

INVESTIGATION OF THE HISTORY AND UNIFICATION OF PARK COUNTY HIGH
SCHOOL AND SCHOOL DISTRICT NUMBER 4 IN LIVINGSTON, MONTANA

BY

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Twenty years ago, in November, 1946, the Montana Committee on Public Elementary and Secondary School Organization and Finance, whose purpose it was to study the structure and organization of the school districts of Montana, turned its report over to the Governor of Montana, Sam C. Ford and the members of the thirtieth legislative assembly. (2) This factual and complete report of the school district problems in Montana was not acted upon very enthusiastically by the thirtieth, or any subsequent legislatures up to our present day. (61) Instead of acting directly upon the problem, as legislatures in other states had done to make reorganization mandatory, the legislature left the problem with the local school districts and allowed them to cope with the problems of reorganization and refinancing on a voluntary basis. (60) There has been great pressure for change and the number of districts has decreased in Montana from 2,500 in 1931 to 906 in 1965. (61)

After thirty-five years there is still very much room for Montana to discard misconceptions and speed up the reduction of school organizational units. It should have been evident that every day of procrastination some of Montana's children would be getting a substandard education if the tools of change were not used with alacrity. No little red school house organized years ago to satisfy the needs at that time was ever conceived to prepare its pupils for another world such as that existing at present. (3)

As time went by, more and more districts were reorganized to meet modern standards. The unification of Park County High School and School

District Number 4 of Livingston, Montana, was a case where the problems became so apparent that something had to be done. The crowding was beginning to smother good education and it was getting worse each year. The "action" people on the school boards and in the community rallied the undecided electors by vividly publicizing the needs that were present and these actions produced changes that will be beneficial to generations yet unborn.

The purpose of this paper is to show the years of struggle with school problems that led to the present unification and building program. It is also an attempt to depict the circumstances and actions connected with the issues involved in the growth of Livingston's schools to show how better education developed in the community. And finally, it is an attempt to show how these people put personal and traditional biases aside to break the power of diverse purposes that had at times depressed the opportunities of the children since the public education system was established in 1883. During the historical development of the Livingston school system, the advancement of education looked doubtful at times. (58) Yet, those who favored better education were generally able to achieve their goals. The people did it again in 1964 and 1965, when they passed the unification proposal first, the \$1,574,000 bond issue for the new high school next, and finally, a special levy to continue the kindergarten and pay for maintenance and teacher salaries in the elementary system. (63)

Statement of the Problem

Reorganization is a very complex operation, especially to those who have not made a study of it or have not had the opportunity to pay attention to its implications for local education. Suddenly, the problem became evident and many questions concerning school district unification had to be answered such as:

1. Would this unification cause my taxes to increase or decrease?
2. What were the reasons for unification?
3. What events caused it to be necessary?
4. What groups were involved in getting it accomplished?
5. What benefits would result from it?
6. Where was the new building to be located?
7. When would the new building be in use?
8. What was the history of change that had led to the present condition of the school system?
9. What support had people in the past given their schools?

The purpose of this study was to develop a comprehensive picture of historical actions relating to school changes in the Livingston area and finally to emphasize the latest events in unification and record them.

This investigation was intended to make available the history, facts and figures of interest and importance for future use.

Procedures

The procedures used to gather the information for the paper were as follows:

1. Study and review of literature related generally to national, regional, state and local reorganization for general comparisons.
2. Selection of specific literature and information directly pertinent to the historical development of reorganization in Montana.
3. Investigation of school board minutes and other administration files and records of School District Number 4.
4. Intensive study of newspaper archives for a history of the schools in Livingston, Montana.
5. Preparation of a questionnaire (65) to be personally delivered and explained to obtain information and opinions from those involved in the unification.
6. Presentation of copies of the manuscript to the proper school authorities for evaluation to avoid inadvertent errors concerning the unification.
7. Interviews with authorities who were involved in the activities leading to the unification.
8. Interview with a local historian for additional information about the schools' history.
9. Summarization of the findings in a short paper for future reference.

The interviews revealed how the reorganization actually took place -- not how it theoretically should have taken place. The unification had already been completed so no method of evaluation as to how efficiently the job could have been accomplished will be attempted.

CHAPTER II

MAJOR ATTEMPTS AT STATEWIDE SCHOOL REORGANIZATION IN MONTANA

Montana has been accused of being behind the times educationally by informed persons in many different areas in the state. Even today, Montana seems to be an area of quiet mountains, fields and villages, not by-passed by rapid change; but where the educational processes are somewhat out of touch with the rest of the fast-moving technological world.

The school districts in the state also seem out of touch with methods of reorganization used elsewhere to form larger and more efficient school districts when necessary. Rather than make districts reorganize by law, the state legislature has allowed individual schools to do this on a voluntary basis which hasn't produced the action necessary. (62) It is possible to make comparisons on a percentage basis to show what Montana has done in comparison with the rest of the nation. Table 1 (61) shows reorganization in the nation as a whole for the past thirty-four years and Table 2 (1) shows reorganization of Montana organizational units operating schools over the same period.

TABLE 1. SCHOOL DISTRICT REORGANIZATION IN THE UNITED STATES DURING THE PERIOD 1931-1965

Years	1931-32	1964-65
Number of Organizational units	127,529	29,391

TABLE 2. SCHOOL DISTRICT REORGANIZATION IN MONTANA
DURING THE PERIOD 1931-1965

Years	1931	1965
Number of Organizational Units	2,500	906

A comparison of the figures in Table 1 and Table 2 shows the United States has discontinued a total of 98,138 school districts in the last thirty-four years; this is a reduction of 76.2%. Montana has dropped 1,594 school districts over the same period of time which is a reduction of 63.8%.

