

A STUDY OF DIVIDE COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT NUMBER ONE OF
NORTH DAKOTA AND A VIEW OF ITS REORGANIZATION

BY

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Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the Master of Education Degree
in the Department of Education
Montana State University
August, 1967

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This study is an examination of the Divide County School District Number One of North Dakota with the aim of taking a second look at the existing reorganized school district, with particular emphasis upon the Noonan area of the newly formed district. Previous to the reorganization, Noonan was an independent district. Since the reorganization, numerous problems have evolved and Noonan has seriously considered becoming an independent district again.

This small country school and the small isolated high school are disappearing from the American scene. In its place is springing up the modern consolidated school. In 1930 there were over 127,000 school districts in the United States; today there are about 25,000. The trend in the state of North Dakota is similar. In 1930 North Dakota had over 2200 school districts; at the present time North Dakota has about 1200 districts.

A large percentage of educators are condemning the small school district. School district reorganization has been advocated on the basis of certain education and financial advantages which are beneficial to the participating districts. Orley W. Wilcox (11) points out that the chief reasons for reorganization are:

1. To allow opportunities for the teaching staff to specialize in their major fields of preparation.
2. To provide improved administration and supervisory leadership.
3. To lower the cost per pupil for the services provided.
4. To improve transportation services.
5. To bring pupils into contact with larger and more heterogeneous groups of their peers.
6. To provide specialized services such as counseling and guidance, art, music, health and school lunch programs.
7. To equalize financial support.

In far too many instances, however, advocates of school district reorganization programs overlook these values and stress misconceptions in their attempts to sell the program to the districts.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

This paper, "A Study of Divide County School District Number One of North Dakota and a View of Its Reorganization," prompted the following questions:

1. How was the district first reorganized and what is its current structure?
2. Can the district's internal problems be solved in order to have a workable school district?
3. Or would it be feasible for Noonan to again become an independent district?

These questions concerning the Divide County School District Number One formed the basis for this study. This is not to say that the reader would not see other problems or other solutions as he examines this paper.

PROCEDURES

The procedures listed below were used in the approach to the study of the Divide County School District Number One reorganization.

1. An investigation of the records of the County Superintendent of Schools and the Superintendent of Schools of Divide County School District Number One was made to find the reorganization plan, the present status of the district and the procedure to be used if Noonan School is to become an independent school district.
2. An investigation of the records in the Divide County Courthouse and of the Agriculture Soil Conservation Service was made to secure data on the financial status, school census and industry of the district.
3. A review of literature at the Montana State University Library was made to find the advantages, disadvantages, procedures and recommendations for school district reorganization.
4. Much information, which was not evident from the study of the records, was obtained from present school board members of Divide School District Number One, former school board members of the original Noonan School District, members of the former Divide County Reorganization Board and various Noonan businessmen.

LIMITATIONS

The study was restricted to Divide County with special emphasis upon Noonan's participation and interests. Except for Alexander Public Schools, Alexander, North Dakota, this study was not concerned with the reorganization of other school districts of the state.

CHAPTER II

HOW THE DISTRICT FIRST REORGANIZED AND ITS CURRENT STRUCTURE

Divide County is located in the northwest corner of North Dakota. It is bounded on the north by the Canadian Border and is bounded on the west by the Montana State line. Thirty-two townships and eight incorporated cities and villages make up the county. The county seat is located in the city of Crosby in Filmore Township and Crosby is the largest city in population, 1759 (see Figure 1).

The area of Divide County is 1251 square miles. The total population of the county in 1960 was 5566 or about five persons per square mile. In addition, there is an Air Force Radar Station located in Elkhorn Township which has a population of about 125 individuals. Most of the land is level so that a person can see from Noonan the lights of the surrounding cities in North Dakota and Canada. Agriculture, as it is throughout North Dakota, is the main industry of the county, and the statistical reports of the United States population census (9) and the agriculture census (10) for the past twenty years or more indicate a reduction of the population and animal industry in Divide County. Table I presents the main agricultural products in Divide County.

Figure 1.

Map of Divide County School Districts

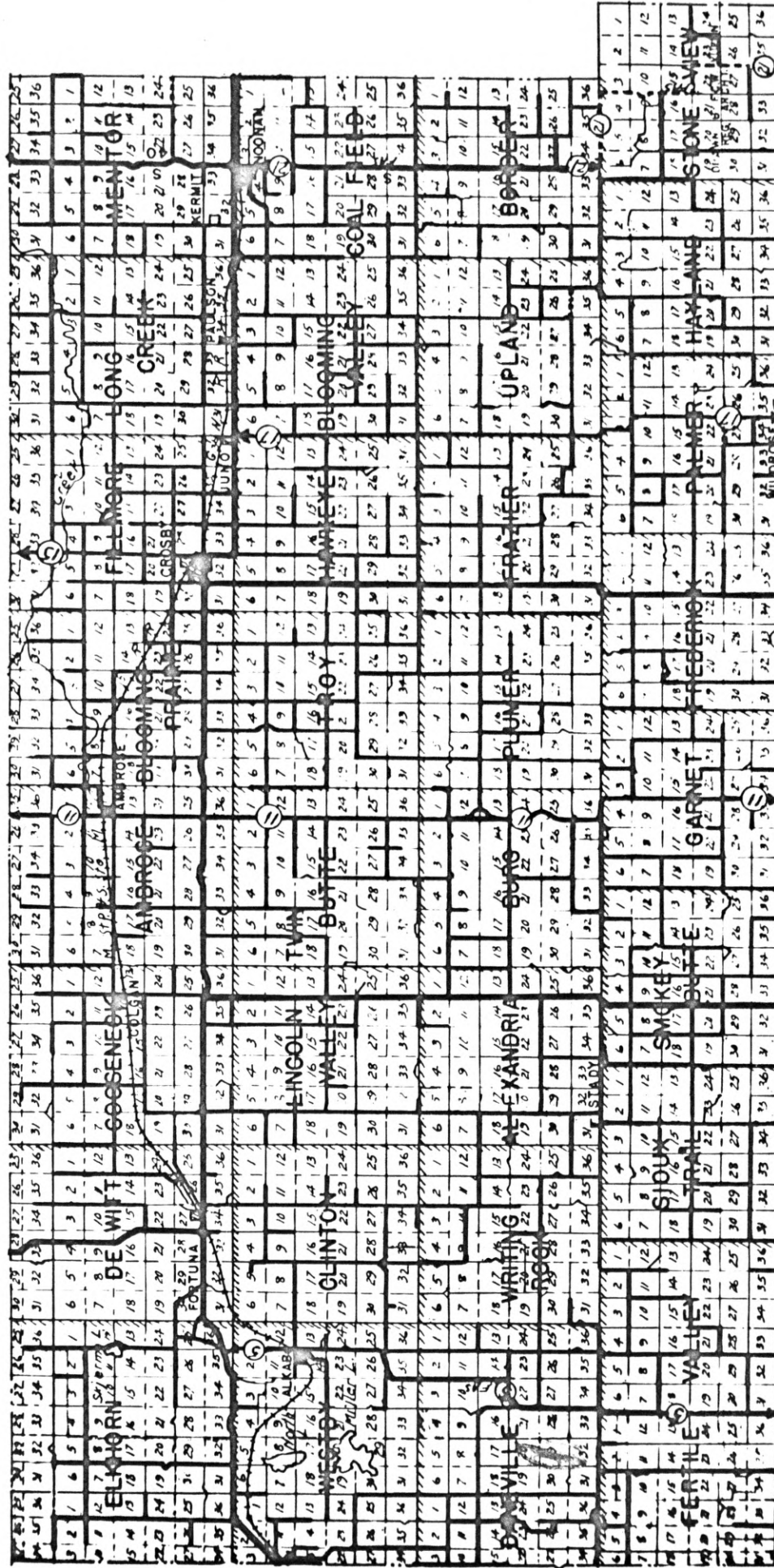


TABLE I. CROP ACREAGE OF DIVIDE COUNTY.

Crops	1964	1965	1966
Spring Wheat	148,000	173,300	171,300
Barley	46,000	25,000	40,500
Oats	20,000	17,000	17,000
Flaxseed	3,300	2,100	2,100
Rye	6,200	6,000	4,000
Hay	29,000	26,000	29,000

Principal crops grown in the county are spring wheat, barley, oats and hay.

Since there is no surface water to speak of, dry land farming and strip farming prevail throughout the county. The soil is glacial and fertile. Though the soil is fertile the rainfall of Divide County is cyclic. The rainfall may be well above the average of 15-16 inches for several successive seasons and then there may be a period of drought for two or more successive seasons.

Table II obtained from the Census of Agriculture (10) and county courthouse records shows a reduction in the number of animals produced in the county from 1944 to 1966.

TABLE II. ANIMAL INDUSTRY IN DIVIDE COUNTY.

Animal	1944	1954	1959	1966
Cattle	17,000	14,591	12,479	13,587
Milk Cows	5,013	2,789	1,991	*
Swine	2,543	1,727	1,258	444
Sheep	6,451	6,281	3,650	2,935

* Figure not available.

There were approximately 17,000 head of cattle in 1944 and about 13,587 head in 1966. This would be about a twenty per cent reduction. Dairy production, swine production and sheep production have reduced in the same manner. The biggest decrease was the drop in dairy production which was about sixty per cent.

