tax burden; desire for more efficient expenditures; and students remaining in school longer; financial support - the factor that has most influenced school district reorganization is the amount of state aid - progress is greatest where state aid is highest.

Fourth: What Effect Have Transportation Changes had on Reorganization?

Improved transportation facilities have provided impetus for school reorganization according to several authors. Also, reorganization has improved transportation. Hamlin and Sumption (1951) found that reorganization brought transportation to many children who had walked to school before. The National Commission on School District Reorganization of 1947 recommended that adequacy standards for school districts be modified according to transportation problems. The trend toward consolidation of school districts instead of creation of new school districts to extend educational opportunity has come about partly because of the development of all-weather roads and dependable transportation, according to Norman (1964).

The review of the literature shows that the factor limiting school size to have received the most attention was the matter of
transportation time. Dawson and Reeves (1948) stipulated a maximum travel time of one hour each way by bus for high school students. Greider and Romine (1955) and others used the same maximum. Carpenter (1960) set a maximum of from fifty to sixty minutes each way for junior and senior high school pupils.

Dawson and Reeves (1948) and others described improved road conditions, which made possible the development of extensive transportation systems, as being a major factor in increasing the size of attendance units through reorganization. Chisholm (1957), on the other hand, explained that, as means of transportation improved, certain areas developed the practice of contracting to send their children to neighboring districts in which high schools were maintained. This practice spread until in some states not more than ten percent of the school districts served all pupils of elementary and high school age within the districts. Reorganization was suggested as the method of solving this problem.

To summarize the effect of transportation changes on reorganization: transportation changes provided impetus for reorganization. Improved roads and transportation systems caused or made possible larger reorganized districts. Improved transportation made it possible to transport students to other districts offering high schools, reorganization was used to solve this problem and return students to their home districts.

Fifth: What are the Obstacles to Reorganization?

Various writers have reviewed the factors found to delay the
reorganization of school districts. Those listed by the National Education Association Research Commission are as follows:

1. Politically ambitious local-school trustees have been unwilling to be displaced.

2. False local pride, community acceptance of the status quo, and resistance to change have combined to block it.

3. Misconceptions of what a reorganized district would mean have produced unwarranted fears.

4. Cumbersome procedures for reorganization have obstructed efforts.

5. State school finance structures in some states have favored small districts (National Education Association, 1949, pp. 15-17).

Fear of increased costs resulting in increased school taxes was described by Kerr (1950) and others as a hindrance to school reorganization. The Michigan State Committee indicated this was a justified fear as some school district actually had a loss in state aid as a result of reorganization (Michigan State University, College of Education, 1956).

Bickley (1958) discovered when there has been long tenure of county superintendents, school district reorganization was deterred; it was further deterred when there had been long tenure of city and town superintendents. He also found some evidence that the existence of non-public schools within the county deters reorganization, and when a majority of the school corporations within a county have a high school, school district reorganization is deterred.

The American tradition of local control has been an obstacle to
school district reorganization. Although public education is legally a function of the several states, Williams (1965) found that the custom of delegating to local districts the responsibility for establishing and maintaining public school facilities has been followed for such a long period of time that it has accumulated the force of law. Hobbs (1965) showed that the strength of this tradition is indicated by the fact that a large measure of the state legislation relative to school district reorganization, particularly in the midwest, is permissive rather than mandatory.

The following statement is listed in the California State Department of Education Manual for the Study of School District Organization by County Committees (1962):

The sole aim (in school district reorganization) is and should be to create school districts which, under given social and geographic conditions make it possible to provide children the best educational program. Rather than attempting to take the schools away from the people, therefore, district reorganization aims to strengthen and preserve the local school district system with the control of education chiefly in the hands of the parents (P. 14).

The American Association of School Administrators' Commission on School Administration in Newly Organized Districts (1965) found people had the following fears concerning reorganization:

1. Local control will be destroyed.
2. The school plant will be taken out of the neighborhood and the children transported far away from home.
3. Parental influence of the children will be weakened.
4. School taxes will increase.
5. The close relationships between the home and the school,
which have long been maintained in the smaller unit, will be destroyed.

6. The community itself will be seriously weakened or destroyed.

Jacobson (1957), in a study of three small school districts in Idaho, found essentially the same social processes and forces operating. Fears of big schools, of a lack of belonging, of loss of the school and loss of "local control" were important hindrances to reorganization.

Alford (1960) expressed the idea that a school is both an organ of national society, educating its citizens, and also an important social institution in its local community. The question of reorganization of school districts exposes the conflict between these functions of a school: to unify adjacent districts in the interest of national educational efficiency may threaten local autonomy and self-esteem. He found that the conflict of interests is related to self-esteem. He found that the conflict of interests is related to the whole issue of centralization in a modern democratic society.

Loss of local control through reorganization was disputed in a study at the University of California. Morphet and Ross (1961) showed that smaller districts:

1. Do not have more local control; actually they have less.
2. Small districts can neither get nor hold outstanding instructors.
3. Costs for smaller schools and districts are found to be higher than in the larger districts. Even per pupil costs are greater (p. 16).
Goldhammer (1959) agreed with Morphet and Ross, as he pictured the school board as the central functioning agent for uniting the efforts of the schools and the desires of the community with the influences of county, state, and federal agencies. Hence, his conclusion followed that the fewer boards in a particular area, the greater unification of educational opportunities for all children in the area.

The Rural School Survey Committee discovered that the tradition of local control created a block to reorganization (Gaumnitz, 1959b). Since by tradition government was achieved through the town meeting, it was natural that local school boards should govern local school districts. The school system which served the American people so well during the pioneer days is not given up lightly even though the economy has changed from agriculture to industry, from hand production to automation, and from rural living to urban living.

Lack of leadership has also been an obstacle to reorganization. Several studies of leadership in school district reorganization have been completed in the midwestern states. Farley (1953) agreed that a highly complex series of leadership activities are involved in a statewide program of school district reorganization, and that one of the major reasons for the persistence of large numbers of inadequate and ineffective school districts seems to have been the lack of effective leadership.

Roe (1950) suggested that the lack of leadership was another hindrance to reorganization. It was found that recommending changes in institutions or customs that are as surrounded by nostalgic...
memories as the idea of the "little red school house" is very often unpopular with many people. Therefore, few people want to take the lead in recommending changes in school district organization. Roe indicated a further hindrance to reorganization was the lack of a unified pattern for the accomplishment of reorganization which tended to produce competition between villages and left the establishment of community school boundaries largely in the hands of local interest and pressure groups.

To summarize, the obstacles to reorganization appear to be:

(a) The local board of education does not want to be displaced.
(b) False community pride.
(c) Resistance to change.
(d) Misconceptions regarding reorganized districts.
(e) Cumbersome procedures for reorganization.
(f) Finance has favored small-schools.
(g) Perceived loss of local control.
(h) Children would be transported greater distances, out of the neighborhood or community.
(i) Lack of leadership.
(j) Lack of leadership combined with the lack of a good pattern or plan for reorganization.
(k) Concerns or fears: increased costs, school will not be in the neighborhood, parental influence will be weakened, taxes will go up, close school/home relationships will be destroyed, and the community will be weakened.
Sixth: What are the Advantages and Disadvantages of Reorganization?

Many states have studied closely the advantages of school reorganization and the potential it has for providing equal desired educational standards for the students of their state.

The Connecticut Study Committee suggested the following were advantages of reorganization.

1. Advantageous deployment of personnel.
2. Better preparation of all students for the decisions and responsibilities of citizenship in an increasingly complex world and to prepare the most able students for college.
3. Provision of enough testing, guidance and evaluation services.
4. Sufficient instruction for the mentally, the physically, the socially, and the emotionally handicapped, the special instruction without which they cannot hope to gain full human stature.

The Illinois Committee listed certain general advantages of school district reorganization.

1. Improved financing and purchasing.
2. Improved organization within the district.
3. Improved administration.
4. Improved curriculum.
5. Improved supervision and instruction.
6. Improved special services for school children.

7. Improved physical plants and instructional facilities
   (Illinois Committee on School Organization, 1974, pp. 6-13).

According to Mullins (1975), the following reasons are most frequently listed by proponents of school district reorganization:

1. More economical and efficient operations would be provided due to reductions in administrative staff, better utilization of facilities and teachers, savings as a result of bulk purchasing and lower combined transportation costs.
2. Confusion and lack of articulation created by separate elementary and high school districts would be eliminated.
3. Comprehensive curriculum and educational programs could only be offered in schools large enough to support them (over 100 in the graduating class).
4. Inequalities and inequities of educational opportunity for rich and poor school districts situated side by side could be eliminated (p. 52).

The California Commission on School District Reorganization recognizes the following factors in determining a satisfactory school district:

1. Complementary socio-economic make-up including community of interest.
2. Financial ability of an area, together with state funds, to provide education at a reasonable cost per student.
3. Equalization of the tax burden for support of schools; and
4. Adequate present and potential size of the pupil population to be served (California Commission on School District Organization, 1962, p. 9).

The Minnesota Committee listed some advantages that could be gained by the reorganization of Minnesota school districts:

1. More equal educational opportunity for all Minnesota youth.
2. Better opportunities for a high school education.
3. More equitable distribution of school costs.
5. Improved library, health and other facilities.
6. More efficient administration and supervision.
8. Greater permanency in larger units.
9. Opportunities for vocational education (Minnesota Department
McHenry (1965) who studied Utah schools and Williams (1965) who studied Oregon schools agreed on the goals of reorganization. They described reorganization as leading to efficiency and economy in educational programs and services which would, at the same time, be compatible with the needs and demands of modern technological society.

The Superintendent of Public Instruction in the state of Washington stated that school district reorganization in his state was encouraged in order to give the patrons of school districts a greater voice in the management of their schools, and to improve the educational program and its related services for the children of these districts (Williams, 1965).

The California State Board of Education spoke of school district reorganization as leading to improved schools:

It shall be the policy of the state board of education to encourage and give primary consideration to the formation of adequate unified school districts inasmuch as the adequate unified school district provides the greatest opportunity for continuous improvement of the educational program and for effective and efficient use of school funds (California Commission on School District Reorganization, 1962, p. 9).

In 1942 the Michigan Public Education Study Commission was appointed by Governor Murray D. Van Wagoner to make an exhaustive study of the educational inequalities of Michigan Public Education. One of the commission's major recommendations was that the state should encourage improved education through reorganization and that there should be a gradual reduction of the 6,239 school districts to 253 reasonably self-sufficient community school districts which would
represent the combined social, economic, and educational interests of both rural and urban groups.

One of the most extensive studies of school district reorganization was conducted by Roland Strolle (1955) in Michigan. He also recommended reorganization of school districts as a means of making them adequate. He used the following criteria for adequacy:

1. An adequate school district should provide an educational program at least through grade twelve.
2. An adequate school district should have at least 900 enrolled in grades kindergarten through twelve.
3. An adequate school district should have a minimum of six million dollars of state equalized valuation or a per pupil valuation of seven thousand dollars.
4. An adequate school district maintaining all twelve grades should possess the quality of school cohesiveness (p. 47).

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

1. Cost economies in instruction and attendant functions occur from larger numbers of students but cost diseconomies from transportation outweigh the economies as more students must be transported to school (Sher and Thompkins, 1976).
2. Larger school districts are not necessarily better, as a district grows larger, a monolithic bureaucracy is created (Educational Cooperative Services, 1977).
3. Seiber and Wilder (1973) note that 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. In an article by Christopher Jencks, as noted by Elhers
(1973), he said equalizing opportunity cannot take us very far toward eliminating inequality.