When regional research laboratories were established under Title IV of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, Montana was included in the Northwest Region with Alaska, Washington, Oregon, and Idaho.

To show the inefficiency of Montana school district reorganization one needs only to note that these five states with a population of 6,144,059 have a total of 1,826 school districts. Of this number, Montana with a population of 669,547 laid claim to 906.

Earlier Attempts to Reorganize

An attempt to reorganize districts into larger units was proposed in 1914 by Superintendent of Public Instruction, Davee, who proposed the County Unit Plan. It was designed for purposes of taxation and administration, instead of school consolidation. Davee proposal was killed in the House of Representatives in 1915. (62)

Miss May Trumper, the successor of Mr. Davee as Superintendent of Public Instruction for Montana, continued his fight for passage of the bill. In 1919, her efforts met with success and the County Unit Plan was enacted into law. (62)

This plan was an optional county unit law which could be adopted by any group of third class districts in any county. The law enabled these districts to form one unit by the vote of qualified electors in the areas involved. (62)

This statute in Montana varied from similar laws in other states in that it left various administrative powers with the local school boards, such as electing teachers, purchasing of supplies and equipment and issuing all warrants on district funds. This law provided for a board of five members to determine a uniform county levy and budget funds for the districts in the unit. (62)

Superintendent of Public Instruction Trumper praised Cascade county for being the first to accept the provisions of this law. Chouteau and Carbon Counties adopted the plan soon after. (62)

In 1924, Cascade and Chouteau counties discontinued operation under the plan. This form of administration was not dropped because it had failed. It has actually given better educational service to the districts than that possible under the usual system. Probably the most powerful factor in its discontinuance was the supposition that it had caused an increase in school costs in the counties using it. At that time, costs of education were rising everywhere and county valuations were dropping which caused levies to be raised. This financial situation was little understood or appreciated by

the people. As a result of discontinuing the County Unit Plan, Cascade and Chouteau Counties had unsatisfactory conditions in 1924 with some schools closed and other with shortened terms. (62)

Carbon County, the last county using the plan, discontinued it in 1927. The greatest handicap of this proposal was the misconception the public had received that it produced increased costs so that it did not have a fair trial to show its potential usefulness. (62)

The next attempt to reorganize Montana's schools came in 1945, when Governor Sam C. Ford appointed a committee of nine to study the school situation in Montana and report back to him and the State Legislature in 1946. (2) This committee made a very thorough study of the state's school districts and found many problems that needed solutions. According to the study the State Department of Public Instruction was under-staffed, which made it impossible to establish and maintain the desired long-range program for the improvement of education in Montana. The qualifications and salary for the office of superintendent were low and did not attract better qualified candidates. In 1946, the superintendent and his small staff had the responsibility of supervising 1,710 school districts. In view of the state's size and sparse population, it appeared that the department was understaffed as well as underpaid and generally not equipped to perform its duties adequately. Administering schools through so many separate boards of trustees complicated the matter and reduced efficiency of administration. (2)

Most school districts of Montana were too small to provide a modern program of education. Previously, these districts had been the solution to the limited educational needs of the "horse and buggy" days. At that time the

schools were operated, equipped and maintained by the local boards who controlled their own schools with little help or direction from the county or state. With better transportation and the shifting of trade centers to the more populous areas, the centering of social and economic life in larger cities, the gradual disappearance of many small settlements and other factors, there came a decline in the need for the small school district. (2)

The traditional local districts were formed without regard to population trends or educational advancement. The primary purpose of the schools was the teaching of the "three R's" but did not make provision for the added features required such as: vocational education, music, art, physical education, medical and dental care and many other programs in the modern curriculum. The educational needs in our society made it imperative that children be given the benefits of more highly developed educational programs. (2)

In many cases it might have been impossible to reduce the number of schools however, it was very necessary that there be a consolidation of school districts. This consolidation had been extremely slow and ineffective. The problems arose when districts that had low levies attempted to keep their present status while others having high levies tried to consolidate with other districts to lower levies. (2)

Many of the small school districts had only three or four families and it was often extremely difficult to find three persons who were willing to accept the office of school trustee. In such cases there was not a variety of opinions which could contribute to formulating good policy. The quality of the school would be determined by the personal opinions of one or two people, which often resulted in four walls, a few desks and books, or,

on the other hand, in extravagance in trying to keep ahead of the next district. (2)

The pattern of school organization did not provide a continuous program of education from first grade through high school. Only 176 of the 1,710 school districts in Montana provided this twelve-year program for the children. The failure to provide such education made it necessary to transfer pupils and funds and did not permit parents to participate in the control of high schools which their children attended; therefore, it reduced the quality of the over-all educational effort. (2)

Another attempt to find some solution to Montana's school problems came in 1958. The State of Montana engaged the Field Research Division of George Peabody College of Teachers from Nashville, Tennessee, to study the schools and inform the state as to what could be done to promote better education. (4) A strongly worded report made some comments that Montana should re-examine its current pattern of school attendance centers. Montana should weigh the ethical problem of using the state power to tax citizens in economically and efficiently managed areas. Then calling upon those same taxpayers to subsidize districts not so organized and not having an honest reason for the type organization they maintained. The state should also make an honest appraisal of the opportunities given to pupils in high school of a hundred students or less which enjoyed both the support and even the state blessing in accreditation when another locality, five miles away on an all-weather road, had a high school of three hundred pupils or over and offered twice the number of subjects. (4)

The districts should be reduced in number. The following basic steps, if

implemented, would rapidly reduce the superfluous districts: (4)

1. A simple ultimatum that all districts not operating schools would be abolished. This would reduce units from 1,160 to 953.