Though many of the farms produce only grain, diversified agriculture is prevalent throughout the county. Diversification is essential to the continued stability of this area because it is subjected to many hazards such as hail, grasshoppers, frost and drought.

The Census of Agriculture (10) shows a decline from 1241 farms in 1944 to 812 farms in 1959 or a loss of 429 farms or a reduction of about one-third. During the same period, farm families went from 967 in 1944 to 577 in 1959 or a loss of 390 family units or approximately a forty per cent loss.

This decrease is not only typical of the number of farms, but also of the population of Divide County. The movement of rural

population to the industrial urban areas is not a particular problem of just Divide County, but is a problem throughout North Dakota and the nation.

Mercer Cross (1) of the Minneapolis Tribune reported in the 1960 issue of the State of North Dakota Labor Bulletin the following general facts:

1. Non-farm employment in North Dakota averaged 125,330 in 1959. This was a 73 per cent gain over 1939. Farm production in the state last year was 194,745, a 20 per cent drop in twenty years. The actual farm operators lost was 47,063.
2. We believe it is reasonable to assume that most of the farmers who left the farm are now wage workers in North Dakota cities. A large number of women who are employed in service and retail occupations came from North Dakota farms.
3. Retail, wholesale, and service trades employed nearly half the non-farm workers in 1959, thus it is not difficult to estimate where lost farm population finds its way.
4. Manufacturing, construction, government, transportation and public utilities absorb smaller numbers.
5. A high percentage of promising young persons are forsaking the farms of North Dakota and seeking their fortunes in states with more business and industry.

Table III presents the three census totals and indicates the differences existing between 1930 and 1960. The evidence of the increasing size of farms plus the evidence obtained from Table III would support the contention that the downward population will be continued in the 1970 census although perhaps at a reduced rate.

TABLE III. POPULATION CHANGES OF TOWNSHIPS IN DIVIDE COUNTY
FROM 1930 TO 1960,

DIVIDE COUNTY	9636	7086	5967	5566	-4070
Alexandria Twp	196	112	77	90	-106
Ambrose	334	294	286	220	-114
Ambrose Twp	248	240	102	104	-144
Blooming Prairie	284	194	134	90	-194
Blooming Valley Twp	255	183	112	99	-156
Border Twp	222	173	117	70	-152
Burg Twp	211	124	117	70	-141
Clinton Twp	194	99	76	62	-132
Coalfield Twp	317	194	142	104	-213
Crosby	1271	1404	1689	1759	488
Danville Twp	258	203	136	109	-148
DeWitt Twp	151	115	83	51	-100
Elkhorn Twp	218	124	98	267	49
Fertile Valley Twp	317	224	100	65	-252
Fillmore Twp	347	195	178	99	-238
Fortuna	196	214	181	185	-11
Frazier Twp	170	89	91	45	-125
Frederick Twp	240	194	108	109	-131
Garnet Twp	216	114	101	68	-148
Gooseneck Twp	341	242	142	106	-235
Hawkeye Twp	257	147	80	67	-190
Hayland Twp	223	123	78	66	-157
Lincoln Valley Twp	185	100	86	110	-75
Long Creek Twp	255	119	88	85	-170
Mentor Twp	227	130	113	100	-127
Noonan	423	520	551	625	202
Palmer Twp	200	89	61	35	-165
Plumer Twp	208	103	75	37	-171
Sioux Trail Twp	174	125	88	70	-104
Smoky Butte Twp	174	91	78	98	-76
Stone View Twp	207	117	99	55	-152
Troy Twp	243	156	88	93	-150
Twin Butte Twp	220	135	91	58	-162
Upland Twp	240	159	122	95	-145
Westly Twp	240	209	160	158	-82
Writing Rock Twp	148	109	67	42	-106

Divide County lost 4070 people or 42 per cent of its population between 1930 and 1960.

All county divisions lost population except the cities of Crosby, Noonan and the Elkhorn Township. Twenty-seven of the thirty-two townships have lost over half their population with three of the townships losing over 80 per cent.

It is obvious that there are fewer people to support and maintain the functions of county government, local government and payment of taxes for school revenue.

Divide County is not richly endowed with either industry or public utilities and currently there is no industrial development in the county. The coal mining plant of Baukol-Noonan Incorporated was moved six years ago to another county, although the aggregate plant of Baukol-Noonan Incorporated is still located in Coalfield Township of Divide County.

The telephone companies and branch line railroads represent the majority of public utilities. Since the reorganization of school districts the Soo branch line railroad through Mentor and Long Creek townships has been closed down.

Table IV presents a complete breakdown of the local tax base for Divide County by school districts for 1959. It clearly indicates that the three sources of local school tax revenue of Divide County were real estate, personal property tax and public utilities. A very high percentage of the local tax base throughout the county was found in real estate. All but one school district relied on real estate for over 50 per cent of the local tax money. Also, it was interesting to

TABLE IV. TAX BASE 1959.

NAME AND NUMBER OF DISTRICT	REAL ESTATE		PERSONAL PROPERTY		PUBLIC UTILITIES		DISTRICT TOTAL
	AMOUNT	PER CENT	AMOUNT	PER CENT	AMOUNT	PER CENT	
Long Creek #2	\$ 66,388	53.7	\$ 20,926	16.9	\$ 36,316	29.4	\$ 123,630
Holmes #3	869,549	65.0	299,789	22.4	168,459	12.6	1,337,807
Blooming Prairie #4	210,465	73.9	51,608	18.1	22,730	8.0	284,803
Ambrose #5	140,704	59.9	74,175	31.6	20,037	8.5	234,916
Colgan #6	91,721	70.2	21,703	24.3	7,124	5.5	130,548
DeWitt #7	203,996	69.8	69,979	24.0	18,178	6.2	292,153
Elkhorn #8	100,636	69.6	42,275	29.4	1,376	1.0	144,487
Westby #9	52,361	54.3	35,652	36.9	8,506	8.8	96,519
Hillside #10	53,927	81.4	12,325	18.6	---	---	66,252
Lincoln Valley #11	101,482	73.3	36,896	26.7	---	---	138,378
Fairview #12	56,060	77.5	15,962	22.2	---	---	72,022
Lexington #13	145,826	72.9	54,214	27.1	---	---	200,040
Hawkeye #14	151,239	70.1	49,765	23.1	14,585	6.8	215,589
Bluffton #15	151,192	73.4	39,139	19.0	15,708	7.6	206,039
Dolphin #17	115,292	75.7	36,963	24.3	---	---	152,255
Highland #18	89,503	73.0	33,074	27.0	---	---	122,577
McCullough #19	129,975	78.8	24,787	15.1	10,099	6.1	164,861
Whiteaker #20	142,460	86.8	21,710	13.2	---	---	164,170
Roseville #21	115,171	77.0	34,486	23.0	---	---	149,657
Lee #22	93,411	75.9	29,693	24.1	---	---	123,109
Writing Rock #23	86,716	82.0	19,058	18.0	---	---	105,774
Daneville #24	129,951	76.7	39,498	23.3	---	---	169,449
Fertile Valley #25	192,308	79.2	50,549	20.8	---	---	242,857
Sioux Trail #26	115,189	67.7	54,954	32.2	---	---	170,143
Elmgren #27	116,898	78.2	32,500	21.8	---	---	149,488
Outlook #28	119,523	61.8	73,929	38.2	---	---	193,452
Liberty #29	114,433	69.1	39,974	24.3	11,126	6.7	165,533
Montrose #30	45,021	75.6	14,563	24.4	---	---	59,584
Willow Lake #31	49,325	75.0	16,451	25.0	---	---	65,776
Goose Lake #34	90,532	68.8	33,786	25.6	7,389	5.6	131,689
Twin Butte #35	52,634	77.3	15,478	22.7	---	---	68,112
Alkabo #36	68,161	52.2	48,764	37.3	13,743	10.5	130,668
Independent #37	42,683	69.8	18,489	30.2	---	---	61,172
Bounty #38	27,547	32.6	12,181	14.4	44,827	53.0	84,555
Grant #39	100,863	80.9	22,592	18.1	1,290	1.0	124,745
Noonan #41	381,381	50.9	253,780	33.8	115,099	15.3	750,260
	\$4,814,523		\$1,761,944		\$516,602		\$7,093,069

note that nineteen school districts had no public utilities. It appears that the Noonan School District was more favored in regard to personal property and public utilities, but since 1959, it must be remembered, the Baukol-Noonan Incorporated coal mining plant has been moved into the eastern adjoining county, Burke County.

How the District Was Reorganized. On July 1, 1962 the Divide County School District One was formed. Of the 1251 square miles of Divide County, 783 square miles made up Divide County School District One, making it the largest school district in size in North Dakota (refer to Figure 1.) Townships and parts of townships along the western and southern fringe areas of the county were permitted to be annexed to other North Dakota school districts if it were more convenient for the children to attend the schools of these districts. Because of the great distances, sections of western townships of Divide County did not join Divide County School District One and students from these sections attend various schools in Montana.

The following school districts comprise the present Divide County School District One: (See Figure 2.)