5. Reorganization of a school district could result in the domination of the district by the most powerful portion of it (loss of local control) (Williams, 1965; Jacobson, 1957).

6. Change just to change unjust. If the districts are operating smoothly now, reorganization isn't necessary (Educational Cooperative Services, 1977).

Gaining approval of communities to make consolidation possible is not always easy to accomplish.

Purdy (1967) compiled the following list of reasons as to why citizens may not support consolidation.

1. Lack of understanding as to what supports an educational program that is both comprehensive and excellent.

2. Confusion, misunderstanding, and mistrust because of lack of support by school administration.

3. Fear of losing local control.

4. Fear of increased costs of taxation.

5. Security in the traditional experience of the past, resistance to change.

6. Fear of increased transportation time.

7. Conflict between merging districts, ethnicity, tax system, economic system.

8. Fear of losing local identity.


10. Political controversy over reorganization.
In summary, the advantages of reorganization appear to be:
better deployment of personnel; improved administration, curriculum,
supervision of instruction, physical plant and facilities, library,
guidance, health facilities; better trained teachers, better preparation
of students; better instruction for handicapped students;
financial advantages including bulk purchasing, lower transportation
costs, equalization of the school tax burden, more efficient and
economical use of resources; and better opportunities for vocational
education.

The disadvantages of reorganization appear to be: reorganization
can create a monolithic bureaucracy; possibility of domination of the
district by powerful subgroups; increased transportation time; fear
of anything big; fear of losing local identity; conflict between the
merging districts, ethnicity, tax system and economics.

Seventh: What are the Arguments Against Encouraging or Forcing More
Consolidation?

Good schools and bad schools, however defined, come in all sizes.
Educational improvement and economic efficiency are the real challenges and schools of every size could benefit from efforts in this
direction.

According to Sher (1977), after more than 30 years of experience
with school and district consolidation, it is clear that consolidation has not lived up to the claims made by its supporters. By and
large the benefits have been exaggerated and the liabilities simply
ignored.
While some school districts can benefit economically and educationally by consolidating, such districts are a distinct minority and are becoming increasingly rare. In most cases it is far more sensible to design creative ways of bringing resources to children rather than forcing children to go long distances to those resources.

Any decision about consolidation involves tradeoffs. To some individuals, getting what big schools and districts can offer e.g. more instructional equipment and more teaching specialists is worth the costs i.e. loss of a community institution, more transportation and reduced participation in school and extra-curricular activities. To other individuals the benefits are not worth what must be given up to get them (Sher, 1977).

Studies done by Holland, Baritelle, and White (1976); Sadler and Ching (1975); and Honey (1978), all indicated that although larger districts could provide some savings, transportation costs, social costs to small communities, and other factors outweigh the benefits of reorganization or consolidation.

The acceptance of consolidation and reorganization as a solution to the problems of small schools is not unanimous.

Even supporters of larger school district organizations including Johns and Alexander (1971), Johns and Morphet (1975), and Burrup (1977) concluded that further consolidation or reorganization is not a practical solution to small school problems in all parts of the country. Even Conant (1957), a critic of the small high school conceded this point.

Undoubtedly there are certain parts of the United States where
geographic considerations make small high schools necessary. Population is so sparsely distributed that enough people just cannot be transported to a central point. A balance must be struck between the benefits derived from education in a high school of sufficient size and the deleterious effects of a long bus ride to and from schools each day (pp. 83-84).

In a study by the Minnesota Department of Education (1960), they found consolidation was impossible in some sparsely populated areas of the state.

Educational studies have been done to compare students of small school districts with students of larger districts to see if any effect occurred to students attending smaller schools.

Bidwell and Kasrada (1975) used data from 104 school districts in Colorado. They concluded that overall size had a very slight effect on student achievement.

Weaver (1975) in his "Case Against Preston County Comprehensive Facilities Plan for Consolidating the Schools", controlled for I.Q. and found no consistent positive correlation between size and achievement.

Coleman (1966) found school size to be "a variable not significantly correlated with achievement."

Summers and Wolfe (1975) indicate that the higher achievement results correlated with smaller school districts at both the elementary and secondary school levels.

Alkin (1968) concluded that neither district size nor financial support levels had any significant relationship to student achievement.

Turner and Thrasher (1970) found no significant differences on
Iowa Achievement test scores that could be attributed to small school size and found no difference in grade point averages between graduates of smaller and larger schools in the freshman year of college.

Sewell and Haller (1964) collected data from 16,000 high school seniors in Wisconsin concerning what factors affected their educational aspirations. They observed that school size had the weakest correlation to college plans of all the variables considered.

Barker and Gump (1964) concluded "that the actual proportion of students who can participate in the essential activities which support the academic program, the quality of that involvement and the satisfaction with that involvement clearly favor the smaller community over the larger consolidated school" (p. 281).

Thus, the arguments against reorganization appear to be the contentions that: the benefits are exaggerated and the liabilities ignored, resources should be brought to the child rather than taking the child to the resources; the benefits are not worth the costs; the actual proportion of students who can participate in activities is greater in smaller schools and the quality of that involvement and satisfaction of involvement favors small schools.

Eighth: What are the Results of Reorganization?

Many studies have been made of the results of reorganization and most writers seem to be unanimous in determining that the results of reorganization have been positive. A bulletin issued by the United States Office of Education in 1953 discussing the educational changes which had occurred in certain reorganized school districts, pointed
out that the number of one-teacher schools had been reduced and that important changes had been made in both the elementary and secondary curriculums. But the most significant change was in the higher college level of preparation of the staff from the staff in the old district had at the time of reorganization (Fitzwater, 1953).

Keisel (1953) made the following statement concerning results of reorganization in California, "Every study which has been made thus far in this country has pointed to the desirability of unified districts instead of encouraging separately organized elementary and secondary school districts" (p. 10).

The Maine School District Committee described advantages that were realized in reorganized districts in Maine.

1. Units of sufficient size to equalize educational opportunities have been formed in all areas not geographically isolated.

2. School programs have been improved at both elementary and secondary levels.

3. A greater uniformity of school taxes has been achieved.

4. Public funds expended for the support of schools are buying a better quality of education than was achieved prior to district organization (Maine School District Commission, 1953, pp. 65-66).

Taxes during five years had increased only eight percent as against eleven percent in non-reorganized districts. In addition, greatly improved programs and additional transportation aid had been provided in reorganized districts.

Bough (1963) studied educational opportunities in Indiana before and after school district reorganization. The following seven
conclusions were reached:

1. School district reorganization resulted in schools that were equal to or superior to the original schools in all respects.

2. Reorganization provided the greatest gains in education by means of a broader scope of class and extra-class offerings.

3. It (reorganization) resulted in an improved administrative structure.

4. It resulted in more qualified instructional staffs with more time to improve the quality of classroom instruction.

5. It resulted in an increase in number and quality of special services provided for students.

6. It provided for increased efforts to provide for individual differences of students and maximum development of each student.

7. Students in schools with limited class and extra-class offerings took advantage of increased educational opportunities offered in reorganized schools.

First (1960) studied the consolidation of three school districts in Michigan. Before consolidation Elkton and Pigeon both were operating high schools accredited by The North Central Association and the University of Michigan. Bay Port had its own small high school too. Across the rest of the area elementary youngsters converged upon the twenty-one, one or two-room schools. At that time, of the sixty-three country schools operating in Huron County, twenty-two had no hand washing facilities and three were completely without their own water supply. Fifty-one had privies instead of indoor toilets, and fifty-one were constructed of combustible...
materials and lacked modern fire control features. After ten years of study and direction, the voters passed the consolidation issue by a small margin. The merger was said to combine a solid tax base, an enlarged high school enrollment, and a school-minded adult populace interested in better education within the reach of available finances.

Schultz (1959) discovered there may be no inherent value in either bigness or smallness, the larger the school district, at least up to 1,200 and probably up to 2,000 or more pupils, the better the school opportunities and the greater the economy of operation. In his study of reorganized school districts in Iowa, the author found that the indoor gymnasium, well-equipped auditoriums, ample rest room facilities, and sufficient storage space were among the rewards of reorganization and consolidation. Well-stocked libraries with plenty of light and space became a reality, but the outstanding feature was that the attractive, more usable surroundings made it easier for teachers to give their best to the students and for students to give their best to their studies.

The purpose of Kent's study (1957) was to determine the extent and adequacy of selected educational characteristics in nine reorganized high schools in Indiana which completed reorganization by August, 1953. The following conclusions were drawn from the study:

1. In all areas under consideration, the nine reorganized high schools were superior to the twenty-three original high schools.

2. The greatest gains associated with consolidation occurred in providing more adequate physical facilities.
3. The instructional staffs of the nine reorganized high schools were not superior in training and experience, but they were working under conditions more favorable to satisfactory achievement.

4. Based upon the ratings of the Evaluative Criteria in the areas of program studies, activity program, and school plant, the nine reorganized high schools appeared to be average or above in providing educational opportunities.

One of the most comprehensive research studies of the effects of school district reorganization was conducted by Kreitlow in Wisconsin. Kreitlow (1971) began a study in 1949 with the objective of determining what actually happened after reorganization took place. He took children who, in 1949, were in the first grade of five newly reorganized school districts and in five matched control communities, and determined the effects of reorganization in terms of educational opportunities, achievement, cost, and social impact when these children were in the first, sixth, ninth, and twelfth grades. His examination of the schools and the children in 1960, when they were in the twelfth grade, revealed the following facts: (a) greater educational opportunities were found in the reorganized schools than in the non-reorganized schools, (b) the students in the reorganized schools showed greater achievement than students in the control schools, (c) the cost in the reorganized schools was found to be twelve dollars per student higher than in the control schools, and (d) the impact of reorganization on the community was found to be negligible.

Buck (1954) listed at least three questions that should be
answered concerning any reorganization proposal:

1. When youth are lifted out of the primary contacts of home and neighborhood, what, if any, are the effects on discipline and delinquency?

2. Is the leadership base among youth actually broadened (as claimed) by the reorganization, or does the highly competitive situation actually squeeze out many capable youth?

3. Since the school is often the center of the secular life of the community, a strong force which draws parents into relations with each other, to what extent does reorganization alter the patterns of adult association?

Fitzwater (1953) reported the results of a study covering 552 districts in eight states. He reported that the new teaching staffs had higher levels of college preparation than those employed in the old districts before reorganization. He also found staffs were improved by adding nurses, psychologists, guidance counselors, physicians, speech correctionists and dental hygienists. He described marked improvements in music, art, and vocational education programs.

Hamilton and Lowe (1962) studied the academic achievement of students in reorganized and non-reorganized districts and found the preponderance of evidence indicated that greater academic achievement is likely to take place in larger schools. They learned that larger facilities often mean greater possibilities for specialization in remedial work, foreign languages, vocal and instrumental music, industrial arts, citizenship, health education, and other areas.
Services in such specialized areas were found to be characteristic of larger school districts and are regarded by many educators as being of vital importance in producing well-rounded children and in equalizing educational opportunities.

The Research Department of the Illinois Education Association obtained and analyzed data from 118 districts which recently were organized as one unit from kindergarten through the twelfth grade. An analysis of the remainder of the total of 244 districts reorganized under the community unit law was also made when information was available from state records. Selected teachers and county superintendents who were associated with the reorganized districts were also questioned. The findings revealed that improvements in the educational program had been made but that a number of reorganized districts were inadequate (Illinois Education Association, 1952).