2. A statute requiring every elementary school district to merge with its high school district, so one board governed all education in the area. This would reduce the number of districts to 171 of which 24 would, automatically become county-side districts.

3. A mandate that state policies and regulations would draw accreditation and financial support from non-isolated schools which cannot justify their existence in terms of subjects offered, staff, enrollment, and nearness to another district. This would reduce the districts still farther. (4)

Many leading citizens of the state did not give up working for statewide redistricting. Still another attempt was made in 1961, when a proposal was presented by the Governor's Committee on School District Reorganization and Finance. The committee formed the following minimum requirements which agreed in general with the Peabody report but were stated more specifically:

1. The school district must contain grades one through twelve, have a combined average number belonging in grades nine through twelve of at least 150 or more, except each county would be entitled to at least one district. Also, a waiver could be obtained for isolated schools with predicted long-term growth.

2. All territory must be contiguous.

3. All reorganized districts would be the same class. No district class system would exist.

4. Each district would have four trustee districts; any municipalities must be in one district. Districts abolished would be attached to an adjacent district and its property and indebtedness apportioned to the successor or successors. Bonded indebtedness would remain in the territory which voted it in. (62)

The committee presented this to the Montana State Legislature where it was defeated in the House of Representatives by a close margin. (62)

It is interesting to note the only plan that regressed from the gains established was the County Unit Plan. Each of the attempts did some good even if not as much as could be hoped by the educators understanding the problems.

CHAPTER III
HISTORY OF LIVINGSTON SCHOOLS
1883 - 1966

As the Livingston school system approached the end of seventy-three years of training the youth of the city and district, the building of a new high school on McCleod Island echoed the need that had appeared periodically throughout the city's history. (58) Park High School which will cost \$1,574,356 (a single story brick structure) will represent the largest single expenditure for new school construction in the city's history. (63)

Many times an election for school bonds failed in the city for some reason. In each case, however, technicalities or public opposition or indifference were overcome and the money was ultimately provided for expansion of the schools. (58)

The area from the north boundary of Yellowstone Park to Duck Creek, seventeen miles northeast of Livingston was designated as School District Number 30. The district was approximately eighty miles long and fifteen miles wide. The first small school was on the Sam Nesbit Ranch south of Livingston near the junction of the Trail Creek road and the road along the west side of the Yellowstone River to Emigrant, Montana. At this point, a small community had been established on the route from Bozeman through the Meadow and Trail Creek Valleys to Emigrant Gulch. The land east of the Yellowstone River was in the Crow Indian Reservation where a private school was established at Chico, Montana the following year. (58)

The only other community in this first large district was Benson's Landing, about four miles down the Yellowstone River from Livingston where

Amos Benson's ferry became the heart of a settlement. There is no record of a school being established there. (58)

In 1882, the citizens of Benson's Landing moved to what is now the lower east side of Livingston. The new location was named Clark City. At this time the Northern Pacific Railway laid out the Livingston townsite and by the spring of 1883, Livingston had absorbed Clark City. (5)

Records of school board actions are not available covering those early years. However, according to the first copies of the Livingston Daily Enterprise, the first public school in Livingston started on Monday, June 25, 1883, with fifty students in two large upstairs rooms rented in the Major Bingham's Hall building over the Public Drug on Callender Street. These rooms could each seat fifty students and were equipped with the latest desks, blackboards, globes and ball frames. (48)

The primary grades were taught by Miss Fannie Allen and the advanced grades by Mrs. Maude Eberman. (19) In August, the advanced grades had twenty-eight students and the lower forty-five, which was considered a good attendance because the school session had not been well advertised. (47)

Previous to the start of school, the board of trustees comprising Amith, Goughnour and Bingham, conducted a successful bond election for \$15,000 to build a new school at the present location of the Eastside School on the corner of D and Lewis Streets. This portion of the block had been donated to the district by the Northern Pacific Railway Company. (24) The blank bonds were received in June of 1883, (25) and the construction was expected to begin about July 25, on a building which would be "second to none when completed". (26)

In December of 1883, Doctor Grant, the school clerk, reported 217 persons under twenty-one years of age in School District number 30, which then consisted of Livingston and the neighboring area. Of the 217 reported, only 102 were enrolled in school. In January of 1884, the compulsory school law was passed by the Territory of Montana to deal with these enrollment problems. (16) The voters now passed a special tax levy for \$1,900 which had previously failed, and thus allowed school to resume in Bingham Hall in January of 1884, with a Miss Lockwood from Butte taking the upper grades and a Miss Flanagan teaching the primary grades. (27)

Months passed, but construction had not started on the new building. The bonds that were supposed to be issued on December 22, 1883, were not forthcoming. (58) The Daily Enterprise inquired as to what had happened, and E. Goughnour, the board chairman, replied that the bonds had been declared illegal because the district did not have a total tax valuation of \$850,000. They had exceeded the statutory provision of two per cent of the assessed valuation and consequently were void. (11) The trustees added that they were preparing a proposition to authorize an issue of bonds that would conform to the district valuation to provide funds for the erection of the school. (28) An election was held in February of 1884, to bond the district for \$7,000. (42) The school was to be a two-story brick building costing \$12,000. The bonds were to pay part of the cost and the balance was to be raised by other means provided by law. (29) The bond issue was passed sixty-seven to four and the people expected to have a building by July or August of 1884. (30)