All of:

Long Creek No. 2
Holmes No. 3
Blooming Prairie No. 4
Ambrose No. 5
Colgan No. 6
DeWitt No. 7
Lincoln Valley No. 11

A portion of:

Roseville No. 21
Lee No. 22
Hillside No. 10
Liberty No. 29
Daneville No. 24

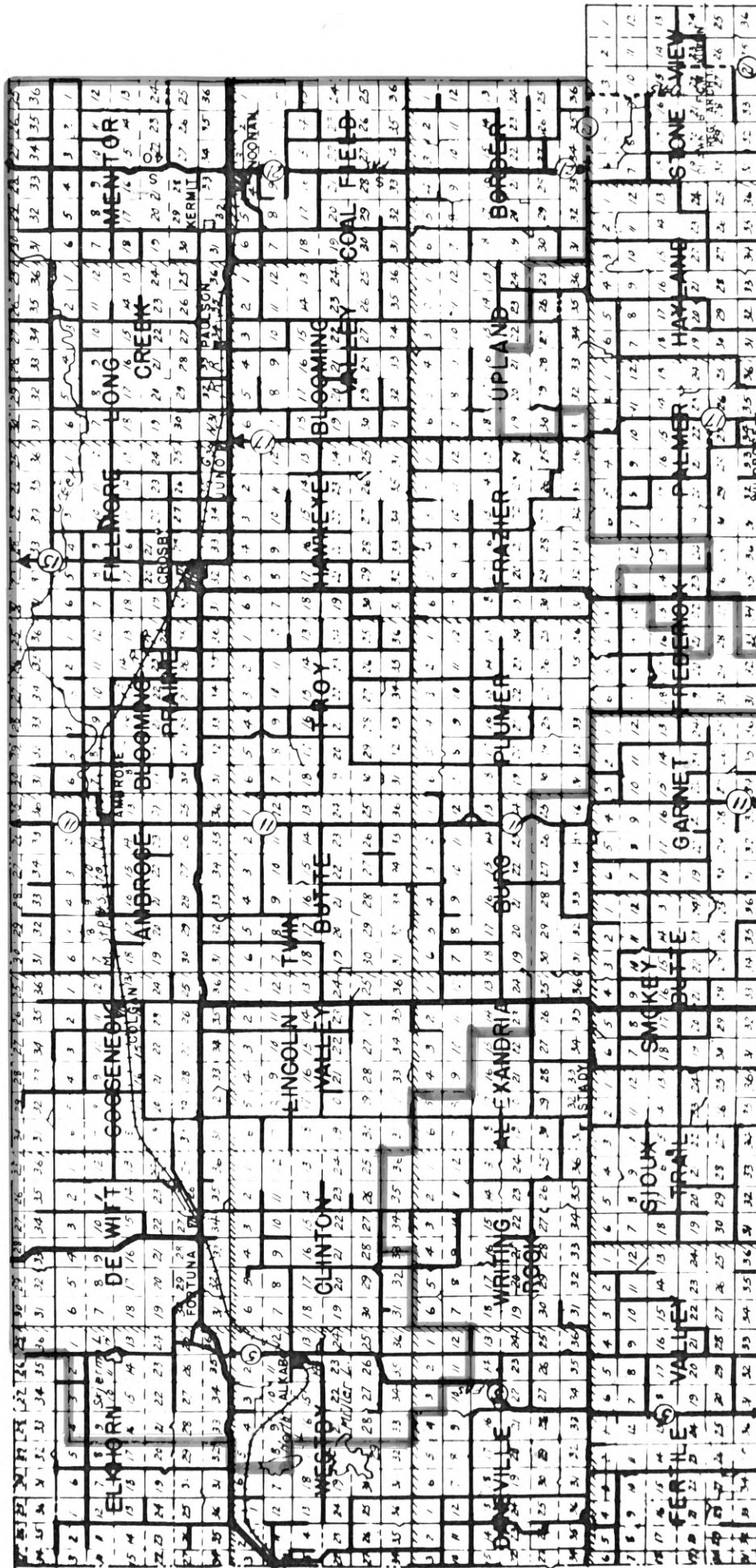
Fairview No. 12
Lexington No. 13
Hawkeye No. 14
Bluffton No. 15
Dolphin No. 17
McCullough No. 19
Whiteaker No. 20
Goose Lake No. 34
Twin Butte No. 35
Alkabo No. 36
Independent No. 37
Bounty No. 38
Grant No. 39
Noonan No. 41.

The objectives of the reorganization were primarily to make better educational opportunities available to all children of the area included in the plan. In order to accomplish this, special attention was given to the basic part of the educational structure, the school district itself. A good school district would have the wealth to provide and the people to serve and, as a result, with good management, schools which would measure up to the highest rating that could be established and maintained. In the Divide County School District One Reorganization Plan (7), the following qualities were desired in a good school district:

1. To provide uniform training for all children from grade one through grade twelve and kindergarten and adult education wherever practical.
2. To provide adequate facilities in the form of classrooms, shops, gymnasiums, laboratories, playgrounds, etc., for a complete educational program.

Figure 2.

Map of Divide County School District Number One



3. To provide safe, efficient transportation for all children who need it.
4. To provide and retain well trained, efficient teachers and supervisors in all schools.
5. To provide a complete educational program based on child growth and needs, with special work in guidance, music, special education, industrial, commercial, agriculture and other fields.
6. To have a uniform system of taxation for school purposes which meets all the requirements of the district without placing an unreasonable tax burden on any individual taxpayer at any time.
7. To assure every child the opportunities of a high school education.

Before the reorganization, the Divide County educational system was operating as forty separate school districts. Many of the above qualities of a good educational system were lacking in these small districts.

An examination of Table V shows that the districts reorganized into Divide County School District One showed a lack of uniformity in tax support of schools ranging from zero mills to 58.23 mills per year and a variation in costs per pupil ranging from \$234.36 to \$820.43 per pupil per year in the elementary grades and from \$373.70 to \$860.73 per pupil per year in the secondary grades. These costs per pupil and the tax levies within the individual districts showed variations from year to year. The student-teacher ratio in high schools throughout the county varied from twenty-one to one to seven to one.

Other problems existing throughout the county were inadequate space for high school students at Alkabo and Ambrose, and a wide

Name and Number of District	Taxable valuation	Total mill levies 1960-1961	Taxes collected last year	General fund receipts	General fund expenditures	Cash on hand June 30, 1961	Number of elementary pupils	Cost per elementary pupil	Number of teachers in district	Number of high school students	Cost per high school pupil
Long Creek #2	121,582	-	920	14,160	6,531	7,628	16	321.22	1	-	-
Homes #3	1,316,506	51.57	35,485	212,054	174,369	37,686	416	266.36	28	216	373.70
Blooming Prairie #4	277,696	-	1,223	10,989	6,266	4,714	-	-	-	-	-
Ambrose #5	213,478	55.75	160	32,954	28,843	4,111	59	304.59	5	22	649.66
Colgan #6	127,452	7.84	901	9,552	4,961	4,591	12	365.71	1	-	-
Dewitt #7	297,197	44.64	8,100	40,540	31,771	8,769	58	340.68	5	28	533.21
Hillside #10	54,392	19.00	1,381	3,334	2,748	4,845	-	-	-	-	-
L. Valley #11	143,483	39.91	2,861	15,529	8,762	6,767	21	243.36	2	-	-
Fairview #12	71,380	7.00	653	3,405	1,491	1,931	-	-	-	-	-
Lexington #13	189,581	33.07	4,692	18,783	10,726	8,057	23	415.49	2	-	-
Hawkeye #14	207,349	19.00	3,722	8,910	5,488	3,422	-	-	-	-	-
Bluffton #15	205,015	19.00	3,255	12,073	8,304	3,769	10	522.86	1	-	-

TABLE V. (Continued)

Name and number of district	Taxable valuation	Total mill levies 1960-1961	Taxes collected last year	General fund receipts	General fund expenditures	Cash on hand June 30, 1961	Number of elementary pupils	Cost per elementary pupil	Number of teachers in district	Number of high school students	Cost per high school pupil
Dolphin #17	145,312	13.14	1,890	18,009	7,571	10,437	11	480.81	1	-	-
McCullough #19	246,116	32.57	3,250	25,923	21,980	3,943	21	738.60	2	-	-
Whiteaker # 20	160,609	-	701	9,590	6,128	3,462	-	-	-	-	-
Liberty #29	112,053	37.41	67	18,804	13,313	4,706	13	820.43	2	-	-
Goose Lake #34	124,827	-	438	3,765	251	-	-	-	-	-	-
Twin Butte #35	65,783	37.04	1,718	5,440	3,998	1,442	-	-	-	-	-
Alkabo #36	125,068	56.52	6,242	17,061	15,542	1,519	15	605.39	4	12	693.69
Independent #37	59,393	30.92	1,447	1,776	1,772	4	-	-	-	-	-
Bounty #38	80,034	-	2	2,475	951	1,524	-	-	-	-	-
Grant #39	127,215	-	130	33,338	1,576	1,762	-	-	-	-	-
Noonan #41	753,579	58.23	10,195	80,924	72,101	8,823	163	265.15	10	49	860.73
Roseville #21	100,256	33.30	2,258	8,411	6,628	1,189	7	688.74	1	-	-
Lee #22	40,500	36.75	2,738	9,217	6,259	2,966	14	307.43	1	-	-

discrepancy in the program of studies available to secondary students in Divide County. Table VI presents a check list of the subjects offered in 1959-1960, and shows the lack of uniformity in the educational program that was available for children in various parts of Divide County.