Another major study investigated the achievements of reorganized schools in Missouri (Green, 1953). This study followed the general plan of comparing, first the educational services before and after reorganization and, second, certain administrative aspects of reorganized and non-reorganized schools. The latter comparisons were made by means of a check list developed from information which was gathered at the time of the first comparisons.

A study of the progress in school district reorganization was made by the Nebraska Department of Education (1964). The investigation was limited principally to two counties in the south-central Nebraska, but it dealt with various phases of reorganization. Its findings, in general, parallel those reported for the studies of
Illinois and Missouri.

The three studies found, in summary, that assessed valuation of school districts was increased greatly as a result of reorganization. Tax levies tended to remain constant in Illinois and Missouri but were reduced in Nebraska. The cost of instruction rose in Illinois and Missouri. Transportation costs were found to be affected most in Illinois, particularly by sparsity of population, salaries of bus drivers, and a limitation of transportation to home-school trips. The studies found that reorganized schools were offering additional and expanded educational services.

In summary, the results of reorganization appear to be: (a) the instructional staff has higher college preparation; (b) school programs have been improved at the elementary and secondary levels; (c) greater uniformity of school taxes have been achieved; (d) public funds are buying better quality education; (e) there is a broader scope of class and extra class offerings; (f) there is improved administrative structure; (g) improvement of facilities; (h) greater educational opportunity; (i) greater achievement by students; (j) an increase in the number and quality of special services; (k) increased efforts to provide for individual differences and maximum development of each student; (l) greater possibilities for specialization in remedial work, foreign language, music, industrial arts, etc.; and (m) greater uniformity of taxes.

This review of literature has included an overview of the history of consolidation in the United States and a detailed analysis of the history of the school consolidation process in the State of Michigan.
The literature was then reviewed on recommended size for school districts and for the different levels of schools included within a school district.

The literature on the effect school size had on cost effectiveness of school districts was next reviewed.

The review continued with an examination of the literature on the effect of school district size on the academic achievement of students and the quality of a school district's teaching staff.

The literature on the process of reorganization as it has and was occurring in our country was then examined.

The review then proceeded to the literature on the problem of gaining support for consolidation and on the advantages and disadvantages of consolidation. A thorough review was conducted on the case that could be advanced to discourage consolidation and reorganization.

The review of literature concluded with the examination of the literature regarding the reasons for the consolidation movement and the advantages that have been gained due to the consolidations that have taken place across the United States.
CHAPTER III

RESEARCH METHODS DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

Sample

The population for this study was made up of all 529 Michigan K-12 public school districts. The school district superintendent served as the source of information collection. The superintendent was selected for this purpose because this study focuses on administrative practices and attitudes regarding consolidation of school districts and because the superintendent is likely to be the single most knowledgeable source of information, at the district level, regarding the topic under investigation as it relates to his or her school district.

Babbie (1973) has stated that the "ultimate purpose of survey sampling is to select a set of elements from a population in such a way that descriptions of these elements accurately describe the total population from which they are selected....Random selection is the key to this process" (Babbie, 1973, p. 83). In other words, if one is to use sampling, as this study will at the district level, then random sampling should be used. There are various strategies which could be used (e.g., number the districts and then utilize a random number table), but the most appropriate strategy considering the number of districts (529) is "a systematic sample with a random start" (Babbie, 1973, p. 42).
The sampling frame for conducting the sample came from the listing of all K-12 public school districts in Michigan that is compiled and published by the Michigan Department of Education as part of the Fourth Friday Reports. These 529 K-12 public school districts represent 99.8% of the total state membership (Michigan Department of Public Instruction, *Analysis of Revenues and Expenditures for 1982-83, Bulletin 1014, p. 2*).

The sample size for this survey was determined with the following formula (Cochran, 1957):

\[ \text{No.} = \frac{t^2 \cdot S^2}{d^2} = \frac{t^2 \cdot p \cdot q}{d^2} \]

Where \( t \) = student - \( t \) at the 95% confidence level

\( S^2 \) = the population variance

\( d \) = percent error tolerated

For the purpose of this study the 95% confidence level with 10% error tolerated was chosen as the confidence limits. The proportion variance \( (S^2) \) is maximized by making \( p = q = 0.5 \) and \( p \cdot q = 0.25 \).

Thus:

\[ \text{No.} = \frac{(1.96)^2 \cdot (0.5) \cdot (0.5)}{(0.1)^2} = 96 \]

An additional 10% was added to the sample to compensate for possible inability to contact some superintendents or incomplete interviews or other non-statistical errors. Thus, the final sample size was: \( 96 + (10\%) \cdot 96 = 106 \).

The ratio of the sample (106) to the population (529) is 1 to 5 (20%). From the numbered list of all K-12 public school districts in
Michigan, the sample was drawn in the following manner. A random number between 1 and 5 was selected from a random number table. Every fifth district, starting with the random number identified, was selected from the list of school districts.

Detroit was added to the sample due to its unique and specific characteristics in that it is the only metropolitan school district in Michigan.

This sampling plan assured proportional coverage of school districts in relation to geographic locations and community types (Metropolitan, Urban, Suburban, and Rural).

Procedures

A systematic sample of Michigan K-12 public school superintendents was chosen. The research instrument, a questionnaire comprised of 25 questions was developed. Twenty-one of the questions were close-ended with forced choice responses and four questions were open ended. All forced choice questions were either two point scale (yes/no), or three point scale (yes/no/undecided). The questionnaire was conducted by telephone, by the researcher with the superintendents of the districts selected in the sample.

Before being contacted by phone, each superintendent selected received a copy of the survey and a letter from the author explaining the purpose of this survey.

Instrumentation

The questionnaire instrument was validated through a pilot
testing with a sample of superintendents in the state of Ohio to evaluate the clarity and comprehensiveness of its contents. Based on the pilot study, appropriate revisions were made prior to the preparation of the final questionnaire.

All complete survey questionnaires were compiled and entered on the computer for data analysis. The data compiled from this instrument were then analyzed. The findings are reported in Chapter IV.

Analysis

The research questions were:

1. Is there a difference in how superintendents from various sized school districts view consolidation?

2. What are the primary concerns superintendents have regarding consolidation?

3. What do superintendents believe would be the advantages and disadvantages, for their district, if they were involved in consolidation? Do the superintendents' responses vary if the superintendent was previously involved in school consolidation?

4. What do superintendents believe would be the effects of more school consolidation in the state on: the costs of education; the quality of course offerings; the use of facilities; staffing; co-curricular activities; and administrative efficiency?

5. If a school consolidation plan was drawn up by the State Department of Education, what type of consolidation plan would superintendents support?
6. What do superintendents believe would be the support level for consolidation by their teaching and support staff, board members, students, community members, administrators and themselves.

7. Does the number of years a person has been a superintendent make a difference in the attitudes and opinions of superintendents on school consolidation?

8. Do school superintendents attitudes and opinions on school consolidation vary according to their age?

9. What are the characteristics of a school district that may influence a superintendent's decision to support consolidation with that district?

10. Do school superintendents' attitudes and opinions toward school consolidation vary if (a) the course offerings in the district are limited due to the size of the district, (b) the course offerings in the district have been affected by school district finances, and (c) declining enrollment has affected course offerings?

Data analysis activities for this investigation focused on providing an accurate description of the K-12 public school superintendents' attitudes regarding school consolidation. To provide such a description requires that results be presented and discussed in terms of the major questions of this study. Data collection also included demographic information relative to selected characteristics of the respondents and the districts in which they work.

Items on the survey instrument can be divided into two categories. The first category deals with demographic and factual
characteristics. The second category deals with questions related to attitudes, opinions, and beliefs.

The analysis was conducted in three parts. Part I provides a description and discussion of the responses of the total sample of respondents regarding each of the survey questions. To accomplish this part, frequency distributions (raw counts and percentages) have been computed and are displayed in tabular form. The findings are presented in Chapter IV.

Part II of this analysis provides a discussion of the responses of the total sample of respondents regarding the research questions and examined the relationships between the extent of the superintendents' attitudes toward consolidation and the demographic variables. Chi-square techniques were used to determine the types of associations that exist within and between these categories. A cross-tabulation between selected sets of two or three variables was also conducted. The findings are presented in Chapter IV.

Conclusions, Implications and Recommendations based on these data will be found in Chapter V.
CHAPTER IV

FINDINGS

The findings of the survey of school superintendents on school consolidation are reported in this chapter.

Part I provides a description and discussion of the responses of the total sample of respondents regarding the questions under investigation. To accomplish this, frequency distributions, raw counts and percentages have been computed and are displayed in tabular form.

Part II examines the relationships within and between the variables, i.e. do the superintendents' responses vary according to the age of the superintendent, the size of the district, the state equalized valuation of the district, the number of years as a superintendent? The research questions will be discussed in this section.

Chi-square techniques were used to determine the types of associations that exist within and between these categories. Cross tabulations between selected sets of variables were conducted and are reported.
Part I School Consolidation Study Survey Results

Table 3
Question 1. How Long Have you Been a Superintendent in This District?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1-5 years</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>55.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6-10 years</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>24.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11-15 years</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>10.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16 years and up</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>9.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>103</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Question 2. How Many Years Have you been a Superintendent?

The data collected indicates that the superintendents obviously did not understand this question. The answers received did not correlate with the responses to the first question. Therefore, the answers received are not reported nor were they used in any cross-tabulations of the research questions.

Table 4
Question 3. Age of Superintendent?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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<th>Percent</th>
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<tr>
<td>in 20's</td>
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<tr>
<td>in 30's</td>
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<td>in 40's</td>
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<td>in 60's</td>
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**Table 4 - Continued**

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<th>Number</th>
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<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>103</td>
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**Table 5**

**Question 4. Are you Anticipating Closing any School Buildings in Your District in the Next Three Years?**

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<thead>
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<th>Number</th>
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<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>90</td>
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<td>Total</td>
<td>103</td>
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**Table 6**

Of Those who Responded yes to Question 4:

<table>
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<th>Percent</th>
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<tr>
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<td>Middle/Junior High</td>
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<tr>
<td>High Schools</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>13</td>
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**Table 7**

**Question 5. Are Course Offerings Limited in Your District Because of it's Size?**

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Number</th>
<th>Percent</th>
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Table 7 - Continued

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<tr>
<td>Total</td>
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Table 8

Question 6. Has Declining Enrollment Affected Your Course Offerings?

<table>
<thead>
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<th></th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Percent</th>
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<td>56.3</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>103</td>
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</table>

Table 9

Question 7. Have Your Course Offerings Been Affected by School District Finances?

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<tr>
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<td>35</td>
<td>34.0</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>103</td>
<td>100.0</td>
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</table>

Table 10

Question 8. Has Declining Enrollment Affected Your Co-curricular Offerings?

<table>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>71.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>103</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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Table 11

Question 9. Do You Believe More School Consolidation Should Take Place in Michigan?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>63.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>21.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Undecided</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>15.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>103</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 12

Question 10. Should the State Department of Education Develop Consolidation Recommendations for School Districts to Consider?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>65.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>30.1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Undecided</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>103</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 13

Question 11. Should the Legislature Develop Consolidation Recommendations for Districts to Consider?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>33.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>65.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Undecided</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>103</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 14

Question 12. Should the State Mandate School District Consolidation in District Where State-Wide Curriculum/Staffing/Facilities Standards are not Being Met?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>47.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>52.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>103</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 15

Question 13. Should the State Offer Incentives to Encourage Consolidation?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>77.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>22.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>103</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 16

Question 14. If the State Department of Education Were to Attempt to Develop a Consolidation Plan Which They Recommended Which Schools Should Consolidate, Which of the Following Groups of People, if any, Should Serve on that Committee with State Department Officials?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a. State legislators:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>51.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>47.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Undecided</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. Superintendents</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>102</td>
<td>99.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. City and town officials:</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------------------</td>
<td>-----</td>
<td>----</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Undecided</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d. Teachers:</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Undecided</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e. School board members:</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Undecided</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>f. Principals:</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Undecided</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>g. High school students:</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Undecided</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>h. Citizens:</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Undecided</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 17

Question 15. If Michigan Were to Reorganize School Districts into a New Organizational Plan, Which of the Following Plans Would you Support if you had to Pick a Definite Plan:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Plan Description</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a. K-8 elementary districts and separate high school districts:</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. School districts consolidating to form larger K-12 districts:</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>67.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. By county lines:</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>11.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d. By intermediate school district boundaries:</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e. Other plan or no answer</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>9.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 18

Question 16. What do You Believe is the Ideal District Size or Enrollment?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>District Size</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a. 0-1,500</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>8.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. 1,500-2,500</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>28.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. 2,500-5,000</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>38.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d. 5,000-10,000</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>17.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e. 10,000 and up</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>f. no answer</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2.9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In this survey, data were collected from each superintendent as to the enrollment of the superintendent's district. An investigation was then done to examine the relationship between the two variables: district enrollment size and ideal enrollment as seen by the
superintendent. The following table is the cross tabulation of these two variables. (Note: cells contain N count, row percent and column percent.)

Table 19

Cross-Tabulation of: "District Enrollment Size" and "Ideal Enrollment Size"

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>District Enrollment Size</th>
<th>1,500</th>
<th>2,500</th>
<th>5,000</th>
<th>10,000</th>
<th>10,000 and up</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>up to 1,500</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1,500</td>
<td>18.8</td>
<td>45.8</td>
<td>33.3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1,500 to 2,500</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>75.9</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>33.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2,500</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2,500 to 5,000</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>52.4</td>
<td>38.1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>9.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5,000</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>27.5</td>
<td>44.4</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>67.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5,000 to 10,000</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>33.3</td>
<td>66.7</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10,000</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>22.2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10,000 to 20,000</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20,000 and over</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

With the exception of the largest school district in the state, all superintendents considered their own district size or larger to be the ideal size school district. Superintendents whose district size was less than 2,500 students tended to consider larger districts (up to 5,000) to be the ideal size. Superintendents of districts with enrollments of 10,000 to 30,000 all considered their district
size to be the ideal size.

There is a strong systematic relation between the perceived ideal size and the actual size of the district with clear tendency for choosing their own size or larger.

Table 20

Question 17. Do You Believe If More Districts in our State Consolidated that:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a. The cost of education would be reduced:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>28.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>60.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Undecided</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>11.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. The quality of offerings would be improved:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>73.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>18.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Undecided</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>7.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. There would be more efficient use of present facilities:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>67.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>18.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Undecided</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>14.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d. High quality staff would be more equitably distributed:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>36.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>41.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Undecided</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>21.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e. Co-curricular programs would be expanded:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>52.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>30.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Undecided</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>17.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>f. Administrative efficiency would be improved:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>57.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>26.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Undecided</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>16.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 21

Question 18. Advantages and Disadvantages of School Consolidation.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a. Administrative efficiency</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advantage</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>53.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disadvantage</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>19.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 21 - Continued

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>b. Co-curricular Activity</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Unsure</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>27.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advantage</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>51.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disadvantage</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>24.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unsure</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>24.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>c. Staffing</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Advantage</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>60.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disadvantage</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>15.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unsure</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>24.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>d. Facility usage</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Advantage</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>56.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disadvantage</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>27.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unsure</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>16.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>e. Course offerings</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Advantage</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>80.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disadvantage</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>9.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unsure</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>9.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>f. Financial</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Advantage</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>47.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disadvantage</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>19.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unsure</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>33.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 22

Question 19. As a Superintendent, Have You Ever Been Involved in Consolidation of Two Districts?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>16.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>83.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>103</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 23

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>a. Support Staff</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>21.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>58.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Undecided</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>20.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>b. Teachers</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>27.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>54.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Undecided</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>18.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>c. Administrative</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>44.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>40.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Undecided</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>14.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>d. Board Members</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>19.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>66.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Undecided</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>14.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>e. Community Members</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>7.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>80.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Undecided</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>11.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>f. Superintendent</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>44.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>35.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Undecided</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>20.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>g. Students</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>16.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>62.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Undecided</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>21.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In an effort to determine whether school districts were using other alternatives rather than consolidation to improve course offerings, the following three questions were asked of the superintendents regarding participation in vocational and academic consortia.
Table 24

Question 22. Is Your District Currently Involved With an Academic Consortium?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>46.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>53.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 25

Question 23. Is Your District Currently Involved with a Vocational Consortium or Skill Center?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>93.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No Answer</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1.9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 26

Question 24. Do You Believe the Consortium Concept is a Viable Alternative to Consolidation?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>80.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>18.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No Answer</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As the response tabulations indicate, 93.2% of the superintendents surveyed indicated their district participated in either a skills center program or belonged to a vocational consortium. 46.6% of the superintendents indicated their district
participated in an academic consortium. 80.6% of the superintendents see consortiums as a viable alternative to consolidation.

An investigation was done to compare the responses on the variables: Is district involved in vocational consortium and is consortium concept a viable alternative. The table below details the cross tabulation of these variables.

Table 27
Cross Tabulation: "Is District Involved in Vocational Consortium" and "Is Consortium Viable Alternative"

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>Undecided</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Is district involved in vocational consortium&quot;</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>80.2</td>
<td>18.8</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>93.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>92.8</td>
<td>94.7</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Is consortium concept viable alternative&quot;</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>80.0</td>
<td>20.0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4.8</td>
<td>5.3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Undecided</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>103</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>80.6</td>
<td>18.5</td>
<td>0.9</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It is clear from the table above that most superintendents consider the concept of consortium to be a viable alternative to consolidation of those whose districts are involved in a vocational consortium, 80% consider it to be a viable alternative.
Table 28
Cross Tabulation: "Is District Involved in Academic Consortium" and "Is Consortium Viable Alternative"

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>&quot;Is District Involved in Academic Consortium&quot;</th>
<th>&quot;Is Consortium Viable Alternative&quot;</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>37</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>77.1</td>
<td>20.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>44.6</td>
<td>62.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>46</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>83.6</td>
<td>16.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>55.4</td>
<td>47.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>80.5</td>
<td>18.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

We find that less than 50% of the districts are involved in an academic consortium. Yet the majority of the superintendents consider the consortium concept to be a viable alternative regardless of their involvement in academic consortium.

Table 29
Question 25: Which of the Following Issues would be an Influencing Factor in Your Decision? (to Consolidate With Another District)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Issue</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>No Answer</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a. State equalized valuation of the proposed district.</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>73.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. Size of district to be merged with.</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>86.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. Geographic distance of the proposed district from your area.</td>
<td>97</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>94.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d. Ethnic or racial</td>
<td>29</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>28.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 29 - Continued

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>make-up of proposed district.</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>71.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e. Economic make-up of proposed consolidated district.</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>27.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 30

Student Enrollment in the District

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1-500</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>501-1,000</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1,001-1,500</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1,501-2,000</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2,001-2,500</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2,501-3,000</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3,001-3,500</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3,501-10,000</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10,001 and up</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>103</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 31

State Equalized Valuation Per Child

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>30,000 or less</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30,000-40,000</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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Table 31 - Continued

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>40,000-50,000</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>27.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50,000-60,000</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>14.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60,000-70,000</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>9.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>70,000-80,000</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>80,000-90,000</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>90,000-100,000</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>100,000 and up</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>7.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>103</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

One of the reasons State Equalized Valuation data was collected was to investigate whether school superintendents responses to the question in regard to whether more school consolidation should take place, would vary based on the state equalized valuation of the district.

Table 32

Cross Tabulation of "Do You Believe More Consolidation Should Take Place" and "State Equalized Valuation"

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>&quot;SEV&quot;</th>
<th>&quot;More consolidation should take place&quot;</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Undecided</td>
<td>Total</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less than 30,000</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30,000</td>
<td>75.0</td>
<td>25.0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4.8</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30,000 to 40,000</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>61.5</td>
<td>26.9</td>
<td>11.5</td>
<td>25.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40,000</td>
<td>25.8</td>
<td>31.8</td>
<td>18.8</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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Table 32 - Continued

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>&quot;SEV&quot;</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>Undecided</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>40,000 to 50,000</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50,000</td>
<td>57.1</td>
<td>14.3</td>
<td>28.6</td>
<td>27.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50,000 to 60,000</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60,000</td>
<td>60.0</td>
<td>26.7</td>
<td>13.3</td>
<td>14.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60,000 to 70,000</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>70,000</td>
<td>70.0</td>
<td>10.0</td>
<td>20.0</td>
<td>9.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>70,000 to 80,000</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>80,000</td>
<td>66.7</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>33.3</td>
<td>2.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>80,000 to 90,000</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>90,000</td>
<td>83.3</td>
<td>16.7</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>90,000 to 100,000</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>100,000</td>
<td>66.7</td>
<td>33.3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Over 100,000</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>100,000</td>
<td>50.0</td>
<td>37.5</td>
<td>12.5</td>
<td>7.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6.5</td>
<td>13.6</td>
<td>6.3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>103</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

No systematic relation exists between the district state equalized valuation and the superintendent's attitude toward consolidation. In all state equalized valuation categories the majority of superintendents see a value in more school consolidation in the state. However, the weakest support for consolidation comes from superintendents who have districts with state equalized valuation of $100,000 or more, the highest state equalized valuation.
Part II Research Questions

This section includes a discussion of the research questions and other data.

Research Question 1

The first research question was: Is there a difference in how superintendents from various sized school districts view consolidation?

Of the superintendents surveyed in this study, 63.1% were in favor of more school consolidation taking place in the state of Michigan. Over 21% (21.4%) of the superintendents said they were opposed to more school consolidation taking place and 15.5% were undecided as to whether they were in favor or opposed to more consolidation taking place.

The larger the student population of the superintendent's school district, the more likely he was to be in favor of more school consolidation. ("He" is used as there were no female superintendents in the sample that was selected.) One hundred percent (100%) of the superintendents surveyed who came from districts of between 5,000 to 10,000 students were in favor of more school consolidation. Eighty percent (80%) of the superintendents surveyed who came from districts with enrollments of over 10,000 supported more consolidation.

The superintendents from the districts that had smaller student enrollments were not as supportive of school consolidation as the
superintendents from the larger districts but were still quite supportive of more school consolidation taking place in the state. Over 54% (54.2%) of the superintendents from districts of 0 to 1,500 students answered yes to supporting more school consolidation with only 27.1% opposed and 18.7% undecided as to their position on this issue.

Over 56% (56.2%) of the superintendents surveyed from districts with a population of 1,500 to 2,500 supported more consolidation taking place in the state, 30.4% were opposed and 13% were undecided as to their feelings on this issue.