Rumors began circulating that the building site was to be on the west

side rather than the east side of town as originally intended. Trouble started. (46) As a matter of interest -- about this time it was announced that a Catholic school and convent would be built that year on the west side of town. (15) During March, the annual school election was set for April 5, with all three trustees to be re-elected. (53) After a heated campaign, H. M. Sloan, R. A. Chisholm and H. T. Ceperly were elected trustees; James McBride was appointed clerk. (54)

The school term expired in May of 1884 and was to take up again in Bingham Hall in September. (31) The bids were not advertised promptly because the architect had not prepared his plans completely. The board said they were going to advertise immediately so they could erect the school that year. (32) Still more trouble came when the bidders for the contract insisted the architect's plans were not specific enough. (33) In September of 1884, the contractor stated he would begin work immediately (34) and by October brick were being laid for the partition walls. (35)

In the meantime, school started as scheduled in Bingham Hall with one-hundred students enrolled. (36) The new building was still not finished when school closed for the Christmas vacation, so plans were made to move to the Fowlie Hall building over the Vicar's Drug store on Second and Callender streets in January. (37) Toward the end of the school term, the proposal to determine whether \$3,300 should be raised to finish the building was sanctioned by the voters. (38) The complete amount voted was the limit of the district's debt ceiling and left \$1,700 still needed to finish the upper floor. This amount was raised a short time later.

All spring and summer, work progressed on the new building. (39)

School commenced in the lower part of the building in September of 1885, with one hundred students in attendance. Professor W. E. Harmon was principal and taught the upper grades. Miss LeBarre taught the intermediate and Miss Flanagan the primary grades. (40) This placed the Livingston schools in district-owned quarters for the first time.

During the first two decades, the schools were seriously short of funds due to new taxation procedures that were indifferent or inaccurate. This made it necessary to call special elections in order to raise additional funds for school operations. At one time, the teachers, board members, and others, made contributions to keep the schools open until practically a full term was completed. (58)

In the spring of 1891, a bond issue of \$25,000 was passed for one or more additional school buildings. The bonds were declared illegal because they exceeded the statutory three per cent limit and because the number of votes were under the necessary forty per cent of the electorate as required by law. (41) Shortly, another bond election authorized \$20,000 for the buildings. A one-story frame building was built on the East Side School grounds. In addition, another frame building was completed on C and Gallatin Streets to accommodate the first four grades.

Years later, in March of 1907, \$18,000 in bonds was voted for the erection of the present Northside Building which stands at Chinook and Third Streets. This school served one hundred-ten students in grades one through four with three teachers and a teaching principal in four classrooms.

In 1892, for a sum of \$15,910, W. H. Orr of Helena contracted to

erect a two-story brick building at Fifth and Callender Streets on the west side of town. This building was the immediate predecessor of the present school. Excavations began in April of the same year, but Orr and Company failed their contract, so other builders were hired to complete the contract. (45) Even with these problems, the structure was ready for school by the fall of that year. (52)

High school grades nine, ten and eleven were added to the district schools in 1894 and were quartered on the second floor of the West Side School. (22) In 1900, Park County High School was established. Four full courses were offered and the school was commissioned so graduates could enter any college or university in the state without an examination. The school had Mr. O. M. Harvey as principal with two assistants and sixty students. (5) In 1904, the high school was required to move due to overcrowding (58) and in February the County High School District was bonded for \$25,000. (21) C. E. Bell designed a new building (7) which was ready for use in January of 1905. (5) By 1918, the enrollment was again over the buildings' capacity (5) making conditions so crowded that a \$68,000 bond issue was passed which furnished an addition that alleviated the problem for that year. (12)

In 1901, the original East Side building was remodeled and the present two-story brick structure completed. Part of the \$325,000 bond issue was used in 1949 to build a kindergarten, a visual aids room and an auditorium-gymnasium. (23) At the present time, East Side can serve three hundred students in grades one through five and the staff consists of eleven teachers and one teaching principal. There are eleven classrooms, two playrooms, an

audio-visual room, kindergarten and auditorium-gymnasium. (63)

Fire razed the West Side building during the school year of 1907, and churches in the city were rented for classrooms until the building was rebuilt. It was again ready by the following September. (58) This building at Fifth and Callender Streets currently has facilities for eight teachers and a teaching principal who work in eight classrooms with approximately two hundred pupils in grades one through five. (63)

The school attendance was so high in 1912 that there was not enough room in the existing buildings so a room over the Golden Rule Store on Second Street (now the J. C. Penny Co. store) was leased. (58) In this room, R. J. Woods, the only male faculty member in the district, (beside the superintendent) taught the first manual training program. (66) In December of 1912, a bond issue of \$69,500 for a new building was defeated but in 1914, another issue for \$80,000 was proposed and accepted by the electors. (9) The resulting school, located at Lewis and B Streets, was ready for the students in September of 1915 (44) and contained nine rooms including a manual training room, domestic science room and a large auditorium. (66)

Enrollment increased during 1926 and 1927 to such a point that it was necessary to vote on bonds valued at \$45,000 which passed in 1928. Construction began immediately, and the addition was ready for occupancy in the fall of 1929. This added five more rooms and a gymnasium to the old structure. (66) This school was originally named "Central" but the name was changed to "Lincoln" in 1926 upon a request from the Grand Army of the Republic in honor of Abraham Lincoln. (66) Presently the school stands as

it was then constructed. There are fourteen classrooms, a gymnasium and various smaller auxiliary rooms which makes this the largest school building in the district. In it fourteen teachers and a full-time principal work with approximately 350 students in the sixth, seventh and eighth grades. (63)