The approved list of high school subjects of the State Department of Public Instruction of North Dakota (2) shows Alkabo had forty-three deficiencies on the basis of that year's offering, Ambrose had forty-three deficiencies, Crosby had nine, Fortuna had thirty-nine and Noonan had thirty-two.

It was hoped that the reorganization would provide a uniform system of taxation, a transportation system, a uniform student-teacher ratio with more equal education and more equal per pupil cost. Also, it was hoped that administration of the schools by a single board would give uniformity to the educational program of the whole area. With these objectives in mind, the Divide County School District One was set up upon the following recommendations which were set forth in the county reorganization plan (7).

TABLE VI. CHECK LIST OF SUBJECTS TAUGHT AND DEFICIENCIES NOTED
IN THE HIGH SCHOOLS OF DIVIDE COUNTY.

Subject	Alkabo*	Ambrose	Crosby	Fortuna	Noonan
English I	x	x	x	x	x
English II	d	d	x	d	x
English III	x	x	x	x	d
English IV	d	d	x	d	x
Speech	d	d	x	d	x
Journalism	d	d	x	d	x
U. S. History	d	d	x	d	d
World History	d	d	x	x	d
Problems of Democracy	d	x	x	x	x
World Geography	d	d	d	x	x
Algebra I	d	d	x	x	x
Advanced Algebra	d	d	x	d	d
Geometry	d	d	x	x	x
Solid Geometry	d	d	d	d	d
Trigonometry	d	d	x	d	d
Advanced Math	d	d	d	d	d
General Science	d	x	x	x	x
Chemistry	d	d	x	x	d
Physics	d	d	x	d	x
Biology	x	d	x	d	d
Advanced Science	d	d	d	d	d
Typing I	Correspondence	x	x	x	x
Typing II		d	x	d	d
Shorthand		d	x	d	d
Bookkeeping		d	x	x	x
Office Machines		d	x	d	d
Homemaking I		d	x	d	d
Homemaking II		d	x	d	d
Agriculture I		d	x	d	d
Agriculture II		d	x	d	d
Agriculture III		d	x	d	d
General Homemaking		d	d	d	d
General Agriculture		x	d	d	d
German		d	d	d	d
Latin		d	x	d	d
Spanish		x	d	d	d
Physical Education (Boys)		x	x	x	x
Physical Education (Girls)		x	x	x	x
Health (Boys)		x	x	x	x
Health (Girls)		x	x	x	x
Band		d	x	d	x
Chorus		d	x	d	x

TABLE VI. (Continued)

Subject	Alkabo*	Ambrose	Crosby	Fortuna	Noonan
Small music groups	d	d	x	d	d
Theory of harmony	d	d	x	d	d
Guidance	d	d	x	d	x
Industrial arts	d	d	x	d	d
Citizenship Orientation	x	d	x	x	x
Driver training	d	d	x	x	d
Art	d	d	x	d	d
Distributive Education	d	d	d	d	d
General Business	x	d	x	d	x
General mathematics	d	x	x	d	x
Psychology	d	d		d	d
Mechanical drawing	d	d	x	d	d

*Some subjects handled through correspondence. Other subjects could be taught but a larger enrollment would be necessary.

LOCATION OF SCHOOLS AND UTILIZATION OF BUILDINGS

1. Five high schools are presently serving the entire area. Included in the plan for the proposed district, accredited high schools will continue to serve the area in the future. At present these schools are located at Noonan and Crosby.
2. The present laws require that rural schools in a reorganized district that are operating must continue to operate unless the people in the old district where the school is located, by a majority vote, approve its closing or when a petition requesting that the school be discontinued is signed by two-thirds of the electors in the old district where the school is located and is presented to the school board in the reorganized district. Table V shows that there were eight rural schools, two consolidated schools and five urban schools operating during the 1960-1961 school year. As this number becomes less, the school board of the new district will arrange suitable educational facilities for the areas affected.

Transportation. It is recommended that a system of vehicular transportation be inaugurated and expanded as needed. Bus type transportation shall be provided with family transportation to be used in exceptional cases at the discretion of the board. The decision as to the adequacy and practicability of any one type of transportation will be by the new school board of the new district. It is recommended that the larger

buses stay on the designated roads; however, the board may use their discretion regarding special cases.

It is estimated that about twelve buses will be needed, some of which will be station wagons. It is also estimated that the average cost of operating these buses will be about eighteen cents per mile less state reimbursement. The longest ride from the first pickup appears to be about forty-two miles.

The Type of School District. The proposed district shall be a special school district with a board of education consisting of nine members elected as follows:

Two members from Commissioner District #1 elected by eligible voters in Commissioner District #1, two members from Commissioner District #2 elected by eligible voters in Commissioner District #2, two members from Commissioner District #3 elected by eligible voters in Commissioner District #3 and three members elected at large.

One member from each commissioner district must be from the rural area and two of the three members elected at large must be from the rural area. This will result in a minimum of five rural members on the nine member board.

The Probable Cost of Operating the Schools of the New District.

Estimated Revenue for New District (General Fund)

General Fund Levy (\$5,203,170 x 27 mills)	\$140,485.00
Foundation Program	138,150.00
838 Elementary Pupils	
327 High School	64,746.00
State Tuition	19,800.00
Federal Aid	4,000.00
Gas and Oil Revenue	10,000.00
State Aid for Transportation	30,000.00
TOTAL	<u>\$407,181.00</u>

Estimated Expenditures (General Fund)

Administration	6,100.00
Instructional Service	271,200.00
Other Services	48,400.00
Operation of plants	47,800.00
Maintenance of plants	5,400.00
Fixed charges	16,100.00
Capital outlay	<u>7,900.00</u>
	\$402,900.00

The Adjustment of Assets and Liabilities of Districts or Portions of Districts.

1. All cash assets in any fund in any district or any portion of a district included in the reorganization plan will become the property of the new district.
2. All the physical assets such as school buildings, school sites, barns, furniture, fixtures, textbooks, and supplies of all the districts included in the plan and located within the boundaries of the proposed school district will become the property of the new district and must be delivered to the new district upon notice. Each township will have the privilege of purchasing one unoccupied school building for township use at a price of \$1.00 and title clearance.
3. The bonded indebtedness of all districts or portions of districts included in the plan will become the general obligation debt and liability of the reorganized district. Where a part of a district is included in the proposed school district, only its proportionate share of bonded indebtedness will become the obligation of the new district.
4. Any outstanding bills, of any of the districts included in the proposed district, as of June 30, 1962, will become the obligation of the new district. Where a part of a district is included in the proposed school district, its proportionate share of outstanding bills shall become the obligation of the new district.
5. Any uncollected, unobligated taxes, as of June 30, 1962, due to any of the districts included in the proposed district will be, when collected, transferred to the new district.

6. The cash assets and uncollected taxes of districts where only a part of the district is included will be pro-rated between the new reorganized school district and remaining portions of the district in the ratio that the 1962 taxable valuation of the portion included in the new district bears to the old district from which it was taken.
7. Any building fund established and existing in any district included in the proposed district will become and remain as a building fund for the new district. Any building fund levies in old districts are to be automatically discontinued with the exception of Noonan School District #41 and Holmes School District #3; however a five mill building fund levy is to be assessed against all districts in the proposed new district with the exception of Noonan School District #41 and Holmes School District #3 which are and will continue to carry the maximum 10 mill building fund levy until their respective debts to the State School Construction fund are repaid. When their respective debts to the Construction Fund are repaid, they will be assessed the same building fund levy as is being assessed against the remainder of the new district. The five mill building fund levy is to be used as a building fund for the new district.
8. State and county payments due to any of the districts or parts of districts included in the proposed district will be paid to the new district. If only a portion of a district is included a pro-rated share of the payment shall be made to the new school district.

THE CURRENT ATTENDANCE AREAS OF DIVIDE COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT ONE

TABLE VII. NUMBER OF ELEMENTARY PUPILS, TEACHERS AND SCHOOLS.

Name of School	Number of Elementary Pupils Grades 1 - 6	Number of Elementary Pupils Grades 7-8	Number of Elementary Teachers	Elementary Pupil-Teacher Ratio
Crosby	312	88	18	1 to 28
Noonan	121	38	8	1 to 20
Fortuna	125	25	8	1 to 19
Ambrose	30	--	2	1 to 15
Lincoln Valley	8*	--	1	1 to 8
District Total	596	151	37	1 to 20

* Grades 1 - 4 only

During the 1966-67 school year, Divide County School District One operated five grade schools and had 747 pupils taught by 37 elementary teachers.

Table VIII shows the number of high school pupils, teachers and schools.

TABLE VIII. NUMBER OF HIGH SCHOOL PUPILS, TEACHERS AND SCHOOLS.

Name of School	Number of High School Pupils	Number of High School Teachers	High School Pupil-Teacher Ratio
Crosby	268	14	1-19
Noonan	87	5	1-19
District Total	335	19	1-19

In the 1966-67 school year, Divide County School District One operated only two high schools, one at Crosby and one at Noonan. The total high school enrollment was 355 pupils taught by nineteen teachers.