Superintendents from districts that have student populations between 2,500 and 5,000 students were in favor of more consolidation, 76.2%. Nine and a half percent (9.5%) of the superintendents in this category were opposed to more consolidation and 14.3% were undecided.

The following table illustrates the cross tabulation of the responses. (The contents of each cell are: the number count, the row percent and the column percent.)

Table 33

Cross-Tabulation "Enrollment" and "More School Consolidation Should Take Place"

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>&quot;Enrollment&quot;</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>Undecided</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>up to 1,500</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1,500</td>
<td>54.2</td>
<td>27.1</td>
<td>18.7</td>
<td>46.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2,500</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2,500</td>
<td>56.2</td>
<td>30.4</td>
<td>13.0</td>
<td>22.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2,500</td>
<td>20.0</td>
<td>31.8</td>
<td>18.8</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 33 - Continued

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>&quot;Enrollment&quot;</th>
<th>&quot;More consolidation should take place&quot;</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2,500</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5,000</td>
<td>76.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5,000</td>
<td>24.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10,000</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10,000 and over</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10,000 and over</td>
<td>9.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Research Question 2

The second research question was: What are the primary concerns superintendents have regarding consolidation?

There appears to be a major concern among superintendents regarding the involvement of the legislature in consolidation. Sixty-five percent (65%) of the superintendents do not believe the legislature should develop consolidation recommendations for school districts to consider.

In addition, in responding to the question of which groups should be involved in developing consolidation guidelines, school superintendents rated legislators last, even below high school students, in regard to groups to be involved.

Another concern of superintendents appears to be the idea of the state mandating school district consolidation in districts where
state standards are not being met. Superintendents appear to be evenly divided on this issue, with 47.6% favoring the state mandating consolidation and 52.4% opposing.

Finances are an issue of concern: the superintendents believe, if consolidation is to occur, the state should provide incentives. Over seventy percent (77.7%) of the superintendents believe incentives should be provided, 22.3% believe incentives should not be provided. It is interesting to note that as early as 1959, Conant was suggesting that incentives should be provided to encourage school districts to consolidate into more educationally sound, economically efficient districts.

The incentives suggested more often by superintendents was financial. Superintendents suggested such financial incentives as:

1. Not making consolidated districts pay more in taxes than they would have had they not consolidated, with the state making up the difference.

2. Financial planning study grants should be given to districts interested in looking at consolidation.

3. Provide positive financial incentives for a three to five year period for school districts that consolidate.

4. Financial support for additional costs of transportation due to two districts consolidating.

Research Question 3

The third research question was: What do superintendents believe would be the advantages and disadvantages, for their district, if
they were involved in consolidation? Do the superintendents' responses vary if the superintendent was previously involved in school consolidation?

The major advantage of consolidation according to the superintendents in this survey is in the area of course offerings. Over 80% (80.6%) of the superintendents believe (improved, increased) course offerings would be an advantage of consolidation. Over 9% (9.7%) believed course offerings would be a disadvantage with 9.7% unsure.

The next major advantage would be in the area of staffing. Over 60% (60.2%) of the superintendents believe staffing would be an advantage with 15.5% believing it would be a disadvantage and 24.3% are unsure.

The third major advantage, in the opinion of the superintendents, is facility usage with 56.3% seeing this as an advantage.

Ranking fourth on the list of advantages is administrative efficiency with 53.4% of the superintendents believing it would be an advantage.

Fifth on the list is co-curricular activities with 51.4% of the superintendents seeing an advantage in co-curricular activities.

Last in the ranking of advantages is the area of finances. Over 47% (47.6%) of the superintendents indicated that consolidation would result in an advantage in this area. Thirty-three (33%) percent of the superintendents were unsure if there would be an advantage or a disadvantage to their district if consolidation took place.

Table 36 illustrates the superintendents' degree of indecision.
regarding the advantages and disadvantages of consolidation. The relatively large percentage of indecision on some of the areas could indicate that superintendents are not adequately informed about consolidation, at least, not well enough informed to be able to make a judgment as to whether items would be advantages or disadvantages. This could be a result of the fact that only 16.5% of the superintendents in the sample have ever been involved, as a superintendent, in school consolidation. The amount of undecided answers varied from 9.7 on course offerings (most believed an advantage) to 33% undecided on financial. The average undecided on these issues was 22.5% a significant amount if one fifth of the respondents could not decide.

Table 34

Advantages of More Consolidation as Viewed by Superintendents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Advantages</th>
<th>Percentages</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Course Offerings</td>
<td>80.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Staffing</td>
<td>60.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Facility Usage</td>
<td>56.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Administrative Efficiency</td>
<td>53.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Co-Curricular Activity</td>
<td>51.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Financial</td>
<td>47.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 35
Disadvantages of More Consolidation as Viewed by Superintendents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Disadvantages</th>
<th>Percentages</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Facility Usage</td>
<td>27.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Co-Curricular Activities</td>
<td>24.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Financial</td>
<td>19.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Administrative Efficiency</td>
<td>19.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Staffing</td>
<td>15.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Course Offerings</td>
<td>9.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 36
Percentage of Superintendents Undecided as to Whether These Areas are Advantages or Disadvantages

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Undecided</th>
<th>Percentages</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Financial</td>
<td>33.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Administrative Efficiency</td>
<td>27.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Co-Curricular Activities</td>
<td>24.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Staffing</td>
<td>24.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Facility Usage</td>
<td>16.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Course Offerings</td>
<td>9.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This question also involved an investigation into the responses of the superintendents to the question of the advantages and disadvantages in regard to whether the superintendent had been involved in school consolidation previously. The following tables illustrate the rankings for advantages and disadvantages based on...
whether or not the superintendent had been involved in consolidation.

### Table 37

**Advantages and Disadvantages - Superintendents Who had Been Involved in Consolidation**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Advantages</th>
<th>Disadvantages</th>
<th>Unsure</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Course Offerings</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>70.6</td>
<td>20.0</td>
<td>30.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staffing</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>64.7</td>
<td>5.9</td>
<td>29.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Facility Usage</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>64.7</td>
<td>29.4</td>
<td>5.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Co-curricular</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Activities</td>
<td>52.9</td>
<td>23.5</td>
<td>23.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administrative</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Efficiency</td>
<td>52.9</td>
<td>17.0</td>
<td>29.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>47.1</td>
<td>17.6</td>
<td>29.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Table 38

**Advantages and Disadvantages - Superintendents Who Have Not Been Involved in Consolidation**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Advantages</th>
<th>Disadvantages</th>
<th>Unsure</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Course Offerings</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>82.6</td>
<td>9.3</td>
<td>8.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staffing</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>59.3</td>
<td>17.4</td>
<td>23.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Facility Use</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>54.7</td>
<td>26.7</td>
<td>18.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administrative</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Efficiency</td>
<td>53.5</td>
<td>19.8</td>
<td>26.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 38 - Continued

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Advantages</th>
<th>Disadvantages</th>
<th>Unsure</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Co-curricular Activities</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

No statistical differences exist between the two groups - superintendents who have been involved in consolidation and those who have not been involved.

In the area of Administrative Efficiency, the majority of superintendents considered it an advantage of consolidation. Of those who considered it a disadvantage, 85% have not been involved in consolidation.

In the area of Co-curricular Activity, again, the majority of the superintendents (51%) found this area to be an advantage regardless of their previous involvement or lack of involvement in consolidation.

Staffing - again the majority of (60%) of the superintendents considered the area of staffing to be an advantage. Only 6% of the superintendents who have had previous experience with consolidation considered staffing a disadvantage.

In the area of Facility Use, though the majority considered facility use an advantage, a sizeable percentage of superintendents with experience and the superintendents without experience considered facility use a disadvantage.

Course Offerings - Though the vast majority (80%) of the
superintendents considered course offerings to be an advantage in consolidation, it is interesting to note that 82% of the superintendents with no prior experience with consolidation thought course offerings to be an advantage and 70% of the superintendents with prior experience found it to be an advantage.

Financial - Both groups of superintendents gave similar responses, less than half found financial to be an advantage in consolidation.

Research Question 4

The fourth research question was: What do superintendents believe would be the effects of more school consolidation in the state on: the costs of education; the quality of course offerings; the use of facilities; staffing; co-curricular activities; and administrative efficiency?

Superintendents were asked a question on each of these areas. Table 39 below contains the questions asked and the superintendents responses in percentages.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 39</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Do You Believe if More Districts in our State Consolidate That:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The cost of education would be reduced?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The quality of offerings would be improved?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 39 - Continued

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>Undecided</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>There would be more efficient use of facilities?</td>
<td>67.0</td>
<td>18.4</td>
<td>14.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Higher quality staff would be more equitably distributed?</td>
<td>36.9</td>
<td>41.7</td>
<td>21.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Co-curricular programs would be expanded?</td>
<td>52.4</td>
<td>30.1</td>
<td>17.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administrative efficiency would be improved?</td>
<td>57.3</td>
<td>26.2</td>
<td>16.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It is interesting to compare the responses to these questions with the responses to the question on what superintendents see as advantages to their district if more consolidation were to occur. The table below is the cross tabulation of the answers to the two questions.

Table 40

Comparison of Superintendents Responses to Research Questions 3 and 4

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>&quot;Do you believe if more districts in our state consolidated that&quot;</th>
<th>&quot;Advantages of more consolidation as viewed by superintendents&quot;</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The quality of offerings would be improved</td>
<td>Course offerings as an advantage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Efficient use of facilities</td>
<td>Facility usage as an advantage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administrative efficiency would be improved</td>
<td>Administrative efficiency as an advantage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>73.8</td>
<td>80.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>67.0</td>
<td>56.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>57.3</td>
<td>53.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 40 - Continued

"Do you believe if more districts in our state consolidated that":

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Advantage of more consolidation as viewed by superintendents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Co-curricular programs would be expanded</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Higher quality staff would be distributed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The cost of education would be reduced</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Research Question 5

The fifth research question was: If a school consolidation plan was drawn up by the State Department of Education, what type of plan would the superintendents support?

Superintendents indicate they favor the State Department of Education developing consolidation recommendations (65.1% yes to 30.1% no). They strongly believe the state should provide incentives to encourage consolidation (77.7% yes, 22.3% no). This would indicate that a plan that includes incentives would be favored by superintendents and that a plan that does not include incentives would not be.

School superintendents believe the following groups should help develop the plan:

Superintendents 99.1%
School Board Members 97.1%
Citizens 93.2%
Principals 84.5%
Teachers 81.6%
City & Town Officials 62.1%
High School Students 61.2%
Legislatures 51.5%

Again, the most interesting finding is that superintendents prefer almost everyone else, at least all those included in the forced choice, to help develop the plan, before the legislators.

Sixty-seven percent (67%) of the superintendents surveyed said they favored most a school reorganization plan in Michigan that would have present school districts consolidating to form larger K-12 districts. The second most favored plan was reorganization by county which has only 11.7% of the superintendents supporting the plan. Forming K-8 elementary districts with separate high school districts received support from only 5.8% of the superintendents. Over 5% (5.8%) of the superintendents favored reorganization of school districts within intermediate boundary lines.

An analysis was done to determine which consolidation plan was supported by superintendents who indicated they were in favor of more school consolidation in Michigan. Sixty-seven percent (67%) of those superintendents favor consolidation by forming larger K-12 districts. The distant second choice of these superintendents was to have consolidation take place by county line. Over 11% (11.7%) favored this plan.
Table 41

Cross Tabulation Analysis - Variable "Do You Believe More School Consolidation Should Take Place" versus "Support of Consolidation Plan"

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organization Plan</th>
<th>&quot;More consolidation should take place&quot;</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>K-8 Elementary and</td>
<td>Yes 5</td>
<td>No 0</td>
<td>Undecided 1</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Separate High School</td>
<td>83.3%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>16.7%</td>
<td>5.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>District?</td>
<td>7.7%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>6.3%</td>
<td>69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School District</td>
<td>49%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>67.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consolidation to Form Larger K-12</td>
<td>71.0%</td>
<td>11.6%</td>
<td>17.4%</td>
<td>67.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Districts</td>
<td>75.4%</td>
<td>36.4%</td>
<td>75.0%</td>
<td>67.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>By County Lines</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>33.3%</td>
<td>41.7%</td>
<td>25.0%</td>
<td>11.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>12.2%</td>
<td>22.7%</td>
<td>18.7%</td>
<td>12.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>By I.S.D.</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>66.7%</td>
<td>33.3%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>5.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6.2%</td>
<td>9.1%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>6.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Plan or No Answer</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>30.0%</td>
<td>70.0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>9.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4.6%</td>
<td>31.8%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>9.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>65%</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>103%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>63.1%</td>
<td>21.4%</td>
<td>15.5%</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Research Question 6

The sixth research question was: What do superintendents believe would be the support level for consolidation by their teaching and support staff, board members, community members, students, administrators, and themselves?

Superintendents

Over 44% (44.7%) of the superintendents surveyed said they would
support more consolidation in their district.

The reasons most frequently given by superintendents who would not support consolidation for their own district were:

1. Don't see any real advantages in consolidation.
2. Like quality and size of current district now.
3. Possible loss of job, loss of local control and identity.

**District Administrators**

Superintendents believed that 44.7% of their administrators would support consolidation in their district. The reasons given most frequently by superintendents as to why administrators might be opposed to consolidation were:

1. Possible job loss.
2. Like small schools and think they have the right size district now.
3. Fear of losing some control and power.
4. Strong identification with their present school.

The superintendents believe that teachers, support staff, board members, students and community members would all be opposed to consolidation in their school district.

**Teachers**

Over 54% (54.4%) of the superintendents felt the teachers in their district would oppose consolidation. The reasons given were:

1. Fear of loss of jobs or their teaching seniority.
2. Concern of salary being decreased.
3. Like current district and the quality of the educational program.

4. Like size of current district.

5. Fear of change.

**Support Staff**

Over 58% (58.3%) of the superintendents said their support staff would oppose consolidation in their district. The reasons most given by superintendents for support staff being opposed to consolidation were:

1. Loss of job.

2. Fear of change.

3. A strong identification of the support staff with the school district because many live in the district and attended school in the district.

**Board Members**

Sixty-six percent (66%) of the superintendents said their board members would oppose consolidation. The reasons given were:

1. Fear of losing local control.

2. Perceived attitudes toward school district.

3. Fear of losing board identity.

4. Like size of district now.

5. Fear of change.

Students

Over 62% (62.1%) of the superintendents said their students would oppose consolidation in their district. Superintendents said, in their opinion, students would be opposed to consolidation for the following reasons:

1. Like current school.
2. Identity.
3. Tradition.
4. Loss of opportunity to participate in sports and other co-curricular activities.
5. Like small school.

Community Members

Over 80% (80.6%) of the superintendents said their community members would oppose consolidation in their district. The reasons given by the superintendent were:

1. Do not want to be larger.
2. Loss of Identity.
3. Local history and pride.
4. Local control.

The following table indicates superintendents' responses to the question of whether the various groups would support consolidation in their district.

---

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Table 42

"What do Superintendents Believe Would be the Support Level for Consolidation by Their Teaching Staff, Support Staff, Board Members, Community Members, Students, Administrators, and Themselves?"

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>Undecided</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Superintendent</td>
<td>44.7</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>20.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administrators</td>
<td>44.7</td>
<td>40.8</td>
<td>14.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students</td>
<td>16.5</td>
<td>62.1</td>
<td>21.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers</td>
<td>27.2</td>
<td>54.4</td>
<td>18.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support Staff</td>
<td>21.4</td>
<td>58.3</td>
<td>20.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Board Members</td>
<td>19.4</td>
<td>66.0</td>
<td>14.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community Members</td>
<td>7.8</td>
<td>80.6</td>
<td>11.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Research Question 7

Research question seven asks: Does the number of years a person has been a superintendent make a difference in the attitudes and opinions of superintendents on school consolidation?

No systematic relation exists between the number of years the respondents have served as superintendents and their attitudes toward school consolidation. Of those who have been superintendents 5 years or less, 2 out of 3 supported the concept while about 20% said they were unsure.

It is interesting to note that of those who have been superintendents for more than 15 years, almost all, (90%) support the concept of consolidation. It is these superintendents who have had some previous experience with consolidation.
Table 43

Cross-Tabulation Analysis: "Do You Believe More Consolidation Should Take Place" versus "Years as a Superintendent"

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>&quot;Years as a Superintendent&quot;</th>
<th>&quot;More consolidation should take place&quot;</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>Undecided</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 to 5 years</td>
<td></td>
<td>36</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>55.4</td>
<td>40.9</td>
<td>75.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 to 10 years</td>
<td></td>
<td>15</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>60.0</td>
<td>32.0</td>
<td>8.0</td>
<td>24.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>23.1</td>
<td>36.4</td>
<td>12.5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11 to 15 years</td>
<td></td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>45.5</td>
<td>36.4</td>
<td>18.2</td>
<td>10.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>7.7</td>
<td>18.9</td>
<td>12.5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16 years and up</td>
<td></td>
<td>9</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>90.0</td>
<td>10.0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>9.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>13.9</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td>65</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>103</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>63.1</td>
<td>21.4</td>
<td>15.5</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>4.6</td>
<td>31.8</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Research Question 8

The eighth research question was: Do school superintendents' attitudes and opinions on school consolidation vary according to their age?

Table 44

Cross-Tabulation of the Two Variables: "Should More Consolidation Take Place in the State" and "Age of the Superintendent"

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>&quot;Age&quot;</th>
<th>&quot;More consolidation should take place&quot;</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>Undecided</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>20's</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 44 - Continued

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>&quot;Age&quot;</th>
<th>&quot;More consolidation should take place&quot;</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Undecided</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30's</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>37.5</td>
<td>43.8</td>
<td>18.8</td>
<td>15.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>9.2</td>
<td>31.8</td>
<td>18.8</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40's</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>50.0</td>
<td>22.5</td>
<td>27.5</td>
<td>38.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>30.8</td>
<td>40.9</td>
<td>68.8</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50's</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>86.1</td>
<td>11.1</td>
<td>2.8</td>
<td>35.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>47.7</td>
<td>18.2</td>
<td>6.3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60's</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>70.0</td>
<td>20.0</td>
<td>10.0</td>
<td>9.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>10.8</td>
<td>9.1</td>
<td>6.3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>103</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>63.1</td>
<td>21.4</td>
<td>21.4</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It is obvious that superintendents' attitudes do vary by age. Since there was only one superintendent who was in the age group "20's" and he favors consolidation, 100% of the superintendents in this age group support more consolidation.

In the "30's" age group, of 16 superintendents in the group, 37.5% supported consolidation, 43.8% did not support and 18.5% were undecided.

In the "40's" age group, of 40 superintendents, 50% supported consolidation, 22.5% did not support and 27.5% were undecided.

In the "50's" age group, of 36 superintendents 86.1% supported consolidation, 11.1% did not support and 2.8% were undecided.

In the "60's" age group, of 10 superintendents 70% supported consolidation, 20% did not support and 10% were undecided.
It appears that those superintendents with more experience feel more strongly about consolidation, perhaps due to having experience with consolidation when Michigan went through the last large consolidation effort.

Research Question 9

Research question nine asks: What are the characteristics of a school district that may influence a superintendent's decision to support consolidation with that district?

Superintendents were asked, if they were to be involved in consolidation, which issues would be influencing factors in their decision?

State Equalized Valuation

The issue of the state equalized valuation of the proposed district would definitely be an influencing factor. Over 73% (73.8%) of the superintendents surveyed said that the state equalized valuation would be a factor in influencing their decision to consider consolidation. Over 24% (24.3%) of the superintendents said state equalized valuation would not be a factor and 1.9% of the superintendents did not answer this question.

Size

On the issue of the size of the district to be merged with, 86.5% of the superintendents said that size would be an influencing factor. Over 11% (11.6%) of the superintendents said size would not be an
influencing factor and 0.9% or 1 superintendent did not answer the question.

**Geographic Distance**

The geographic distance of the proposed district from their own district was considered an influencing factor by 94.2% of the superintendents. Only 5.8% said geographic distance would not be a factor.

**Ethnic or Racial Make Up**

Only 28.2% of the superintendents responding believed the ethnic or racial make up of the proposed district would be an influencing factor. Over 71% (71.8%) said the ethnic or racial make up would not be an influencing factor.

**Economic Make Up**

The economic make up of the proposed district was seen as an influencing factor by 72.8% of the superintendents surveyed. Over 27% (27.2%) said economic make up would not be an influencing factor.

In summary, it appears, for most superintendents the factors of: state equalized valuation, size of the proposed district, geographic distance of the proposed district, and economic make up of the proposed district would be influencing factors if they were to make decisions regarding consolidation.

Most superintendents (71.8%) do not believe ethnic or racial make up of the proposed district would be an influencing factor.
The following table illustrates these results, with factors listed in descending order of importance.

Table 45
Factors Influencing Consolidation Decisions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Factor</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>No Answer</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Geographic Distance</td>
<td>94.2</td>
<td>5.8</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Size of district to be merged with</td>
<td>86.5</td>
<td>11.6</td>
<td>0.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State equalized valuation</td>
<td>73.8</td>
<td>24.3</td>
<td>1.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Economic make up of proposed district</td>
<td>72.8</td>
<td>27.2</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethnic or racial make up of district</td>
<td>28.2</td>
<td>71.8</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Research Question 10

Research question ten asks: Do school superintendents' attitudes and opinions toward school consolidation vary if: (a) declining enrollment has affected course offerings, (b) the course offerings in the district are limited due to the size of the districts, or (c) the course offerings in the district have been affected by school district finances?

The following tables indicate the cross-tabulation of these variables with the variable - Do you believe more consolidation should take place in the state of Michigan?
Table 46

Cross-Tabulation of "More Consolidation Should Take Place" and "Limited Course Offerings"

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>&quot;Limited Course Offerings&quot;</th>
<th>&quot;More consolidation should take place&quot;</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>Undecided</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>65</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>67.7</td>
<td>16.9</td>
<td>15.4</td>
<td>63.1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>67.7</td>
<td>50.0</td>
<td>62.5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>38</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>55.3</td>
<td>28.9</td>
<td>15.8</td>
<td>36.9</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>32.3</td>
<td>50.0</td>
<td>37.5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>103</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>63.1</td>
<td>21.4</td>
<td>15.5</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A systematic relationship exists between the two variables. Superintendents with schools that have limited course offerings feel strongly toward school consolidation. Two out of three superintendents whose districts have limited course offerings believe school consolidation should take place. Also of interest are the responses of superintendents who said no to limited course offerings. More than half (55.3%) think school consolidation should take place in the state.

Table 47

Cross-Tabulation of: "More Consolidation Should Take Place" and "Course Offerings Affected by District Finances"

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>&quot;Course Offerings affected finances&quot;</th>
<th>&quot;More consolidation should take place&quot;</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>Undecided</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>68</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>66.2</td>
<td>17.6</td>
<td>16.2</td>
<td>66.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>69.2</td>
<td>54.5</td>
<td>68.8</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 47 - Continued

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course Offerings affected finances</th>
<th>&quot;More consolidation should take place&quot;</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>57.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>30.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>63.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A systematic relationship exists between the two variables. Superintendents with schools that have had course offerings affected by finances strongly support more consolidation.

Table 48

Cross-Tabulation of: "More Consolidation Should Take Place" and "Declining Enrollment Affects Course Offerings"

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Declining Enrollment</th>
<th>&quot;More consolidation should take place&quot;</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>62.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>43.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>63.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>56.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>63.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A systematic relationship exists between the two variables. Superintendents with schools that have had course offerings affected by declining enrollment strongly support more consolidation.
Other Investigations

An investigation was also conducted regarding the group of 34 superintendents who answered yes to declining enrollment affecting course offerings and yes to school finances affecting course offerings. The investigation determined if their responses to more consolidation taking place varied according to the state equalized valuation of their district. The following table is the cross tabulation of their responses.

Table 49
Cross Tabulation of This Group of 34 Superintendents Responses to: "More Consolidation Should Take Place" and "State Equalized Valuation"

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>&quot;SEV&quot;</th>
<th>&quot;More consolidation should take place&quot;</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>Undecided</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Less than</td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30,000</td>
<td></td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30,000 to 40,000</td>
<td></td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40,000 to 50,000</td>
<td></td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50,000 to 60,000</td>
<td></td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60,000 to 70,000</td>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>70,000 to 80,000</td>
<td></td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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Table 49 - Continued

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SEV</th>
<th>&quot;More consolidation should take place&quot;</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>80,000</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>to 90,000</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>90,000</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>to 100,000</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>100,000</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The results of the investigation indicated that 73.5% of this selected group of superintendents believe more consolidation should take place, with 8.8% believing more should not take place and 17.6% of the superintendents undecided on the issue.

An investigation was conducted to examine whether the superintendents believe the state should mandate consolidation for districts where state standards are not met are also supporters of more school consolidation taking place in Michigan. The following table is the cross tabulation of these two variables.

Table 50

Cross Tabulation of the Two Variables: "More Consolidation Should Take Place" and "State Should Mandate Consolidation if Standards are not Met"

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>State should mandate</th>
<th>&quot;More consolidation should take place&quot;</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>83.7</td>
<td>10.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>63.1</td>
<td>22.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 50 - Continued

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>&quot;State should mandate&quot;</th>
<th>&quot;More consolidation should take place&quot;</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>44.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>36.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>63.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The superintendents who think the state should mandate consolidation in districts where state standards in curriculum, staffing and facilities are not being met are also supportive of more school consolidation in Michigan.

There is a very strong feeling against the state mandating consolidation.

Distribution of Sample

For the purpose of sampling of school districts, the State Department of Education has stratified the school districts in Michigan into six stratum.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stratum Number</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Tri-county (Wayne, Macomb, Oakland) metropolitan core. One or more adjacent cities with a population of 100,000 or more which serve as an economic focal point of their environs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>All counties in southern Michigan that are south of and including Muskegon, Kent, Montcalm, Gratiot, Midland, and Bay counties. This excludes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Stratum Number Description

1 Macomb, Oakland, and Wayne, within this region, cities of 10,000 or more that serve as economic focal point of its environs.

3 Tri-county (Wayne, Macomb, Oakland), towns and communities of 2,500 to 10,000 that have as their focal point a metropolitan area or a city.

4 All counties in southern Michigan excluding Wayne, Macomb, and Oakland, towns of any population size that have as their focal point a metropolitan area or a city.

5 All counties in southern Michigan (excluding Wayne, Macomb, Oakland) rural communities of population less than 2,500 that serve as the economic focal point of their environs.

6 All northern counties of the lower peninsula and all counties in the upper peninsula. All school districts within these counties.

The following table illustrates the distribution of the selected sample within these strata.

Table 51
"Sample Distribution by Stratum"

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stratum</th>
<th>Number of Districts in Sample Within Stratum</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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Table 51 - Continued

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stratum</th>
<th>Number of Districts in Sample Within Stratum</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

All the findings detailed in this chapter serve as the basis for the discussion of conclusions in Chapter V.
CHAPTER V

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The findings reported in Chapter IV serve as the basis for the conclusions and recommendations that make up Chapter V. The first section reports the conclusions of the study. The study is concluded with a section concerning recommendations for further study.

Conclusions

The findings of this study have led to the following conclusions:

1. Public school superintendents in Michigan believe more school consolidation should take place. The support by superintendents varied slightly by size of district enrollment but every group of superintendents supported more consolidation taking place. Sixty-five (65) of the superintendents surveyed supported more consolidation.

2. The first concern superintendents have regarding consolidation is a major concern regarding the involvement of the legislature in consolidation. A majority of the superintendents do not believe the legislature should develop consolidation guidelines for school districts to consider. In addition, superintendents rated legislators last among all the groups considered, even below high school students, in selecting groups that should be involved in developing consolidation recommendations.

Another primary concern of superintendents appears to be the idea...
of the state mandating consolidation in districts where state standards in curriculum/facilities/staffing are not met.

Finances are also a primary concern. The superintendents believe if more consolidation is to occur, the state should provide incentives. Most incentives superintendents suggest are financial.

3. Superintendents believe the major advantage of consolidation would be (improved, increased) course offerings. The other major advantages, according to the superintendents, are staffing, facility usage, administrative efficiency, and co-curricular activities. The area of finance was interesting in that 47.6% of the superintendents thought finances an advantage but 33.0% were undecided as to whether it was an advantage or a disadvantage.

The superintendents revealed a high degree of indecision ranging from a high of 33.0% on finances to a low of 9.7% in the area of course offerings. This relatively large percentage of indecision could indicate superintendents may not be adequately informed about consolidation, at least, not well enough informed to be able to make a judgment whether items would be advantages or disadvantages.

4. Superintendents who have previously been involved in consolidation ranked the areas in very nearly the same manner as those who had not been involved in consolidation. These superintendents had an even higher average of indecision than the superintendents who had not been involved in consolidation.

5. Superintendents do not believe consolidation would reduce the costs of education.

6. Superintendents believe consolidation would improve the
quality of course offerings.

7. Superintendents believe consolidation would bring more efficient use of facilities.

8. Superintendents do not believe consolidation would cause higher quality staff to be more equitably distributed.

9. Superintendents believe that through consolidation co-curricular programs would be expanded.

10. Superintendents believe consolidation would cause administrative efficiency to be improved.

11. Superintendents would favor a consolidation plan that includes recommendations developed by the State Department of Education. They strongly believe the state should provide incentives to encourage consolidation, particularly financial incentives. The organizational plan most favored by superintendents would have present school districts consolidating to form larger K-12 school districts.

Kindergarten through eighth grade elementary districts and separate high school districts, districts formed by county line, and districts formed by Intermediate School District boundaries received little support from the superintendents.

Superintendents believe the following groups should help develop the consolidation plan. In descending order: superintendents, school board members, citizens, principals, teachers, city and town officials, high school students, and legislators.

12. Superintendents believed the support level for consolidation in their district among various groups was (a) only 44.7% of the
superintendents would support consolidation in their own district even though 65% believe more consolidation should take place in the state of Michigan, (b) superintendents believe 44.7% of their administrators would support consolidation in their own district, (c) superintendents believe teachers, support staff, board members, students and community members would be opposed to consolidation in their district, and (d) the reasons given for opposition to consolidation in their own district were: loss of local control, possible job loss, fear of change, like the size of the current district, strong identification with the current district, and loss of district identity.

13. The number of years a person has been a superintendent does not make a difference in the attitudes and opinions of superintendents toward consolidation.

14. Superintendents' attitudes and opinions toward school consolidation vary according to age. Superintendents in all age groups except the "30's" groups supported consolidation. The "30's" group did not support consolidation.

15. The characteristics of a school district that may influence a superintendent's decision to consolidate are: state equalized valuation, size of the district with which to be merged, geographic distance of the proposed district, and the economic make up of the proposed district.

Superintendents do not believe the ethnic or racial make up of the proposed district would be an influencing factor.

16. Superintendents with schools that have limited course
offerings due to the size of the district strongly support consolidation. Two out of three of the superintendents whose districts have limited course offerings believe more school consolidation should take place.

Of the superintendents who replied no to limited course offerings, more than half believe more school consolidation should take place.

17. Superintendents with school districts that have course offerings affected by district finances strongly support more consolidation.

18. Superintendents with school districts that have had course offerings affected by declining enrollment strongly support more consolidation.

19. The attitudes and opinions of superintendents of school districts that have had course offerings affected by district finances, size and/or declining enrollment do not vary according to the state equalized valuation of their district. All superintendents in this group strongly support consolidation regardless of the state equalized valuation of their district.

20. Superintendents who believe the state should mandate consolidation in districts where state standards in curriculum, staffing and/or facilities are not being met are also supporters of more school consolidation in Michigan.

21. There is a strong feeling among superintendents against the state mandating consolidation.

22. A majority of the public school superintendents in the state
have been superintendents from 1 to 5 years.

23. Most superintendents in the state are in the "40's" and "50's" age groups.

24. Only 12.6% of the superintendents anticipate closing schools in their districts in the next three years.

25. School district size has affected course offerings in 63.1% of the districts.

26. School district finances have affected course offerings in 66% of the districts in the survey.

27. Declining enrollment has affected course offerings in 43.7% of the districts and affected co-curricular offerings in 28.2% of the districts.

28. Superintendents consider their own district size or larger to be the ideal size school district. Superintendents whose district size was less than 2,500 tended to consider larger districts (up to 5,000) to be the ideal size. Superintendents of districts with enrollments of 10,000 to 30,000 all considered their district to be ideal size.

29. Over 16% (16.5%) of the superintendents have been involved previously as a superintendent, with consolidation.

30. Over 46% (46.6%) of the districts are involved in an academic consortium.

31. Over 93% (93.2%) of the districts are involved in a vocational consortium or a skill center.

32. Eighty percent (80%) of the superintendents involved in vocational consortia see the consortium concept as a viable
alternative to consolidation.

33. Over 77% (77.1%) of the superintendents involved in academic consortia see the consortium concept as a viable alternative to consolidation.

34. The majority of superintendents see the consortium concept as a viable alternative to consolidation regardless of their involvement in academic consortia.

Discussion of Findings

The results of this study add to the literature in the field as this is the first study to measure superintendents' attitudes regarding public school consolidation. This study clarifies a number of important issues. Until this time, many speculated but no one knew whether public school superintendents supported more school consolidation. No one knew what superintendents believed were the advantages and disadvantages of consolidation. We now know what superintendents believe regarding many of the issues involved in public school consolidation.

This study clarifies the issue of how informed superintendents are regarding consolidation. There is a significant amount of indecision reflected in the superintendents' responses that could indicate that superintendents need to know more about consolidation.

Another important addition to the literature was the superintendents' choice of school consolidation plan. The literature indicated that a number of states have school districts based on county boundaries and that some researchers believe county school
districts are the wave of the future. Michigan public school superintendents overwhelmingly supported consolidating present K-12 school districts into larger K-12 districts.

The literature is very clear that school consolidation did occur throughout our country and our state when the state superintendents of public instruction and the state department of education were involved in encouraging and promoting consolidation to improve the quality of education for students. The literature is also clear that consolidation activity has slowed and nearly halted in the past two decades, perhaps as a result of the controversy generated during the last consolidation push by the state department.

This study reveals that public school superintendents support the state department of education developing school consolidation plans for consideration. This adds to the literature the opinions and attitudes of school superintendents regarding state department involvement in consolidation. This information has never been available. State departments of education should view this as a most positive indicator and use these results in dealing with public school superintendents in the area of school consolidation. The superintendents also have very definite opinions as to what groups should be involved in working with the state department to develop the plans. The superintendents clearly indicate that they favor the involvement of superintendents, school board members, citizens, principals and teachers. They also slightly favor the involvement of city and town officials and high school students. It is very clear that the involvement of the state legislators is very low on their
priority list. This information is an important addition to the literature. Until this study, no one had researched this area.

If and when our state considers the issue of school consolidation, these results should aid in the process by identifying the groups who should be involved in the process and the problems to be avoided if the plan is to be successful. One, of course, hopes the state department will review the literature if it attempts to create state plans in this area.

The findings of this study add to the literature in the area of district involvement in consortia and superintendents' opinions and attitudes regarding consortia as a means of dealing with the problem of small school districts, particularly in the area of course offerings. Superintendents indicate that they believe consortia are a viable alternative to school consolidation. These results should be instructive to others as they study consortia.

The literature is mixed as the advantages and disadvantages of school consolidation. For every two studies one finds that support school consolidation, there is one that questions the effectiveness of consolidation. This study adds to the literature in two ways: (a) school superintendents have definite opinions as to the advantages and disadvantages of consolidation and (b) they have definite opinions as to what characteristics a district should have to be considered as a consolidation partner.

The results also add to the literature regarding opposition to consolidation. We now have the superintendents' opinions regarding opposition to consolidation by various groups and the reasons...
superintendents believe groups are opposed.

Recommendations for Further Study

As stated earlier, there is a need for further study in public school consolidation. The findings and conclusions of this study further encourage additional research. Recommendations for further study include not only those that grow directly from the findings but also those that would examine school consolidation as it might be relevant to other aspects of education.

The recommendations are:

1. Conduct a study to investigate the attitudes and opinions of those groups school superintendents perceive as not supportive of school consolidation in their districts, i.e. administrators, teachers, support staff, board members, students, and community members.

   A study of board members' attitudes and opinions on school consolidation would be valuable considering the vital role they would have in any possible school consolidation.

2. The State Department of Education in its surveys over the past three years, has consistently found that there is state-wide support for more consolidation. Public school superintendents' opinions do not agree with the State Department survey results, i.e., superintendents believe no group in their district would support school consolidation. It is crucial to know citizen attitudes, opinions and concerns regarding consolidation to enable those who are developing plans to address the concerns in any proposed plans.
3. School consolidations have occurred within the past two years. A study should be done to determine if the consolidations have improved the efficiency, economy and the quality of education in the district. The study could include answers to the questions posed in this study regarding the effects of consolidation, i.e., were the costs of education reduced? Was the quality of course offerings improved? Was there more efficient use of facilities? Was higher quality staff more equitably distributed? Were co-curricular programs expanded? Was administrative efficiency improved?

A related area would be to determine how the most recent school consolidations are viewed by: board members, community members, teachers, support staff, students, and administrators.

4. Superintendents in this study supported the consortium concept as a viable alternative to consolidation. The recommendation would be to conduct studies of consortia, both vocational and academic, to determine how well they are solving the problems of small districts, districts with financial constraints, and other district problems. A study much like this one to determine the advantages and disadvantages and the extent of support for the consortium concept would be beneficial.

5. Conduct a study to investigate the obvious concern superintendents have regarding the legislature. It would be valuable to know the extent and the sources of the problem. Educational officials, school superintendents, and state legislators should work together to promote quality education for all children. A study that would provide some insight as to how to ameliorate the problems could
be beneficial to the entire educational process in the state.

6. Conduct a study regarding incentives that could be provided by the state to encourage school consolidation. This study would aid the State Department of Education personnel as they develop possible school consolidation plans. Incentives were recommended as early in 1959 by Conant as a means to encourage consolidation.

7. Conduct a study of the recent school consolidations in Michigan to determine if the area superintendents in this study perceived as advantages and disadvantages are, indeed, advantages and disadvantages.
June 10, 1985

Dear Superintendent:

Superintendents in Michigan have never been asked their views on the issue of school consolidation. As a doctoral candidate at Western Michigan University, I am gathering data relative to the consolidation issue. This study is designed to examine the views of Michigan public school superintendents.

A random sample of all Michigan public school superintendents was drawn and your name was selected. I have developed a telephone survey to gather your opinions on consolidation. A copy of the survey is included with this letter. I will be calling you over the next two weeks to ask you to help me answer these survey questions over the phone.

I would appreciate your help. I realize there are many demands upon your time, but I hope you will give me the ten minutes necessary to share your views with me on this important topic.

Please be assured all responses to the survey will be completely confidential. No school or person will be identified.

You will have access to the results as I will be sharing my findings with The Michigan School Administrator's Association which has given support to the study.

I value your assistance in this project and look forward to talking with you during the month of June as a researcher and fellow superintendent.

Sincerely,

Dennis McMahon
Superintendent

sl
enclosure
Appendix B

Questionnaire
School Consolidation Study

Interview - Questionnaire

District
Name ______________________  First Contact: ________________  Completed: ____________

(Date)  (Date)

Superintendent's Name: ______________________________________

Telephone Number: __________________________

1-3 3 Sample Number: __________________________

4 1 Class: __________________________

Hello. My name is Dennis McMahon. I'm Superintendent of Brighton Area Schools. I am conducting a dissertation study on school consolidation as part of my doctoral program. I am surveying 20% of all school superintendents in the state. I would appreciate it very much if you would take a few minutes of your time to answer my survey questions regarding superintendent's views on school consolidation in our state. This survey will be kept confidential and I will send you a copy if you desire the results of this study.

5-6 2

1. How long have you been a superintendent in this district? ______

7-8 2

2. How many years have you been a superintendent of schools? ______

9 1

3. Would you mind telling me your age? Are you in the 20's _ _30's _ _40's _ _50's _ _60's _

10 1

4. Are you anticipating closing any school buildings in your district within the next three years? ____Yes ____No

11 1

If yes, at what level? Elementary ____
Middle School/Jr. High ____ High School____

12 1

5. Are the course offerings limited in your district because of its size? _____Yes _____No

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13 1 6. Has declining enrollment affected your course offerings? ___Yes ___No

OE If yes, why; if no, why not?

__________________________________________________________

14 1 7. Have your course offerings been affected by school district finances? ___Yes ___No

15 1 8. Has declining enrollment affected your co-curricular offerings? ___Yes ___No

16 1 9. Do you believe more school consolidation should take place in Michigan?  
   ___Yes ___No ___Undecided

17 1 10. Should the State Department of Education develop consolidation recommendations for school districts to consider? ___Yes ___No ___Undecided

18 1 11. Should the legislature develop consolidation recommendations for school districts to consider? ___Yes ___No

19 1 12. Should the state mandate school district consolidation in districts where state-wide curriculum/staffing/facilities standards are not being met? ___Yes ___No

20 1 13. Should the state offer incentives to encourage consolidation ___Yes ___No

OE If yes, please share with me the incentives you think would be valuable to encourage consolidation.

__________________________________________________________

14. If the State Department of Education were to attempt to develop a consolidation plan in which they recommended which schools should consolidate, which of the following groups of
people, if any, should serve on that committee with state department officials:

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<td>21</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>a. State Legislators</td>
<td>Yes</td>
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<td>b. Superintendents of Schools</td>
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<td>c. City and Town Officials</td>
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<td>e. School Board Members</td>
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<td>g. High School Students</td>
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15. If Michigan were to reorganize school districts into a new organizational plan, which of the following plans would you support if you had to pick a definite plan:

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<td>29</td>
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<td>a. K-8 elementary districts and separate high school districts.</td>
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<td>b. School districts consolidating to form larger K-12 districts.</td>
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<td>c. By county lines.</td>
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<td>d. By intermediate school district boundaries.</td>
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<td>OE</td>
<td>e. Or do you have another plan to suggest that might be better?</td>
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16. What do you believe is the ideal district size or enrollment? 0-1,500 1,500-2,500 2,500-5,000 5,000-10,000 10,000+

17. Do you believe if more districts in our state
consolidate that:

34  a. the cost of education would be reduced?
   _____Yes _____No _____Undecided

35  b. the quality of course offerings would be improved?
   _____Yes _____No _____Undecided

36  c. there would be more efficient use of present facilities?
   _____Yes _____No _____Undecided

37  d. higher quality staff would be more equitably distributed?
   _____Yes _____No _____Undecided

38  e. co-curricular programs would be expanded?
   _____Yes _____No _____Undecided

39  f. administrative efficiency would be improved?
   _____Yes _____No _____Undecided

18. I'm going to read a list of areas which could be considered an advantage or disadvantage to your district if you were involved in consolidation. First I'll read them all, then I'll go back and ask you to decide whether the area would be an advantage or disadvantage to your district. You may answer unsure if you are not sure if it would be an advantage or disadvantage.

   Advan. Disadvan. Unsure

40  a. Administrative Efficiency
   _____ _____ _____

41  b. Co-curricular Activities
   _____ _____ _____

42  c. Staffing
   _____ _____ _____

43  d. Facility Usage
   _____ _____ _____

44  e. Course Offerings
   _____ _____ _____

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19. As a superintendent, have you ever been involved in the consolidation of two districts? __Yes __No

20. In your district, do you believe the following groups would support consolidation?

   a. Support Staff __Yes __ No __Undecided
   b. Teachers __Yes __ No __Undecided
   c. Administrators __Yes __ No __Undecided
   d. Board Members __Yes __ No __Undecided
   e. Community Members __Yes __ No __Undecided
   f. Superintendent __Yes __ No __Undecided
   g. Students __Yes __ No __Undecided

21. If your answer is NO to "Will this group support consolidation?", please give the reason you believe they would be against consolidation.

   Support Staff__________________________
   Teachers_______________________________
   Administrators________________________
   Board Members________________________
   Community Members_____________________
   Superintendent________________________
   Students______________________________

22. Is your district currently involved with an academic consortium? __Yes __ No

23. Is your district currently involved with a vocational consortium skills center? __Yes __ No

24. Do you believe the consortium concept is a
viable alternative to consolidation?
___Yes ___No

25. Which of the following issues would be an influencing factor in your decision:

57 1 State equalized valuation of the proposed district. ___Yes ___No

58 1 Size of district to be merged with. ___Yes ___No

59 1 Ethnic or racial make-up of proposed district. ___Yes ___No

60 1 Geographic distance of the proposed district in your area. ___Yes ___No

61 1 Economic make-up of proposed consolidated district. ___Yes ___No

Closing: Thank you for taking the time to help me with this project. Your answers will not only aid in my research, but will help others in our state interested in this issue know the views our school superintendents have on this issue.

Additional information to be included for analysis: the information will be obtained from the Department of Education.

62-66 5 1. Actual total student population of district.

67-72 6 2. State equalized evaluation of district.


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