In March of 1937, Fred Willson was chosen as the architect to plan yet another addition to the high school (a 9,600 square foot building at a cost of \$225,000). It was ready for use in the school year of 1939. (5) With this addition, the high school now had room for 550 students. (64)

Again, the elementary school population had outgrown its housing and it became necessary for District Number 4 to hold an election for a \$325,000 bond issue to erect a new West Side school in the Park Addition between Tenth and Eleventh Streets, plus an addition to the East Side school. The bond issue carried seven to one but was not valid because it was fourteen votes short of the required number of votes needed by law to make a bond election legal. (13)

At an election in January of 1947, fifty-three per cent of the qualified voters turned out and passed the issue. To produce a quorum, the citizens committee worked intensively to insure the success of this election. A legal problem developed on this bond issue when an injunction was sought to stop the board from issuing the bonds it being charged that the cost of the new school, coupled with the present bonded indebtedness made the total in excess of the taxable valuation of the district as defined by the constitutional limitations. (18) The court found in favor of School District Number 4, (17)

This new West Side school, which was named in honor of Mr. B. A. Winans, who was superintendent of the Livingston schools for thirty-one years, was opened for occupancy in the fall of 1949. This building contained 19,000 square feet of floor space (50) which provided room for six classes, kindergarten through fifth grade. (51) The architects originally planned the school to have ten classrooms but post-war construction costs rose so rapidly the final plans only called for five classrooms as the bond issue was not sufficient to pay for the original number of rooms planned. This school was dedicated on August 28, 1949. (49) A \$145,000 wing containing eight classrooms was added in August of 1954. (6) At present, this building contains thirteen classrooms, a health center, multi-purpose gymnasium, an auditorium and smaller auxiliary rooms which serve approximately 325 students from kindergarten through sixth grade. On the present staff are twelve teachers and a teaching principal. (63)

During July of 1952, a bond proposal of \$395,000 was passed by the electors of District Number 4 to finance construction of a school at North Eighth and Front Streets in the northwest portion of Livingston. This new building was dedicated August 27, 1954, as the "George Washington School". (20) No changes have been made to its structure since it was built. There are seven classrooms, audio-visual room, multi-purpose gymnasium and a large playroom in the basement. The building will accomodate 200 students from kindergarten through sixth grade and the staff includes eight teachers and a teaching principal. (63)

Table 3 lists the total expenditures for school construction, in as far as the figures are available. To this table needs to be added the current Park High School construction project of \$1,574,356.

TABLE 3. SCHOOLS IN THE LIVINGSTON SCHOOL DISTRICT

Date	School	Location	Capacity	Cost
1883	First in Livingston	Major Bingham Hall over Public Drug on Callender Street	100	Rented
1885	Second in Livingston	Fowlie Hall over Vicars Drug, 2nd & Callender Street	110	Rented
1885	East Side	D & Lewis Streets	150	\$ 12,000
1892	East Side Annex	D & Lewis Streets	50	1,400
1892	First North Side	C & Gallatin Streets	120	2,600
1892	West Side	5th & Callender	200	16,000
1901	Present East Side	D & Lewis Streets	300	10,000
1905	High School	5th & Callender	200	25,000
1907	Present North Side	3rd & Chinook Streets	110	18,000
1908	Present West Side	5th & Callender	200	- - - *
1915	Central (Lincoln)	B & Lewis Streets	300	80,000
1918	1st High School Addition	5th & Callender	150	68,000
1929	Lincoln Addition	B & Lewis Streets	125	45,000
1937	2nd High School Addition	5th & Callender	200	225,000
1949	B. A. Winans	10th & 11th Streets	125	200,000
1949	East Side Addition	D & Lewis	20	125,000
1954	George Washington	8th & Front Streets	200	250,000
1954	B. A. Winans Addition	10th & 11th Streets	200	145,000

* Rebuilt by fire insurance funds.

It was evident in 1956 that the Park County High School building was overcrowded. The school was designed to accommodate 550 students but 607 filled its classrooms. (64) This situation existed until 1964 when action was taken to propose a bond issue and obtain an architect to design a high school building of a 900 student capacity with arrangements for future expansion. (63)

The recent unification of the local school districts was a beneficial step toward securing the interest and support of the voters on a \$1,574,356 bond issue which was passed in October of 1965. (56) At the time of this writing, the land has been cleared and construction begun. It is expected to be finished so the students can occupy the building by the fall of 1967. (63)

CHAPTER IV

FACTORS IN SCHOOL DISTRICT UNIFICATION IN LIVINGSTON, MONTANA

In the past the Park County High School filled educational needs of Livingston and the area surrounding it. As population changes caused the advent of high schools in other localities in Park County such as Clyde Park, Wilsall and Gardiner, it became obvious the original need for facilities for the county as a unit were obsolete. The county school was not needed by the people in the outlying districts when they had their own high schools conveniently close. (63)

It was also evident that there were factions within the county which wanted to keep school costs down regardless of the effect on the education of the children in the area. Some people considered that this disagreement would probably cancel the vote for any attempted unification because those voters who could break the impasse appeared to be indifferent to the problem. (63)

Moves Toward Solution of High School Problems

In 1954 the student population reached 560 in the high school. The board of trustees began laying the groundwork for a solution to the school space problem. During this year the possibility of building an addition to the high school was investigated and a citizens' committee was formed to help pass county-wide bond issues for \$1,840,000. The issue failed and the crowded situation continued to become worse each year. (64) The board of trustees continued to work on the possibilities of a new building. In 1958,

a bond issue of \$40,000 was passed which allowed the trustees to buy twenty acres of land on McCleod Island on which they had long held a buyer's option.