CHAPTER III

CAN THE INTERNAL PROBLEMS OF DISTRICT ONE BE SOLVED?

Can the internal problems of District One be solved in order to have a workable school district or would it be feasible for Noonan to again become an independent district?

Naturally, when there are people involved, there are problems and so it was with the people of the newly organized Divide County School District One. As indicated in the last chapter, each of the districts had a problem or problems of one kind or another. Upon consolidation, the problems of one of these districts became the responsibility of the new district; the constituents of the original school districts found themselves part of a larger whole. It was too much to hope that any newly organized district would work perfectly; however, it should have been able to adapt whenever changes seemed necessary as time progressed. Also, it would be too much to hope that solving the present difficulties could be accomplished within a short period of time.

The three main problems of Divide County School District One concern the budget, school plant space, and community cooperation and support. These are discussed in the following sections.

BUDGET

When the district was reorganized, in the rush for creating a larger district, limitations were put into the reorganization plan or verbal promises were made which handicapped the newly formed school board. Orley W. Wilcox (11) pointed out this fact in his statement on financing of the reorganized district.

Many people have the distinctly erroneous idea that reorganization results in reduced costs to the taxpayers involved but the fact is that the chief gain is not financial, but rather should come back to the taxpayers in the form of improved educational programs. Surveys indicate that few reorganization programs cost less than the system which they supplant during the initial years of the reconversion period, due to new costs created by building needs and additional services--guidance, transportation, lunch programs, etc. Yet many people insist that one of the important advantages lies in the reduction of total costs to the district. They justify such claims on the basis of the added revenues from the increased valuation of the larger district, yet fail to recognize the need for increased expenditures.

Many people of the Divide County School District One had this mistaken idea that the reorganization would result in less cost to the taxpayer because one of the promises made for encouraging the consolidation was that the new district would operate on a general levy of twenty-seven mills. During the years 1962 to 1965, the district continued to operate on this same mill levy. Since the time of reorganization in 1962, the expenditures of the district were about \$220,000 above the income from local, state and federal sources.

This money was made available through the transfer of cash on hand in the general funds and special reserve funds of the original districts. This was deficit spending.

Table IX points out the general and special reserve fund breakdown and shows the total amount which was spent over the cash income from 1962 through 1967.

TABLE IX. GENERAL AND SPECIAL RESERVE FUND BREAKDOWN.

Transfer from the district treasurers upon reorganization	\$105,137.30
The Special Reserve Fund was treated as cash on hand and was spent in place of being kept as a separate fund upon reorganization.	60,000.00
The amount collected from taxes for the Special Reserve Fund after date of reorganization.	55,785.97
The total amount which has been spent over the cash income for the District from the Special Reserve Fund and the cash on hand in the General Fund.	\$220,923.27

The total amount of \$165,137.30 was on hand at the date of reorganization in 1962 in the district treasurers funds and the Special Reserve Fund. \$55,785.97 was collected from taxes for the Special Reserve Fund after the district was reorganized. This total amount of \$220,923.27 was spent during the period of the 1962 through 1967 fiscal years to balance the budget but these special funds depleted by the yearly deficit spending.

During the first years of reorganization, the expenses for the operation of the district were greater than was anticipated. Because the district operated on the mill levy of twenty-seven mills for a period of three years, the new school board was forced to cut the budget and use all the aforementioned available resources. Even to maintain the same program each subsequent year required annually increasing the expenditures. This meant the district was static with

no room for educational growth.

In July, 1965, a levy increase was voted for a period of three years which was sufficient only to maintain the program of 1962. In the "Divide County School District Newsletter" of January 30, 1967, Mr. Warren G. Borchert, superintendent of the school district stated:

This past fiscal year, the expenses of operating the schools was up about \$72,000.00 from the time of the beginning of this district in 1962. The additional mill rate from 27 to 40.5 for general fund purposes made this possible.

In other words, this increased mill levy took care of nothing more than increased expenditures.

In January of 1967, the school board of Divide County could see that there would be little if any cash on hand at the end of the 1966-67 fiscal year. With increasing costs of teachers' salaries, pupil transportation, and other expenditures, the school board called a special election in February, 1967, for the purpose of voting upon the question of authorizing an increase in the mill levy. The mill levy was defeated. Next, an estimate was made of the money that would be available, and then the educational program was trimmed to fit the budget.

The areas where the budget was limited in order that the district could maintain the 1962 program were in the fields of instructional supplies, pupil transportation, maintenance, and instructional personnel.

INSTRUCTION SUPPLIES

In order to cut down on the expense of textbooks, books copyrighted as far back as 1953 and 1954 were still in use during the 1965-66 school year. In 1966-67 the 1954 biology and chemistry books were replaced, but the district was unable to replace Our State, the textbook used for North Dakota history, which had a 1954 copyright date. In Noonan the seventh and eighth grade mathematics books, in spite of repair, were losing their pages and covers. To save additional expenses for textbooks, new literature, grammar, and science books were exchanged between the two high schools. Most educators feel that the average life-expectancy of a textbook is five years. Grieder, Pierce and Rosenstengel (8) say:

Books are likely to be used for too long a period of time. Many books being used in schools today contain out-of-date content or omit important new content. Generally local school boards or state laws usually designate the number of years a book will be used after its adoption. The term most frequently designated is five years.

The 1967-68 budget had a textbook allowance of \$12.00 per elementary pupil or \$8,900; yet there were insufficient funds to replace the seventh and eighth grade math books at Noonan. There was no allowance made for the replacement of high school textbooks.

The area of audio-visual aid has been neglected in the past because of shortage of funds and in 1967-68 there were still no funds budgeted for audio-visual aids. In 1967 there were only twelve overhead projectors in a system which contained forty-eight classrooms or one projector for every four rooms. To obtain the maximum benefit,

there should be one projector for every room. There was not one phonograph recorder available for instruction use at Crosby High School. Until 1966-67 teachers at Noonan were not permitted to order films freely from the State film library for classroom purposes. The high school English departments were unable to order the records recommended for use with the new literature texts.

Lack of other instruction supplies throughout the district was a problem. The science department at Noonan had new laboratory manuals which were purchases in 1966 for chemistry, biology, and physical science classes, but the district was unable to purchase the equipment to do most of the experiments suggested in these laboratory manuals. The glass equipment available at Noonan had to be shared by five elementary and secondary science classes, even though there was not even enough equipment to set up individual chemistry tables for the chemistry class. There were only two microscopes for the Noonan biology class of eighteen students. At Crosby the biology room had no electrical outlets, laboratory sinks or biological charts.

The Divide School board was able to budget only \$6,050.00 for school library and audio-visual aids for the year 1967-68. All of the \$6,050 was designated to be used for the school libraries of the district. Nothing was planned for the purchases of audio-visual aids. Table X presents the costs of instructional supplies allotted in the 1967-68 budget.

TABLE X. 1967-68 BUDGET FOR INSTRUCTIONAL SUPPLIES.

Textbooks	\$ 8,900.00
School Library and Audio-Visual	6,050.00
Teaching Supplies	8,000.00
Other Expenses	6,065.00
TOTAL	\$29,015.00

The total expenditure for instructional supplies was \$29,015.00 and according to the Superintendent of Schools, Warren G. Borchert, this was too low to be adequate.

MAINTENANCE AND REPAIR

Pupils are compelled to attend school but they cannot be compelled to learn. It is believed, on the basis of such research as has been done, that the physical environment has important effects on pupil achievement. Educators and psychologists are in agreement that a school should meet the standards usually associated with good homes. High standards of housekeeping should be observed in keeping the school clean, orderly, and in good repair. At Crosby and Ambrose maintenance and repair have been very neglected. The following comments by Corliss F. Nelson, Superintendent of Instruction of the State Department of Education of North Dakota, in his report to the Divide County Superintendent of Schools, summed up the conditions and needs for the maintenance and repair in each of the district's school plants.

After inspecting the school facilities at Crosby, Noonan, Fortuna, and Ambrose on August 2, 1966, I submit the following observations:

Crosby--

The new grade school section is good, although the house-keeping and general maintenance could be improved.

The high school section, although structurally sound, has been seriously neglected in maintenance for a long time. Windows that were broken were replaced with wood; the roof needs repair and doors need repair and adjustment. Most serious of all are the shower rooms - no ventilation, partitions loose and broken, stools dirty and stained, wash bowls dirty and stained, paint peeling from walls and floors, etc. Much of this could be corrected with a good general cleaning and painting. However, I would recommend ceramic tile on the floors and walls, plus new fixtures and stalls. This would be much easier to clean and maintain generally.

The old section now being used as a junior high school should be torn down to make space available for a playground. The building is over fifty (50) years old and to remodel it to present day standards would be prohibitive.

The frame building being used as a teacherage should also be torn down or moved out to provide more playground area. It would appear to me that this ground is far too valuable to the school program to be used as housing for the teachers.

Noonan--

Although limited in size, this school has been kept up better than the Crosby School. Windows were being repaired and in general appearance was good. Some minor repair is needed in the cafeteria and elsewhere.

Ambrose--

This school, I feel, should definitely be closed. The general condition is such that any repair or money spent for repair would be wasted and could better be used in upgrading some of the other schools.

The gym is condemned, furnaces and furnace room need extensive repair. There is no sewer or water and the windows are in poor condition. This building houses only the first four grades and it would seem it would be more expedient to take the students to Crosby with the other grades as long as the buses make the trip anyway.

Fortuna--

This is a new school - very nice - adequate.

In summary, I suggest that a new central high school be built with grade schools located at Crosby, Noonan and Fortuna. Good highways are available to all these locations and the distance is not great.

More custodians and maintenance men should be hired to keep the existing and any new building clean and repaired.

From Mr. Corliss F. Nelson's report one can hardly believe that a public school's facilities such as Crosby's high school and junior high school, could be left to deteriorate to such a level, especially in the matter of housekeeping, sanitation and safety and be tolerated by citizens of the community.

Table XI presents that part of the 1967-68 budget for maintenance and repair.

TABLE XI. 1967-68 BUDGET FOR MAINTENANCE OF PLANT AND EQUIPMENT.

Salaries	\$ 4,380.00
Replacement of Equipment	2,000.00
Other Expenses	7,000.00
TOTAL	\$13,380.00

The amount of \$13,380.00 assigned in the budget for maintenance and repair was very little, especially when taking into consideration that there has been practically no renovation, upkeep, or repair within the period of the last eight years. The \$2,000 budgeted under replacement of equipment is for office equipment and other incidentals. Warren G. Borchert, Superintendent of

Schools, has stated that the allowance of \$7,000 for other expenses would be sufficient only to maintain and repair normal wear and tear of the school plants within the 1967-68 year.

TRANSPORTATION

It has been the feeling of many professional persons throughout the country that all children regardless of where they live should have an opportunity to succeed in school work. Success depends, in part, upon the physical comfort of the children. It is a state responsibility to guarantee each pupil opportunity for an education and since the local school board members are, in effect, state officials, it becomes the responsibility of any district's local school board to furnish all pupils who live great distances from school with a safe and dependable method of getting to school.

As previously stated, during the first years of the reorganization of District One, the expenses for the operation of the district were greater than anticipated, especially in the area of purchasing buses and keeping them in operation. Under Recommendation B, Transportation, the County Reorganization Committee estimated the need for approximately twelve buses, some of which were to be station wagons, but there has been an increase in the number needed until in 1965-67 nineteen buses have been employed, none of which were station wagons. The additional cost of the seven new buses plus maintenance, operation, replacement, and drivers' salaries were

expenditures unaccounted for in the original budget.

In looking over the district as a whole, the bus routes as they were established could have and should have been improved. For example, the bus serving the Fortuna and Ambrose areas from Crosby was such that there was a regular daily 40 minute wait period at Fortuna's elementary school. One bus has been required to make a double trip. Grieder, Pierce, and Rosenstenger (8) say this about double routing:

Some school districts follow the practice of requiring a bus to serve two routes or to serve more than one building. This practice is undesirable because some pupils are often left with idle time.

Table XII presents the expenditures proposed for transportation in the 1967-68 budget.

TABLE XII. 1967-68 BUDGET FOR TRANSPORTATION.

Salaries	\$36,750.00
Replacement of Vehicles	(none)
Transportation Insurance	1,500.00
Payments in Lieu of Transportation	1,500.00
Contracted Services	12,350.00
Other Expenses	40,120.00
TOTAL	\$92,220.00

There has been nothing budgeted for replacement of vehicles. Regarding this item, the Superintendent of Schools, Warren G.

Borchert reported in the January, 1967 "Divide County School District Newsletter":

During the past two years four new buses have been purchased. If adequate replacement had been made at least six buses would have been traded for new ones. Many of the units which were purchased in 1962 have over 75,000 miles on them now, and it appears that they will have to be in operation for several more years. The cost of replacement is higher now than it would have been had it been done earlier. If the bus replacement is to be put on a systematic plan of rotation, at least three buses would be traded each year. The present average cost of replacement for one bus is approximately \$7,000.00 with trade. This expenditure would be another \$21,000.00.

A systematic replacement would mean adding \$21,000 more to pupil transportation expenditure, making a total of \$113,220.00 for the transportation area.

INSTRUCTIONAL PERSONNEL

With the tremendous emphasis on the necessity of improving education for our elementary and secondary pupils, we find that our schools need to meet the challenges of our changing society. A school must not only increase its quality of instruction in our academic program, but our high schools need to expand course offerings. Divide County School District One was unable to expand its course offerings; instead, it had to decrease its high school curriculum because of lack of funds.

The biggest expenditure of any school budget is for instructional salaries, and of the district's fiscal budget for 1966-67 62 per cent, or \$351,375.00 was allowed for teacher salaries. Therefore, because the teacher salaries take up the biggest percentage of the budget, a large cutback was necessary in this area of the budget.

In order to economize, five teachers were cut from the staff. Crosby, Noonan, Fortuna and Ambrose each lost one teacher, and there was no money budgeted to hire a district vocal teacher.

The reduction in teachers affected the curriculum. The courses offered at Crosby High had been fairly good, but were definitely limited to a college preparatory program, but with the loss of a teacher, three of the electives, French, journalism, and speech had to be dropped.

Noonan's high school curriculum had been extremely limited, but the loss of a teacher limited the senior's selection to only three credits. The fourth credit would have to be taken by correspondence or else the senior, or any other student, would be required to travel to Crosby each day to take his advanced science courses.

At Ambrose only one teacher instead of the original two teachers would teach the first four grades, which would consist of thirty-two students. The person employed to teach these grades was over seventy years old. The North Dakota state law states that the enrollment per classroom should not exceed twenty pupils when there are three or more grades in that room.(3);

Fortuna's loss of a teacher would result including the fourth grade within the departmentalization of 5, 6, 7, 8, grade. Otto and Sanders (6) point out that concerning grades 1-6, more than seventy per cent of the elementary principals polled in 1961 preferred the self-contained classroom to departmentalization.

In 1966 the Department of Public Instruction of North Dakota gave the district a third class accreditation rating, which meets minimum requirements only. With the reduction in instruction personnel and curriculum, District One would be in danger of losing its state accreditation in 1967-68.

SCHOOL PLANT SPACE

In this section only the school plants at Crosby and Noonan will be discussed since the school plants at Fortuna and Ambrose are covered very well in Mr. Corliss F. Nelson's report under Maintenance. The school plant at Lincoln Valley is a one-room rural school and it houses only eight students.

The building used at Crosby for high school puposes is much too small. The building was built in 1928 and it has been in use for thirty-nine years. It was designed for about 170 pupils, yet its anticipated enrollment will be 270. Not only is the building much too limited in space, but it has far outlived the proper space designated for the program which should be offered. The physical limitations of the biology room would indicate how a poor school plant could materially reduce effective instruction. At best, this school plant could be used for a junior high school. In particularly poor condition for a school plant, is the building used for the upper elementary grades. This building was erected in 1912, which makes its life service fifty-four years. The new grade school section is good and adequate.

The Noonan school houses five classrooms for grades one through six with 121 pupils and has three classrooms available for grades seven through twelve with 125 pupils. The other room is a combination of social science, study hall, and library room. Extra space was made available by moving the fourth grade to a church basement, and the cafeteria was converted into a self-contained classroom for the seventh grade. The stage was used for the cafeteria. It was planned for the fourth grade to return to the school plant in 1967-68 because of lack of funds. The Noonan school plant does have a good gym which is very adequate.

In Crosby and Noonan the lack of school plant space has seriously handicapped the curriculum.

COMMUNITY COOPERATION AND SUPPORT

After reorganization is effected, there is need for a continuing public relations program. Almost invariably some remnants of opposition remain and there is often also a problem of integrating community thought and loyalty in the new school system.

These problems exist in the Divide County School District. Each original school is interested in its own local situation and the community integration has not been smooth or complete. A good public relations program might help relieve the antagonism and lack of cooperation that is now prevalent throughout the district.

The main problem of District One is that there is no centralized support of the district. Provincialism is a frequent barrier in a reorganized school district. This provincialism is often expressed in the form of fears -- fear of domination by the populous areas, fear of loss of community identity.

In five years of reorganization, only one mill levy has passed. Two bond issues have failed and one mill levy failed to pass. On May 11, 1966 the school board called for a special election for the purpose of voting upon the question of floating a bond issue of approximately \$763,000. Of the \$763,000, \$688,000 was to have been used to build a new high school at Crosby and the remaining \$75,000 would have been used to add three classrooms, a storage room, and lavatories to the Noonan school. According to the 1967 Administrative Manual for North Dakota Schools (3) a 60 per cent majority is needed in school districts with a population of 5,000 or more. The bond issue failed with a 57.1 per cent support. Again in June of 1966, it was voted down with a 56.8 per cent support. Only the Crosby area in each election was able to muster the sixty per cent needed. Though Noonan's overcrowdedness would have been relieved and although the children of Ambrose and Fortuna would have attended the new high school, these areas failed to must a sufficient percentage of votes to pass either bond issue. Community support was lacking.

The chief reasons for opposition and lack of support are these.

The grip of tradition respecting local districts is exceedingly

strong. The attitude that "what was good enough for my father (or grandfather) is good enough for me" persists in many persons.