(10) In 1960 after the procurement of space for a new high school, the trustees began work on the consolidation of the high school district with the elementary district. Three major problems were being worked on to gain a solution to the even greater problem of consolidation. First, it was necessary to wait for the Big Creek School district to be abandoned so it could be divided between the Gardiner District and High School District Number 1 in accordance with the wishes of the voters in that area. When the Big Creek abandonment took place, it allowed the formation of High School District Number 4 at Gardiner. In 1963 by the positive vote and the work of the County Commissioners, High School District Number 4 was formed. (8) This district included the Gardiner Elementary District Number 7, District Number 9 at Cooke City and many miles of wilderness. Now that Gardiner had its own high school district, high school education in Gardiner was no longer the responsibility of the County High School Board. Thus, two problems were solved.

The last problem remaining before the consolidation plans could be completed was a formidable one dealing with the school district abandonment laws. If a district wished to consolidate with one being abandoned, it must go through a complicated procedure in which its property was appraised and inventoried for legal disposal before it could be incorporated into another district. (59) (See Appendix A)

Before the legislature met in 1963, a group representing the high school board worked with the Montana Education Association in proposing a bill which would change the statutes of abandonment when school districts

merge. A new term was introduced into the legal vocabulary called "unification", which allowed districts to unify with the remaining districts as the possessor of all the "eliminated" district's property and debts. This amendment to the abandonment law was passed by the Legislature. (59) (See Appendix B) It is now possible to have a simple unification without the complications of the property settlement involved in abandonment. (59) (See Appendix C)

Problems of the Unification Process

All three of the necessary steps were completed by late 1963. The high school board began holding joint meetings with the elementary trustees to explore the possibilities open to them. A wide variety of problems and solutions were discussed.

As the districts were presently constituted in legally separated administrative units it would not be feasible for the elementary district to use the high school building if they moved in with only the seventh and eighth grades. Without the ninth grade, it would not be accepted as an accredited junior high school. The only one advantage then would be more space. The elementary district would need the ninth grade so it could receive the higher secondary ANB allotment as opposed to the lower elementary ANB pupil allotment. It is to the advantage of the elementary district to have a junior high school approved by the state so that seventh and eighth grade students are counted on the secondary level. This would mean the state would pay a portion of the maximum allotment which in Livingston's case was \$474.88 per student. If these grades remained in the elementary

classification, they would receive state help on a portion of the allotment of only \$349.80 per pupil, the elementary schedule figure. From these figures, a person can see the advantage of establishing a junior high school because of the higher allotment. Directly concerning the junior high school the law reads:

In computing the amount guaranteed for the foundation program, only junior high schools which have been approved and accredited by the State Board of Education shall be considered a part of the secondary enrollment. (59)

The difference in funds for a junior high school that meets the requirements set up by the state so that its seventh and eighth grade students could be considered as secondary enrollment, would vary from \$40,000 to \$50,000 in increased budgeting per fiscal year, depending on the ANB at the time. (63)

Also, the issue to allow the high school district to absorb the seventh and eighth grades as it was a legal possibility for the high school district to operate a junior high school was considered. This plan was discouraged because it involved one district handling another district's funds. The consideration to abandon the old high school building when the new one became available was quickly eliminated because the thought of leaving an abandoned building was unacceptable. After disposing of the alternatives which were actually not solutions, it was agreed that unification was the answer to the problem because of the unlimited future advantages that could be contemplated. Unification became the subject of future joint meetings and community discussions.

To some trustees the problem was not clearly defined and some in School District Number 4 were somewhat reluctant to shoulder the responsibilities of "inheriting" an additional school or possibly two. Also, some of them wondered if Gardiner, which had a high school, would be included in the city school system of Livingston. This problem was unfounded as Gardiner had been made independent upon creation of its own high school district.

When the problems were explained it was decided that work must be started as soon as possible to allow the two districts to unite under one administration. This unification would dispose of the County High School District as such, yet keep High School District Number 1 for bonding and taxation purposes. Now was the time when controversy would have to be put aside for a united effort to convince the people in Park County that this action was the best course to follow.

The opportunity to present the unification proposal to the people came during the school year of 1963 when the student population in Lincoln School and the Park County High School reached a critically excessive point. The following statement and table produced by the Citizens Committee for School Unification explain the problem that existed:

The present high school was built in 1938 to accommodate 550 students. This figure has been the determining factor for hall size, locker space, seating capacity of auditorium, and classroom space. The auditorium is presently used as a study hall: assemblies are now held in the gymnasium. Activity rooms have been converted into classrooms and guidance offices. With the best "know how", it is the desire of the trustees and citizens of this community to secure an education that is balanced in terms of society and the potentialities and purposes of the individual student. The program of the high school must provide an education that develops citizenship, the skills of

the subject matter areas, mental health, and the ability to live effectively with others. The numbers shown in the charts represent enrollments of a community population that is constant and does not allow for people who might come into this area. The Lincoln School auditorium has been made into a library, lunch room, band and orchestra practice room. Laboratory facilities for any type of science program for the junior high level are too limited. Each classroom is over loaded with students because sufficient classroom space does not exist. There is no room for an art program that will reach a majority of the students in grades seven and eight. No opportunity for an expanded program to provide an enriched curriculum for the gifted child. (64)

TABLE 4. ACTUAL AND ANTICIPATED ENROLLMENTS, LIVINGSTON, MONTANA

Year	High School with 550 Student Capacity	Lincoln School with 350 Student Capacity
1963-64	738	462
64-65	748	492
65-66	774	492
66-67	801	460
67-68	836	454
68-69	930	474
69-70	838	472.