A very important cause of resistance in rural areas is the prospect of higher tax rates in small, low-tax districts. The protection of the pocketbook, rather than the saving of the small schools or districts, is at the bottom of this kind of opposition.

Lacking experience with really good schools, many persons do not appreciate the educational advantages which larger districts are able to furnish.

Many areas still experience the bitterness which comes from new challenges to community pride or from vestiges of old challenges. Too often intercommunity relations reveal a history of such conflict. Unfortunately, a frequent focal point for this rivalry is interscholastic athletic competition. This association of intense rivalry between Noonan and Crosby created a foundation on which it has been difficult to build a consolidated school district. This carry-over of old rivalries and jealousies still exists between the various areas of the Divide County School Districts.

An active public relations program with a positive and enthusiastic approach showing the advantages that each community has to gain by working together seems necessary at this point if the district is to succeed in bringing the highest standards of education to the young people of this entire area.

WOULD IT BE FEASIBLE FOR NOONAN
TO AGAIN BECOME AN INDEPENDENT DISTRICT?

In 1962 the Noonan School District and other districts involved voted to consolidate into a single district. No longer self-contained and isolated, the school districts of the newly organized district have had to face new problems together. How the district adjusts to such problems determines whether the district can maintain a good educational program. Divide County School District has been unable to meet the new situations and now is faced with the problem of meeting minimum educational provisions.

The disruptive influences were the annual increasing school costs, the complete depletion of cash reserves, and the failure of the mill levy vote in the spring of 1967 which forced the school board to trim the instructional personnel and educational programs. Another big factor was the overcrowdedness of school plants at Crosby and Noonan and the failure of the two school bond issues in May and June of 1966 aimed at relieving the situation.. The failure to solve these disruptive problems has caused dissatisfaction to become extensive throughout the district so that many people of Divide County School District have begun to loose faith in the reorganization plan.

Noonan's desire to maintain its community as it is, even

when some conditions are recognized as unsatisfactory is a reflection of the conflicts within the district.

People naturally resist change even if the change does not seriously affect them. There has been a gradual change occurring in the rural areas of American, North Dakota, and Divide County for a number of years. Sometimes the change has been so gradual that many services formerly provided in the small community are not missed due to the quality and availability of similar services in larger nearby trade centers. However, as the loss of the school becomes a possibility, people seem to band together in an effort to halt the continued process and many real and many unrealistic reasons are projected to support such an effort. The chief feeling on the part of many of the citizens of Noonan, is that closing the high school by consolidation would mean the "death blow" to the community.

The program of the March, 1967 P.T.A meeting at Noonan School was an open discussion on the possibility of Noonan's withdrawing from the Divide County School District. The meeting was very well attended. It was proposed that the new district would contain all of the townships of Mentor, Coalfield, Border and a portion of the townships of Blooming Valley, Long Creek, and Upland. (See Figure 3.) Table XIII presents the tax base of the new proposed Noonan School District for 1967.

Figure 3.

Map of Proposed Noonan School District

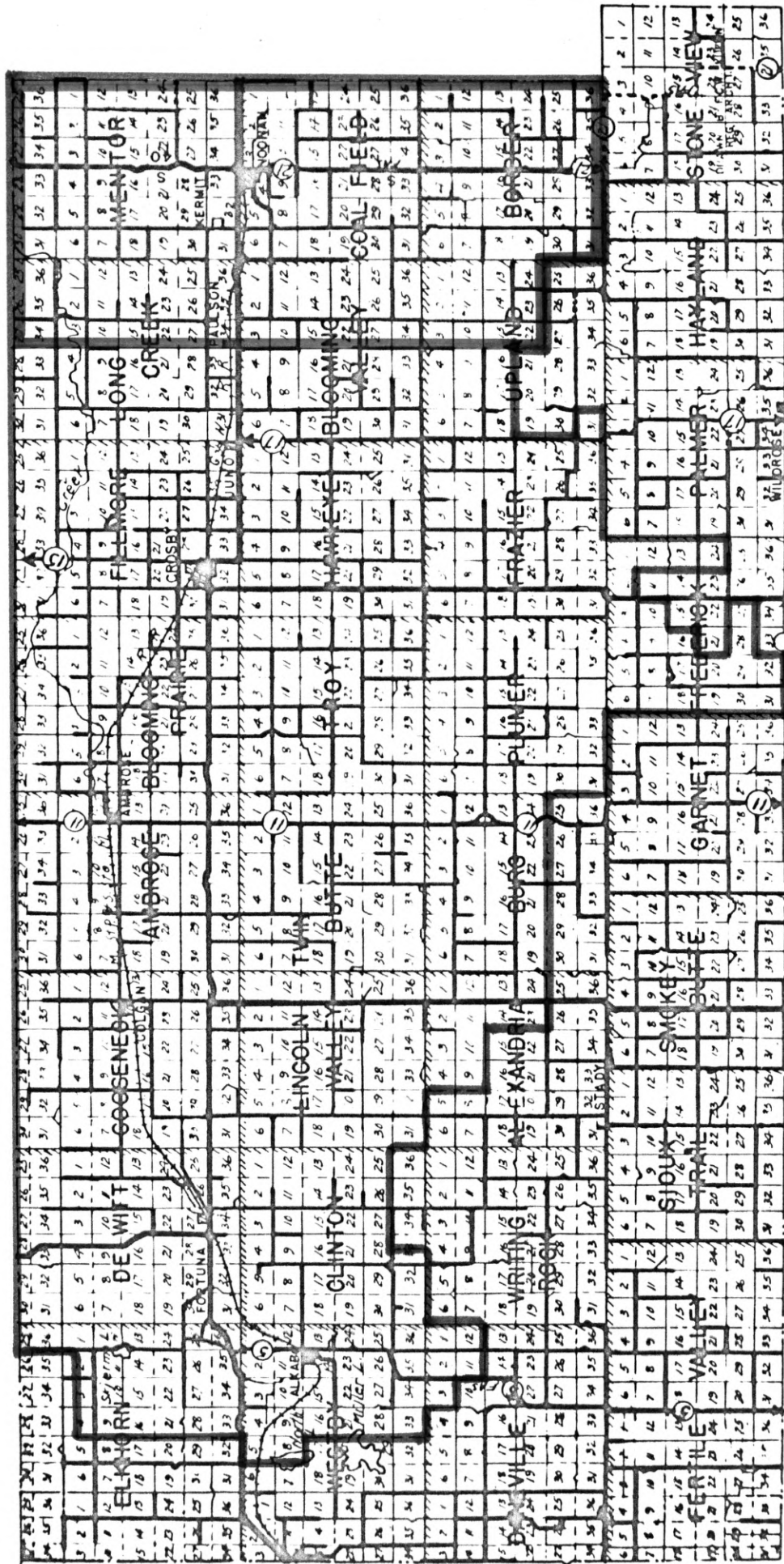


TABLE XIII. TAX BASE 1967.

Township	Real Estate	Personal Property	Utilities	Total
Mentor	\$127,138	\$ 29,717	\$ 7,989	\$ 164,844
Coalfield	254,725	116,274	38,558	409,557
Blooming Valley	149,090	26,481	9,907	186,297
Border	120,952	23,350		144,302
Long Creek	70,987	16,112	13,569	100,668
Upland	24,387	9,682	203	34,272
TOTAL	\$748,098	\$221,616	\$70,226	\$1,039,940

Table XIII clearly shows that the three sources of local tax revenue would be real estate, personal property, and public utilities. The greater part of the tax base is found in real estate.

Table XIV presents the probable cost of operating the Noonan School if it becomes independent.

TABLE XIV. PROBABLE BUDGET FOR NOONAN SCHOOL.

Estimated Revenue (General Fund)	
General Fund Levy (1,039,940 x 42 mills)	\$ 43,677.00
Foundation Program	
160 elementary @ \$198.00	30,400.00
87 high school @ \$290.40	25,265.00
Federal Aid	10,000.00
Gas and Oil	3,500.00
State Aid for transportation	8,000.00
	<u>\$120,832.00</u>

TABLE XIV. (Continued)

Estimated Expenditures (General Fund)

Administration	\$ 2,600.00
Instructional service	83,000.00
Pupil transportation	16,000.00
Operation of plants	8,000.00
Maintenance of plants	<u>3,000.00</u>
Total	<u>\$119,600.00</u>

The state foundation program was figured in accordance with the new Senate Bill 228 which became effective in July of 1967. The item, instructional Services, includes the salaries of eleven teachers and the superintendent. The transportation expenditures were on four buses at \$.28 per mile. The above budget was figured to handle the limited instruction program set in the 1967-68 budget of Divide County School District, which means students of Noonan would be unable to obtain the sixteen units of work required by the Department of Public Instruction. A student would have to take correspondence courses to complete his curriculum for graduation. Noonan School has no facilities to teach home economics, vocational agriculture, and industrial arts. Any plans for placing these subjects into the curriculum would require expensive building plans and increase the general fund mill levy.

Another factor which affects adequate school programs is pupil enrollment. When sparsity factors and low population combine, it becomes very difficult to meet present day school programs. Table XV presents an analysis of present and anticipated enrollment factors of the proposed district.

TABLE XV. CENSUS - PRESCHOOL CHILDREN.

Name of Township	Will begin school in Date of birth	1967 1961	1968 1962	1969 1963	1970 1964	Totals
Long Creek		1	1	1		3
Blooming Valley		1	2	1		4
Upland		2				2
Mentor		1	3	2		6
Border		1	1	2	3	7
Coalfield		<u>8</u>	<u>8</u>	<u>10</u>	<u>9</u>	<u>35</u>
TOTALS		14	15	16	12	57

Pre-school statistics indicate a decrease of first grade pupils in the considered Noonan district. With the population decrease throughout Divide County, the increasing age of parents, and the increase in number of large mechanized farms, a gradual decrease in student population will occur for a period of years.

Most educators believe that once a district has decided to consolidate with another district because it is believed to be the answer to their problems, and once the consolidation has been legally enacted, the case is closed and there is no turning back.

Lee O. Garber (5) points out a New Jersey court ruling which makes this clear.

Unless the law says so, specifically, a school district cannot simply vote itself out of business - even when it discovers that a recent consolidation with another district was a big mistake..

In North Dakota this decision was not followed and a precedence has been set.

In 1962 the school districts of Watford City and Alexander, North Dakota consolidated to form the McKenzie County School District. In 1965 Alexander withdrew from the reorganized district and reformed again as an independent school district. Superintendent Ronald Torgeson said the chief reasons for withdrawing from the larger district were:

1. Need for a school building at Alexander.
2. Failure of building fund elections.
3. Lack of educational advantages for the students.
4. Lack of curriculum improvement.
5. Selfishness.
6. General dissatisfaction.

Alexander's school is of comparable size to Noonan's school. Also, like Divide County School District, there was no consolidation of school plants between Watford City and Alexander, as there was no consolidation of plants between Crosby and Noonan.

The State of North Dakota has no set procedures in its school laws for a district to withdraw from a reorganized district. A

letter was sent to Mrs. Charlotte Taylor, County Superintendent of Schools at Divide County, from A. R. Nestass, Deputy Superintendent of the Department of Public Instruction's position on this matter. If the Noonan school district wishes, it can disassociate itself from Divide County School District if it meets school regulation 15-27-06 (4) which states:

No territory shall be detached from one school district or annexed to another school district if the part of the original district remaining after the proposed annexation would have an assessed valuation of less than one hundred thousand dollars, or less than one hundred twenty-five thousand dollars for each teacher employed in the remaining territory if the remaining territory has a graded school with two or more teachers.

The Divide County School District would retain a sufficient assessed valuation should the Noonan territory leave, so that leaves Noonan clear on this point of law.

The door appears to be open if the Noonan people insist upon seceding from the Divide County School District. The people of the Noonan area must bear in mind that even though District One has problems, the problems they would face upon again becoming an independent district would be greater and harder to solve. They must remember that all of the problems of District One would still exist, the overcrowded school plant, an even more limited budget, even higher taxes, the difficulty of maintaining a well-qualified professional staff, and a very minimum curriculum. Also, there is a probability of a non-accredited school.

CHAPTER IV

SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Patrons of this area have attempted to provide conservative yet good schools within the framework of a limited reorganization. This district along with other districts is in need of a clearly defined educational philosophy, long range planning and purpose. Much of the practice in the operation of the schools has grown through expediency rather than as a result of trying to meet well-defined educational goals. This is particularly evidenced in the manner in which school building programs, school instructional programs and school budget planning have progressed.

It is unfortunate that this study did not secure a measurement of attitudes toward education on the part of the public constituents and the educators of the district. The educational ideals of a community constitute a principal factor in determining the quality of the educational program. People will strive to provide as fully as possible the type of school system that shows promise of attaining their own goals and standards. It is sometimes difficult for community-minded people to distinguish between good educational goals and somewhat selfish personal interests.

Complacency exists in parts of the district with the standards that presently prevail. Many people in most of the areas place local pride and vested interests ahead of the attainment of the best possible education for all young people of the area. These attitudes have led the district to costly educational mistakes,

failure to provide adequate school plant facilities and a reduced quality of curriculum. If children were placed ahead of personal desires this district would not continue in this manner. Determination of the emphasis to be given education is properly the province of the people of the district. The quality of education improves in direct ratio to the growth of education and to the degree of public participation.

Community values and resulting stresses upon various school objectives are not fixed factors. The values will change and can be changed by new means of communication, population shifts, new problems, new insights, and leadership. What may be called the dominant values at any particular time will shift with changes in the strength and aggressiveness of the various groups. This means the prevailing values of the community, the accepted priorities in school purposes, and the pressures being exerted at any given time are not stable factors upon which to base the entire future of any school program. It is the task of educational leadership to know the relative over-emphasis or under-emphasis within a district and to focus attention on the real long-range needs of the area.

The needs of individuals as they grow up and establish themselves as citizens of the community or as they move into other areas are vital considerations in the formulation of an educational program. It is important in order for young people to participate effectively in an economy which is moving rapidly away from a rural to an urban society. Each youth should be helped

to acquire understanding of the system by which goods are produced, exchanged and distributed. They should come to a full realization of the basic assumptions supporting our way of life and the responsibility that each citizen has toward that way of life. Some specific vocational training in a few of the more common vocations of the vicinity should be provided. These can be mechanical skills in the areas of farm machinery, automobiles, radio, and household appliances.

Migration of population, especially young couples and youth, must be considered in vocational preparation. The youth of today must be educated to adjust to every changing situations or to any locality in the world. Small community schools no longer educate youth to take a place only in local community life. This would be true in Divide County School District where migration of youth is a major factor. With this requirement, there is room for only one central high school in the district. It is impossible for the school district to extend itself into a vocational education curriculum such as homemaking, vocational agriculture, business education, industrial arts, and the pre-trade and industrial education at two sites.

RECOMMENDATIONS

In the light of the present conditions of the school plants, limited budget, limited instructional plan of Divide County School District, the following recommendations are made for improving education in Divide County School District.

1. Build a totally new high school unit at Crosby. This new high school should be carefully designed so as to provide the kind of space needed for the extended vocational program, as well as the total anticipated high school population for the entire district.
2. Renovate and designate the presently used high school building at Crosby for use as the junior high school or upper grade level elementary school.
3. Plan for the discontinuance of the high school program at Noonan in order to provide for the operation of an excellent elementary school, as well as to improve the high school program for pupils now attending at Noonan. The Noonan school building would lend itself very nicely to an elementary school and the present facilities used in science would be fairly adequate for the science program in the upper elementary grades.
4. As an alternate to recommendation three, form an elementary and junior high school at Noonan for grades one through nine.
5. Close the Ambrose school. Because of the poor building facilities and since the bus already makes a trip to Crosby, it would be more expedient to take all the students to Crosby.
6. Plan to close the Lincoln Valley School. The students of Lincoln Valley could be absorbed into the elementary school at Fortuna without any increase of staff.
7. Develop a definite public relations program designed to explain the goals, achievements, and needs to the public and to keep the people currently informed. This would help in getting a much needed mill levy passed.

The closing of the schools at Ambrose, Lincoln Valley and the high school at Noonan would save the district \$44,000 in expenditures each year. This money could be used for new buses, instructional supplies, a district music teacher, and for a guidance and counseling program with specially trained personnel to assist teachers and pupils.

As we survey this community the writer feels that the district has the potential to provide for an enviable school program both in elementary and high school if the people are awakened and it is effectively planned. Under the present conditions it will be necessary for this district to make positive and immediate improvements as well as long-range plans. Such positive steps toward improvement will determine whether the district will continue to enjoy its rating as an accredited school system according to the State Department of Public Instruction, North Dakota.

The writer has tried to be realistic in pointing out his impressions without being purposely critical. It is hoped that the information contained in this report will be used toward a study to plan for an educational program in the future which will provide better school plants and greater educational advantages for the children of Divide County School District One.

APPENDIX A

Mrs. Charlotte Taylor
County Superintendent of Schools
Crosby, North Dakota

Dear Mrs. Taylor:

Your letter concerning various school district matters was received.

With respect to the withdrawal of the Noonan area from the Divide County Public School District, this would be presumably only if the remaining area had a valuation of at least \$125,00 per teacher in the remaining area. This is in accordance with Section 15-27-06 and it is a limitation which generally prohibits detachment of any area from a school district. Section 15-53-23 would not apply if the County Reorganization Committee and the State Board approval were obtained for the detachment. In other words, the five-year limitation does not mean anything if both the County and the State Committees are in favor of a change.

Section F of the plan of reorganization of the Divide County Public School District # 1 pertains to the proposed change in the plan raises some questions in my mind. I do not think that there is anything wrong with the statement except where it may conflict with the provisions of the state law. This is a matter which might have to be brought to the Attorney General for interpretation, but I would say again that as far as the detachment of the Noonan area is concerned, this could be done only if it meets the requirements of Section 15-27-06, to which I referred before.

The detachment of the Alexander District in McKenzie County came about strictly on the basis of a plan of reorganization which covers just the area that wished to be detached. The remaining area of the McKenzie County District had a valuation which was in agreement with Section 15-53-26 where the valuation per teacher is \$100,000 without regard to the number of teachers.

I am not certain if I have clarified this for you very much, but if you have other questions please feel free to write.

Yours truly,

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC INSTRUCTION

s/A. R. Nestoss

A. R. Nestoss
Deputy Superintendent

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