Community Action and Results of Unification

In 1963 and 1964, the High School Board was discussing the unification with representative citizens of the community at every opportunity. From meeting with the boards and citizens came a program to carry the information to the people throughout the area. Open community meetings were held and a formal citizens' committee was organized to carry the plan

of unification to its completion. The citizens' committee, PTA, service clubs, and many others began to help. The news media, press and radio also informed the public of the need that was apparent. Administrators, board members and citizens spoke at many meetings throughout the county to explain what unification was, what it could do, and why it was necessary for better education. The climax was that the unification was put up to vote in November, 1964, and accepted.

The seven-man High School Board which had been appointed by the County Commissioners was eliminated and three persons from districts outside District Number 4, yet within High School District 1, were elected to sit with the original District 4 seven-man board. As a result of the elections for trustees held in April, 1965, two of the original County High School board members were elected to take a place in the new positions. (55)

When the new high school building is completed, two major changes will take place in student location and grade arrangement. In 1967, the high school completion date, the seventh and eighth grades from Lincoln School will combine with the ninth grade, to occupy the old high school building. This arrangement will form an accredited junior high school that will allow an increase in budgeting of \$128.10 per ANB because state aid can now be figured at the secondary school rate of \$474.88 per ANB. (63) The other change taking place in 1967 will be the movement of grades ten, eleven and twelve into the new building, which will then comprise an accredited three-year district high school that will be up to date in plant and curriculum.

The changes resulting in advancement of the educational program will cost more money even with some savings effected by the single administrative structure. All persons concerned have stated the most important advantage was that of having a single system, operated by one board and key administrator for a single school system from kindergarten through the twelfth grade. Additional staff will be needed to provide the programs that were lacking in past years. One program to be initiated is a complete guidance service coordinated with that of the Park High School that will reach from the lower grades through the high school.

A problem which unification caused dealt with the size of the administration building. The offices of the clerks of the two districts were combined into the same facilities so there would be better correlation and communication. Housing was not sufficient for the necessary storage of books, supplies and records. Much of the working space was taken up by the increased requirements which caused crowded working conditions. This problem has yet to be solved.

As the district organization continues to progress, many adjustments will have to be made to produce a feeling of one-district, one-system solidarity that is vital to the better education of the youth of the Livingston school system.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

Under present-day conditions it would appear that Montana school districts were out of touch with change. While the rest of the nation was rapidly reducing the number of school districts, Montana was lagging in this respect.

The information collected dealt with a history of our local schools and their problems in expansion due to the growth of the communities in Park County. The first school building was erected in 1885 after encountering serious delays. The children were moved from building to building until the present school became fact. Other problems involved legal issues and public apathy in the passing of bond issues.

The school population of Livingston, Montana had outgrown the schools built in past decades and additions to the plant were not capable of accommodating the increased student body.

It was apparent that the difficulty in providing space for the children throughout the history of our local schools had been with us almost constantly until today. Recent unification coupled with a new high school building program promises to at least temporarily solve this educational deficiency.

Community activity in the matter of the unification has now provided us with a streamlined school organization, culminating in a spacious, modern, excellently equipped high school which will be able to provide those educational facilities necessary for the citizens of the future.

Conclusion

In order to maintain a modern, efficient school system operating so that it can provide adequate education under suitable learning conditions, it is the responsibility of the community to provide funds for new buildings, additions and improvements as the needs arise. This is their duty to the citizens of tomorrow.

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APPENDIX

INTERVIEWEES

- Mr. Gilbert G. Easton, Vice Chairman, School District Number 4, Park Road, Livingston, Montana.
- Mr. Jay Gleason, Clerk of the Board, School District Number 4, 328 South Yellowstone, Livingston, Montana.
- Mr. Harold Guthrie, Principal, Lincoln School, 527 South Eighth Street, Livingston, Montana.
- Mr. K. W. Haines, Superintendent, School District Number 4, 226 South Seventh Street, Livingston, Montana.
- Mr. Raymond Hokanson, Curriculum Coordinator, School District Number 4, 521 South Twelfth Street, Livingston, Montana.
- Mr. T. James Murphy, Park County High School Board Member, East of Livingston, Montana.
- Mr. Herbert Newell, Past School Board Chairman, School District Number 4, 314 South Seventh Street, Livingston, Montana.
- Mr. Tom Osen, Chairman of the Board 1965-66, School District Number 4, 318 South Second Street, Livingston, Montana.
- Mr. Byron Robb, County Attorney for Park County, 109 North Fifth Street, Livingston, Montana.
- Mr. Orley Short, Principal, Park County High School and Park High School, 515 South Thirteenth Street, Livingston, Montana.
- Mrs. Doris Whithorn, Local Historian and Authoress, South of Livingston, Montana.

APPENDIX A

ABOLISHMENT OF A COUNTY HIGH SCHOOL DISTRICT

75-5128. (1262.27) Disposition of property of county high school when abolished or unified-inventory-appraisal-compensation of appraisers. When any county high school is abolished all its real and personal property, other than its moneys, shall be disposed of in the following manner: The district court of the county in which such high school was located on application of the board of county commissioners shall appoint three competent persons, residents of the county, to inventory and appraise all such real and personal property of the said county high school. In making such appraisement the appraisers shall take into account ordinary depreciation, and the adaptability or lack of adaptability of the buildings, grounds, and other real estate, and of the various articles of personal property to any special use for which such property may be sold. The appraisers shall be allowed their necessary expenses, including mileage at the rate of ten (10) cents per mile from their respective residences to the place where the property of the county high school is found, and return, expenses and mileage to be paid out of any moneys belonging to the county high school, or, if none, out of the general fund of the county, upon the order of the district court. When any county high school system of the school district in which it is located according to this chapter, all its real and personal property, including all appurtenances and hereditaments, except as otherwise provided for in this chapter, shall become and remain the property of the school district with which it was unified without an inventory and appraisement.

History: En Sec. 27, Ch. 148, L. 1931;

Amendment: Sec. 9, Ch. 261, L. 1963.

Amendment:

The 1963 amendment added the final sentence.

APPENDIX B

AUTHORITY TO ABOLISH OR TO UNIFY A
COUNTY HIGH SCHOOL DISTRICT

75-4120. (1262.19) Authority to abolish or to unify. Any county in which a county high school has been established may abolish such county high school or unify it with and make it a part of the public school system of the school district in which it is located and dispose of all property belonging thereto in the manner provided in this chapter.

En. Sec. 19, Ch. 148, L. 1931.

Amd. Sec. 1, Ch. 261, L. 1963.

Amendment:

The 1963 amendment inserted "or unify it with and make it a part of the public school system of the school district in which it is located."

APPENDIX C

PROCEDURE FOR UNIFICATION OF A
COUNTY HIGH SCHOOL DISTRICT

75-4120-1. Procedure for unification of county high school. A county high school may be unified with and made a part of the school district in which the county high school is located in the following manner: If the board of trustees of the county high school and the board of trustees of the school district in which the county high school is located shall each pass a resolution requesting unification and an election thereon and shall each file copies of the respective resolutions with the county superintendent of schools, or if a petition signed by ten per cent (10%) of the qualified electors of the high school district where the county high school is located, or of the county if it is not divided into high school districts, is filed with the county superintendent requesting that an election on the question of unification be held, the county superintendent within not less than twenty (20) nor more than thirty (30) days shall cause notice of election to be given by posting and publication.

If a majority of the votes cast at such election shall be FOR unification the county superintendent shall make an order that unification shall be effective the following July 1.

If a majority of the voters cast at such election shall be AGAINST unification the county superintendent shall so declare.

History:

En. Sec. 1, Ch. 37, L. 1965.

Livingston, Montana
July 1, 1966

This questionnaire will be used to gather information for a professional paper as my Master of Education project. The answers will be used in composing a factual, permanent account of the factors connected with the recent school district reorganization. Your answer may be your own opinion and does not have to be proven in any way. We will use a consensus of opinion for stating the factors involved. Please be assured that your name will not be connected in any way with any of the answers which you might choose to give so that you will have complete anonymity and protection. Your name will be included in the index of my paper if you do not have any objection to this.

Thank you very much for any help which you can give me on such short notice. It will always be greatly appreciated.

Name _____ Address _____

Occupation _____

Directions: After reading the question, indicate by a check on the line below the number, the degree you feel the subject stated has influenced the school reorganization in Livingston and Park County.

Example:	None	Low	Med.	High
	0	1	2	3
1. Other school district reorganizations				
Any other <u>Casts of living</u>	✓		✓	

If you happen to think of any interesting information, please feel free to enter it on the line at the end of the section.

To what extent have the following factors influenced school redistricting? Place a check anywhere on the scale opposite the statement.

Section I. Individuals and Organizations

	None	Low	Med.	High
	0	1	2	3
State Superintendent of Schools				
County Superintendent of Schools				
District Superintendent of Schools				
District No. 4 School Board				
Elementary M.E.A.				
Park County High School Principal				
Park County High School Board				
High School M.E.A.				
The Press				
Any Others _____				

Section II, Finance

To what extent have the following factors influenced school re-districting in Livingston?

	None 0	Low 1	Med. 2	High 3
Possibility of increase in school taxes				
Possibility of decrease in school taxes				
More efficient use of money spent for educational purposes.				
Possibility of bond issue for new buildings and equipment.				
The establishment of a larger district to solve a pressing school building problem.				
Any others _____				

Section III, Educational Programs and Services

To what extent have the following factors influenced school re-districting in Livingston?

Dissatisfaction with educational programs being offered.				
That educational services could be better coordinated.				
Any others _____				

Section IV, Attitudes

To what extent have the following factors influenced school re-districting in Livingston?

Change of the School Board to one group				
Change to a central administration				
Any Others _____				

Section V, Psychological Factors

To what extent have the following factors influenced school re-districting in Livingston?

Opposition to the reorganization because of dissatisfaction with the location of the proposed building site.				
Dissemination of misinformation by organized opponents of reorganization				
School board members wishing to remain on the board.				
Any others _____				

Section VI, Public Relations

To what extent have the following factors influenced school re-districting in Livingston?

	None 0	Low 1	Med. 2	High 3
The people in the area were kept informed through out the deliberations.				
Organized programs to enlighten the public on problems of school district organization.				
Public Participation in school district reorganization proposals.				
Any others _____				

Opinions and Comments:

What were the costs of the reorganization?

Comments:

Are there any advantages for the budget? What would be some?

Comments:

Were there any special reasons for reorganization not considered previously in this questionnaire?

Comments:

How will reorganization be better for education in Livingston?

Comments:

In building:

In Educational services:

In guidance services:

In vocational education:

Any others:

Any further information of interest: