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ATTITUDES TOWARD GALLATIN COUNTY NONPUBLIC SCHOOLS

by

IVAN GROOTHUIS

A professional paper submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

MASTER OF EDUCATION

with concentration in

Elementary Education

Approved:

Chairperson, Examining Committee

Head, Major Department

Graduate Dean

MONTANA STATE UNIVERSITY
Bozeman, Montana

August, 1976
The author is grateful to the members of his committee and to Dr. Eric Strohmeyer for the cooperation which they gave in this study. He is especially appreciative to his major advisors and committee chairmen, Dr. Greg Stefanich and Dr. Tom Crumbaugh, for their guidance and encouragement.

The author expresses special thanks and appreciation to his wife, Alice, for her encouragement and understanding throughout the completion of this study.
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This study dealt with the problem of determining the attitudes of Gallatin County, Montana, residents toward the nonpublic schools in Gallatin County.

Although there existed numerous articles and books dealing with various facets of nonpublic education, the writer found a limited amount of related research dealing specifically with the public's attitudes toward nonpublic schools.

The writer developed a questionnaire to ascertain the attitudes of a simple random sample of Gallatin County residents toward the nonpublic schools in Gallatin County. The questionnaire was mailed to the 384 persons in the sample population.

Some of the major conclusions reached as a result of this study were: 1) Public education in Gallatin County is performing satisfactorily, 2) Nonpublic schools are an asset to Gallatin County, 3) Independent, parochial, and Christian schools should exist as an alternative to the public schools, 4) Gallatin County residents are not ready to support the concept of providing tax monies for nonpublic schools.

Some of the major recommendations made as a result of this study were the following: 1) The survey instrument should be revised by stating the questions in Section IV more neutrally, 2) The nonpublic schools should develop more meaningful ways for their constituency to enhance the image of nonpublic education to the public.
Chapter I

INTRODUCTION

In the Oregon Case of 1925, Pierce v. Society of Sisters, 268 U. S. 510 (Tussman, 1962:204), the United States Supreme Court ruled that the fundamental theory of liberty upon which all governments in this union repose excludes any general power of the state to standardize its children by forcing them to accept instruction from public school teachers only. The child is not a mere creature of the state; those who direct his destiny have the right, coupled with the high duty, to recognize and prepare him for additional obligations. With nonpublic school tuition costs on the rise, many families cannot afford the education they desire for their children. Presently, the United States government shows through judicial and with a lack of legislative actions that it does not believe in pluralism of education (Vander Ark, 1974: 4-5).

It will be the intent of this study to determine the attitudes of Gallatin County residents toward the nonpublic schools in Gallatin County. This researcher will choose an instrument to collect data relevant to these citizens' feelings towards their public school as well as towards the local nonpublic schools. Whether the concept of pluralism in education is of an advantage to the people of Gallatin County will also be tabulated.
Statement of the Problem

This study will deal with the problem of determining the attitudes of Gallatin County, Montana, residents toward nonpublic schools in Gallatin County.

Need of this Study

State laws which had provided for educational services to nonpublic schools have been declared unconstitutional by the United States Supreme Court due to the excessive entanglement of church and state. The possibility that nonpublic schools will be forced to close could become a reality. The closing of nonpublic schools may be Justifiable if they offer nothing more to society than simply duplication of educational services as already provided by the public school system. However, if nonpublic schools benefit society by providing a viable alternative to public education, perhaps the citizens will want to make certain that this alternative remains available.

One person who believes in the welfare of the nonpublic schools is President Ford (Presidency 1974, 1975:83A). President Ford maintains that competition in education, between private and public, is good for the student. President Ford went on to say that there is no reason why there should be a monopoly in education just on the public side. Private education has contributed over a long period of time . . . significantly to a better educated America.
If President Ford believes that nonpublic education contributes to a better educated America, then it is important to know the attitudes of the citizens in Gallatin County toward nonpublic schools so that the nonpublic schools will continue to meet the present and changing needs of these citizens. The nonpublic schools will have a better idea of how to improve not only their image but also their financial base. Only after knowing how the citizens feel toward the nonpublic schools will these schools be able to expand on their strengths and change or eliminate their weaknesses. This study, though limited to Gallatin County, Montana, will be important for establishing some credibility and longevity to nonpublic schools as viable alternatives to the public schools.

Lastly, there is a need for this study since very few studies of public attitudes toward nonpublic schools have been attempted in the United States. The Catholic church has published several attitudinal studies; but these surveys have only determined the public's attitudes toward the Catholic parochial schools. The writer has been able to find only one national survey of public attitudes toward nonpublic schools, which was conducted in 1969 by Gallup International (Fahey, 1971:536). Out of this lack of information arises the need for this study.
General Questions to be Answered

The writer will answer the following questions:

1. What are the attitudes of the Gallatin County residents toward the nonpublic schools in Gallatin County?

2. What are the attitudes of the Gallatin County residents toward the public school in their district?

3. Why do Gallatin County residents send their children to a nonpublic school?

4. Through what means are Gallatin County residents made aware of the nonpublic schools in Gallatin County?

5. How much money are Gallatin County residents willing to spend to use nonpublic schools or to keep nonpublic schools operating?

6. Should Gallatin County residents provide tax monies for nonpublic schools operating in Gallatin County?

General Procedures

The problem will be solved by sending a questionnaire to randomly selected residents of Gallatin County. The answers from these questionnaires will be tabulated and the results will be used to determine the attitudes of Gallatin County residents toward the nonpublic schools in Gallatin County. This data will then be used to draw conclusions and to make recommendations.

Delimitation

A delimitation will be placed on the population of this study by limiting the study to those Gallatin County residents listed in the
June, 1976, Mountain Bell telephone directory. Only those residents will receive a questionnaire.

Definition of Terms

Attitude. The predisposition or tendency to react specifically towards an object, situation or value (Good, 1973:49).

Gallatin County resident. Any person listed in the Gallatin County Telephone Directory.

Nonpublic School. Schools which are governed and directed by private persons or organizations and which in general receive no basic public funding (Dandridge, 1972:3).

Pluralism. Emphasizes the multiplicity and variety of groups constituting educational institutions (Good, 1973:427).

Private School. Nonpublic schools.

Summary

There is a need to determine the attitudes of Gallatin County, Montana, residents toward the nonpublic schools. This research paper presents those expressed attitudes toward nonpublic education in Gallatin County.
Chapter II

REVIEW OF RELATED RESEARCH

This researcher found a great lack of information concerning the attitudes of the public toward nonpublic education. The information in this chapter will be presented under two headings: (1) The Role of Nonpublic Education, and (2) Aid to Nonpublic Schools. The first of these headings will deal with why educational pluralism is an advantage, not only for the nonpublic schools, but also for the public schools. It will also deal with the reasons parents choose an alternative type of education. The second heading will deal with several pros and cons of government financial aid to nonpublic schools.

Role of Nonpublic Education

Business life in the United States is thought of as healthy provided competition is encouraged. Competition encourages lower prices and a better product. Yet in the area of education, tax monies provide support for only one system of education—the public school. This researcher found evidence (Lyman, 1974:2) that there appears to be a tide running against the private sector in American life generally, and that there is a concern not for equality of opportunity but for equality of results. Perhaps we can afford to ignore alternate school systems if they have nothing to offer.

Evidence that nonpublic schools have something desirable to offer the citizen can be seen by investigating the various reasons for their
support. Porter (1973:30-44) researched why parents send their children to nonpublic schools and found that: (1) parents sense that a small school has value as a "community." Their lives begin to revolve around their school; (2) the performance of teachers and principal is above average; (3) parents are expected to exercise power in the decision-making process. Parents speak of nonpublic schools as "our" schools versus "our schools"; (4) there is a certain almost intangible pride and excitement among both parents and children associated with "school"; (5) parents speak of the cost factor. Very few families are wealthy, and they truly prefer to patronize the local public school if it were satisfactory. Now there is a feeling of pride associated with their stand to send their children to a nonpublic school--just look what it is costing them!; (6) certain services are simply not available in the public schools, e.g. challenging work, personal attention; (7) parents see the bureaucracy of professional educators as impenetrable; (8) finally, there is to a degree the issue of busing and integration. However, Dandridge (1972:3) sees this last issue somewhat differently, commenting that the nonpublic schools can play an important part in offering a viable educational alternative to minority groups. In many cases it is the nonpublic school who initiates integration.

There is an overall advantage to society for pluralistic education. The nonpublic school makes this contribution just due to its individual uniqueness. Lyman (1974:3) finds that in nonpublic schools, claims of
excellence and individuality have been lived up to.

Palmer (1974:26) emphasizes that far from destroying the public schools, nonpublic schools may help provide new patterns of departure for publicly financed schools in the years ahead. For instance, he would suggest that public schools put more stress in the area of industrial arts. Perhaps public schools have never thought about trying to compliment the work a neighboring nonpublic school is doing.

Palmer's study appears to coincide with that of Fahey (1971:42) who found that Catholic schools were perceived by local residents as superior in social and personal items, while public schools were considered to be more proficient in the area of school operation.

There is an assumption that the nonpublic schools play a role in segregation. Therefore, these schools are thought to be divisive, being less tolerant of other races. Underlying this suspicion is the assumption that if one does not get to know members of other groups when he is going to school, then he will be intolerant of them in later years. A study by Greeley and Rossi (1966:114-137) indicates that in regard to Catholic schools (one group of nonpublic schools) there are no differences between Catholic graduates and others in their attitudes on racial justice. This same study indicates that Catholics are actually more tolerant with regard to civil liberties.
Aid to Nonpublic Schools

This heading will be divided into two subtopics; (1) Reasons why nonpublic schools should not receive public monies, and (2) Reasons why nonpublic schools should receive public monies.

The reasons why a nonpublic school should not receive public monies. The nature of the crisis in nonpublic schools has been, and still is, attributed to dollars and cents. Tuition is escalating so rapidly that parents state that they simply cannot afford nonpublic education. However, finances may not be the root of the problem. Erickson (1971:16-18) found that the nonpublic schools which continue to thrive are those which have a clear purpose for existence. The public sees basic differences between these thriving schools and the public schools, and therefore treats the nonpublic school people as outcasts—never quite accepting them. Over a period of time as distinctiveness between a nonpublic school and a public school disappears, the public begins to accept them. When this occurs, the nonpublic school is in trouble financially. Its constituency will no longer deem it necessary, since the nonpublic school is no different or only different to such a slight degree that they may as well send their children to the tuition-free public school down the road. Again, Erickson also found that ecumenicity along with a watering-down or loss of fundamental church doctrines has contributed to this "no distinction" syndrome.
This is one reason why Catholic school enrollment is dropping while Protestant schools continue to increase.

Anderson (1974:106-107) gives other reasons why nonpublic schools should not receive public monies, such as: (1) the constitutional doctrine of separation of church and state; (2) the public schools could become a dumping ground for students rejected by other schools; (3) there could be a wasteful duplication of expensive equipment and facilities; (4) students could, theoretically, move to a new school every time their teachers tried to discipline them; and (5) long term planning would be made extremely difficult due to the flexibility of enrollment.

Furthermore, Ryan (1965:301-302) suggests that nonpublic education is definitely a free choice of parents to provide an "equivalent" (state supervised) schooling for their children—as guaranteed by the First and Fourteenth Amendments—but that the exercise of this option, equivalence meant complete private support, both indirect and direct, since otherwise all functions (buildings, teachers' salaries, and so on) could be construed as aids to the children rather than to the institution. Since all monies granted to a nonpublic school have administrative costs in the expenditures of public funds, any and all funds given to nonpublic schools would be sufficient basis for legal infra-
The reasons why nonpublic schools should receive public monies. Part of the problem why nonpublic schools fail to gain financial support is due to several popular fallacies that the public holds concerning the role of nonpublic schools. Erickson's study (1971:6-13) speaks to this problem when he suggests that: (1) many nonpublic schools are thought to increase racial injustice, when most are really committed to achieving stable racial integration; (2) nonpublic school supporters are very negative towards the local public school. While it is true that their enthusiasm is not as great as a parent with children in a public school, they are no less enthusiastic than those citizens who no longer have children in the public school; (3) equality of educational opportunity is similar to that of the public school's. The church-related sector of the nonpublic schools tended to discriminate less against the poor, and tended to capitalize more on home values and activities; and (4) many smaller schools cause waste and should be consolidated into larger, more efficient systems thus eliminating duplication, etc. Again Erickson's study shows that when schools expand, the number of extracurricular activities are not increased. Also, less student learning may result since size caused it to become cumbersome and impersonal. However, schools that cater to constituencies smaller in size and more homogeneous in outlook can adapt more readily to the special needs and interests of its members. Before nonpublic schools can expect to receive public funds, these fallacies must be challenged
and disproved or the credibility of positive reasons why nonpublic schools should receive public funds is lost.

There are other reasons for using public monies for supporting the children attending nonpublic schools. Palmer (1974:9) suggests that: (1) the government's schools are not religiously neutral. Public schools state that they will not take a stand for or against God in search for truth (which is one of the primary goals of education), but that they will be neutral in the matter. A silence about God is a denial that God is necessary in the search for truth. Not to take a stand for God is to take a stand against Him. It follows then that it is impossible to be neutral about God and His truth when we seek the truth; and (2) education is primarily and fundamentally a parental responsibility. The state may require a minimum amount of education; but God gave children to parents and not to the state to train, teach, and bring them up. This involves nothing less than a violation of the biblical principle of separation of family and state. A free education is provided only in those schools where the instruction is dominated by religious secularism, and encourages and entices people to violate their consciences and makes it impossible for lower income parents to provide an education for their children according to their religious convictions. Relief will have to be found through the legislative and judicial branches of our government.
Summary

The research completed in the area of nonpublic education suggests that nonpublic schools do provide a viable alternative to public schools and may actually stimulate educationally better public schools.

At this time there are numerous arguments as to why the government should, or should not, fund nonpublic schools. On the negative side, the law is interpreted as providing for a nearly total separation of church and state. Public support leads to excessive entanglement between the two. Many nonpublic schools are losing support, but not for financial reasons. The ecumenical movement leads some constituents to withdraw support for a nonpublic school that is recognizably little different from a public school. Parents are given the free choice to educate their children in a nonpublic school.

On the other side, the public has several misconceptions as to the role of the nonpublic school. These fallacies must be disproved before the general public will favor aid to nonpublic schools. A public school is not religiously neutral either. And finally, education is fundamentally a parental responsibility.

The very nature of the problem suggests more legislative and judicial decisions in the future.
CHAPTER III

PROCEDURES

Introduction

The problem of this study will be to determine the attitudes of Gallatin County residents toward the nonpublic schools in Gallatin County, Montana. A questionnaire will be sent to a random sampling of the residents of Gallatin County to determine those attitudes. The researcher will compile data from the questionnaire and will make recommendations based on the results.

In this chapter the instrument and related literature will be presented in the following manner:

1. A description of the population and the sampling procedure will be given.
2. The investigative category will be defined.
3. The method for collecting data will be discussed.
4. The method of data organization will be described.
5. An analysis of the data will be presented.
6. The precautions taken for accuracy will be defined.
7. A summary of Chapter III will be presented.

Population Description and Sampling Procedure

The population of this study will consist of 384 residents of Gallatin County. A simple random sample method will be used to select
the 384 Gallatin County residents. Since there are a maximum of 400 listed residents per Mountain Bell, June, 1976, directory page, a number from one through 400 will be assigned to each person on each page. A table of random numbers (Kraft, 1958:194-195) will be used to randomly select persons from each page. The number of directory pages for the county will be divided into the sample population to determine the number of county residents needed for selection per page.

**Investigative Category**

The areas which will be examined in this study are (1) the attitudes of Gallatin County residents toward their district public schools; (2) the attitudes of Gallatin County residents toward the nonpublic schools in Gallatin County; (3) the reasons why residents choose to send their children to a nonpublic school; (4) the amount of tuition residents are willing to spend to obtain a nonpublic education; (5) the amount of financial support a resident is willing to contribute towards a nonpublic school; and (6) the means through which Gallatin County residents are made aware of the nonpublic schools in Gallatin County.

**Method of Collecting Data**

A questionnaire will be developed to obtain information for this study and will be mailed to each of the participants. The questions will be designed to answer the six general questions listed in Chapter I.
Accompanying each questionnaire will be a cover letter explaining the nature and purposes of this survey.

The questionnaire will be administered to a test group similar to the actual respondents prior to mailing it to the participants. Any recommendations for change will be considered. This should help clarify ambiguities in the directions or questions and give the developed instrument more validity.

A copy of the survey instrument will be included in an Appendix A to this paper.

Reliability and Validity

The survey instrument was viewed by Dr. Greg Stefanich, the researcher's advisor, and by a statistics expert, Dr. Eric Strohmeyer. The instrument has content validity since the instrument items were made on the basis of their relevance to areas deemed important and were checked for accuracy by experts in the field of education.

Method of Organizing Data

The results of this study will be shown in tabular form. The survey instrument will be designed to elicit responses that will be reflective of the opinions of Gallatin County residents concerning their attitudes towards the nonpublic schools in Gallatin County.

Presentation of the results of the survey will be included in Chapter IV of this paper.
Analysis of Data

Analyzing the collected data will involve a careful examination and interpretation of the responses to each question. The information received from the sample instrument and the comparisons drawn in the tables should enable the investigator to identify and report the attitudes toward the nonpublic schools in Gallatin County.

Precautions Taken for Accuracy

The data will be computer checked in an effort to eliminate as much error as possible in recording responses to questions on the testing instrument. The necessary calculations will be made by the same computer.

Summary

This study will make an effort to determine the attitudes of Gallatin County residents toward the nonpublic schools in Gallatin County. This investigation will include \(^{384}\) randomly selected Gallatin County residents. The questionnaires will be mailed by the researcher July 26, 1976.

Data obtained in this study will be used in a descriptive manner. Tables will be developed from the data collected which will include raw scores and percentages of each survey item.

The instrument (see Appendix A) for Gallatin County residents will
be devised by the writer and will be examined by experts in the field of education to give it content validity.
Chapter IV

FINDINGS AND INTERPRETATIONS

Introduction

This chapter reports the findings of a study which dealt with the attitudes toward nonpublic schools in Gallatin County, Montana. In collecting the data for this study, questionnaires were mailed to 384 randomly selected residents of Gallatin County.

Of the 384 questionnaires distributed, 153 were returned, representing 40 percent. Six persons returned the questionnaire but chose not to answer any of the items. These will not be considered in the item analysis.

Report of the Questionnaire

Fourteen of the respondents, or 9.5 percent, have children attending a nonpublic school while 67, or 45 percent, have children attending a public school and 66, or 45 percent, have no children in school at the present time.

In answer to how long the respondents have resided in Gallatin County, 28 of the responding residents, or 19 percent, reported that they have resided in Gallatin County for a period of up to three years. Another 114 of the respondents, or 78 percent, have resided in Gallatin County longer than three years. The remaining 3 percent did not respond to this particular item.
Table 1 consists of respondents' attitudes toward nonpublic and public schools in Gallatin County, Montana. All responses were recorded on a five point response scale ranging from strongly agree to strongly disagree.

In answer to Question 1, as reported in Table 1, 65 percent of the responding residents reported that they were satisfied with their local public school, 21 percent of the respondents were uncertain, and another 13 percent of the respondents were dissatisfied. Question 2, concerning how the respondents' tax dollars were being used efficiently, was answered favorably by 41 percent of the responding residents, 38 percent of the respondents were uncertain, and 20 percent of the respondents disagreed. In answer to Question 3, concerning whether public education had improved over the past five years, 38 percent of the responding residents indicated that public education had improved, 35 percent of the respondents were uncertain, and 27 percent of the respondents disagreed.

Questions 4 through 15 of Table 1 dealt with Gallatin County residents' attitudes toward the nonpublic schools in Gallatin County. In answer to Question 4 concerning whether the respondents felt that the nonpublic schools were an asset to Gallatin County, 57 percent of the respondents indicated agreement, 27 percent of the respondents were uncertain, and 15 percent disagreed. Question 5 asked whether the number of nonpublic schools should be increased in Gallatin County. Of the
responding residents, 27 percent felt that the number of nonpublic schools in Gallatin County should be increased, 31 percent of the respondents were uncertain, and 40 percent of the respondents disagreed.

In answering Question 6, concerning whether the respondents felt that the nonpublic schools provide better discipline than the public schools, 46 percent of the responding sample population felt that the nonpublic schools provided better discipline, 26 percent of the respondents were uncertain, and 26 percent of the respondents disagreed. Question 7 dealt with whether the nonpublic schools teach a better value system than the public schools. Thirty-four percent of the respondents felt that the nonpublic schools provided a better value system, and 31 percent of the respondents were uncertain. The remaining 34 percent of the respondents disagreed that the nonpublic school provided a better value system. In answer to Question 8, concerning whether the respondents felt that the nonpublic schools place more stress on reading, writing, and arithmetic than the public schools, 27 percent of the responding sample population felt that the nonpublic schools placed more stress on reading, writing, and arithmetic; 40 percent of the respondents were uncertain, and 34 percent of the respondents disagreed.

In answering Question 9 concerning whether the respondents felt that the nonpublic schools better prepared college bound students than the public schools, 24 percent of the responding residents felt that
the nonpublic schools better prepare college bound students, 28 percent of the respondents were uncertain, and 34 percent of the respondents disagreed. Question 10 asked whether the nonpublic schools better prepared the vocation bound student than the public schools. Fourteen percent of the respondents indicated that the nonpublic schools better prepared the vocation bound student, and 35 percent of the respondents were uncertain. The remaining 50 percent of the respondents disagreed.

Questions 11 through 13 dealt with the residents' attitudes toward various types of nonpublic schools. In answering Question 11 concerning whether respondents felt that independent schools should exist as an alternative to the public schools, 46 percent of the responding residents indicated that the independent schools should exist as an alternative to the public schools; 25 percent of the respondents were uncertain; 28 percent of the respondents disagreed. Question 12 dealt with whether the parochial schools should exist as an alternative to the public schools. A high 62 percent of the respondents felt that the parochial schools should exist as an alternative to the public schools, 16 percent of the respondents were uncertain, and 21 percent of the respondents disagreed. Question 13 asked whether the Christian schools should exist as an alternative to the public schools. Fifty-nine percent of the responding sample population indicated that the Christian schools should exist as an alternative to the public schools; 14 percent of the respondents were uncertain; 27 percent of the respondents disagreed.
In answering Question 14 concerning whether the responding residents thought that tax monies should be provided for nonpublic education, 24 percent of the respondents thought that tax monies should be provided for nonpublic education, 12 percent of the respondents were uncertain, and 65 percent of the respondents disagreed. Lastly, Question 15 asked whether the respondents would willingly volunteer financial support to a nonpublic school. Of those who responded, 33 percent of the residents indicated a willingness to volunteer financial support to a nonpublic school; 12 percent were uncertain; 54 percent disagreed.
### Table 1. Residents' Attitudes Toward Public and Nonpublic Schools in Gallatin County.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Survey Items</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Uncertain</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Total No.</th>
<th>Total %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I am satisfied with the public school in my district.</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>146</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The public schools in my district are using my tax dollars efficiently.</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>145</td>
<td>98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The quality of public education over the past five years has improved.</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>147</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The nonpublic schools in Gallatin County are an asset to the residents of Gallatin County.</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>147</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The number of nonpublic schools in Gallatin County should be increased.</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>144</td>
<td>98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I feel the nonpublic schools provide better discipline than the public schools.</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>144</td>
<td>98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I feel the nonpublic schools teach a better value system than do the public schools.</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>146</td>
<td>99</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 1. Continued.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Survey Items</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Uncertain</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Total No.</th>
<th>Total %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I feel the nonpublic schools stress more reading, writing, and arithmetic than do the public schools.</td>
<td>11 8</td>
<td>28 19</td>
<td>58 39</td>
<td>38 26</td>
<td>11 8</td>
<td>146</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I feel nonpublic schools better prepare college bound students.</td>
<td>9 6</td>
<td>26 18</td>
<td>41 28</td>
<td>57 39</td>
<td>13 9</td>
<td>146</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I feel nonpublic schools better prepare vocation bound students.</td>
<td>4 3</td>
<td>16 11</td>
<td>52 35</td>
<td>60 41</td>
<td>13 9</td>
<td>145</td>
<td>99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Independent schools (no religious affiliation) should exist as an alternative to public schools.</td>
<td>13 9</td>
<td>55 37</td>
<td>36 25</td>
<td>28 19</td>
<td>13 9</td>
<td>145</td>
<td>99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parochial schools (church sponsored) should exist as an alternative to public schools.</td>
<td>24 16</td>
<td>67 46</td>
<td>23 16</td>
<td>25 17</td>
<td>6 4</td>
<td>145</td>
<td>99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christian schools (not church controlled) should exist as an alternative to public schools.</td>
<td>27 18</td>
<td>59 40</td>
<td>20 14</td>
<td>28 19</td>
<td>12 8</td>
<td>146</td>
<td>99</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 1. Continued.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Survey Items</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Uncertain</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Total No.</th>
<th>Total %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tax monies should be provided for nonpublic education.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>146</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I would be willing to volunteer financial support to a nonpublic school.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>144</td>
<td>99</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 2 shows the responding residents' opinions toward voluntary nonpublic school financial support. According to the survey, 16 percent of the respondents would be willing to give $10 to $99, while 9 percent of the respondents would voluntarily give from $100 to $399 to support a nonpublic school. Just 3 percent of the respondents indicated a willingness to support a nonpublic school with $400 to $799, and 4 percent of the respondents with $800 to $1200. The remaining 1 percent would willingly support a nonpublic school with an amount over $1200. Forty-seven persons, or 32 percent of those who returned questionnaires, responded to this question.

Table 2. Residents' Opinions Toward Voluntary Nonpublic School Financial Support.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Survey Item</th>
<th>Amount</th>
<th>No.</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>If you would be willing to volunteer support for a nonpublic school, please indicate to what extent you would be willing to do so.</td>
<td>$10-99</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>100-399</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>400-799</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>800-1200</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>over 1200</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total respondents answering:</td>
<td></td>
<td>47</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3 shows the respondents' opinions toward the maximum amount of tuition that they would pay for a nonpublic education. The item "whatever it costs" received 19 responses, or 13 percent. In dollar
amounts, 10 percent of the respondents chose the $400 to $599 range; 8 percent of the respondents chose the $200 to $399 range; 6 percent of the respondents chose amounts from $100 to $199, and 6 percent from $600 to $799. Lesser percentages showed up in the higher figures with 1 percent of the respondents willing to pay tuition in the $800 to $999 range, and 4 percent of the respondents in the $1000 to $1200 range. The total number of residents responding to this question was 70.

Table 3. Residents' Opinions Toward Tuition Limits.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Survey Item</th>
<th>Amount</th>
<th>No.</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>If you considered a nonpublic school, what would be your upper limits for tuition?</td>
<td>$100-199</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>200-399</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>400-599</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>600-799</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>800-999</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1000-1200</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>whatever it costs</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total respondents answering: 70

Table 4 shows the respondents' opinions toward sending their children to a nonpublic school. In answering the question concerning whether the respondent whose children presently attend a public school would send their children to a nonpublic school, 11 percent of the respondents answered yes, 36 percent of the respondents answered no,
and 6 percent of the respondents were uncertain. Seventy-eight persons, or 53 percent of the respondents indicated their opinions on this question.

Table 4. Residents' Opinions Toward Sending Their Child to a Nonpublic School.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Survey Item</th>
<th>Answer</th>
<th>No.</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>If your children presently attend a public school, would you consider</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sending them to a nonpublic school?</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Uncertain</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total respondents answering:</td>
<td></td>
<td>78</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5 shows the responding residents' preferences for sending their children to a nonpublic school. The table shows the number of parents who would pick each of the schools as their first choice, how many would pick it as their second choice, etc. The schools receiving the highest number of first choices were Holy Rosary with 12 percent, Manhattan Christian with 16 percent, and private with 16 percent. Christian Center and Mount Ellis received the smallest number of first choice responses, 2 percent and 3 percent respectively.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Survey Item</th>
<th>Schools</th>
<th>Preferences</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1st</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>No.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If you were to send your children to a nonpublic school, indicate your order of preference for any of the nonpublic schools listed.</td>
<td>Christian Center</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Holy Rosary</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Manhattan Christian</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mount Ellis</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Nondenominational</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Private</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 6 shows how the responding sample population was made aware of the nonpublic schools. The most cited means was by word-of-mouth, indicated by 61 percent of the respondents. The respondents indicated they became aware of the nonpublic schools by sports coverage, 29 percent; radio news or ads, 21 percent; Bozeman Chronicle "School News" received 19 percent; newspaper ads, 12 percent; the questionnaire and school representative received 8 percent each.

Table 6. How Residents Were Made Aware of the Nonpublic Schools in Gallatin County.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Survey Item</th>
<th>Means</th>
<th>No.</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Please indicate how you were made aware of non-public schools in Gallatin County.</td>
<td>Newspaper ads</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Bozeman Chronicle &quot;School News&quot;</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Radio news or ads</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sports coverage</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Word-of-mouth</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>School representative</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>This questionnaire</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total respondents answering: 114 78

Summary

The analysis of the findings was based on the responses from questionnaires sent to the 384 random sample population of Gallatin County, Montana. A majority of the respondents felt that the public schools are performing satisfactorily but are not certain whether their tax
The respondents generally felt that the nonpublic schools are not doing a better job of educating their children except in the area of discipline. The respondents indicated that nonpublic schools should be allowed to exist as an alternative to the public schools, but no tax monies should be used to support them.

Of those respondents who were willing to volunteer financial support for a nonpublic school, most would donate in the range of $10 to $399 annually. The maximum tuition considered was between $200 and $599, although the highest tabulated item was for "whatever it costs."

Given the choice of sending their children to a nonpublic school with its tuition costs, or to retain their children in the public school, 36 percent of the respondents would retain their children in the public school. For those who would choose to send their children to a nonpublic school, most respondents preferred Holy Rosary, Manhattan Christian, or a private school as first choice.

The best means for making the public aware of a nonpublic school was simply by word-of-mouth.
Chapter V

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary

The research for this paper dealt with determining the attitudes of Gallatin County, Montana, residents toward nonpublic schools in Gallatin County.

The literature reviewed suggested that nonpublic schools do provide a viable alternative to public schools and might actually serve as a stimulus for better public schools. Literature further indicated arguments for and against public aid to nonpublic schools. On the one side, public support for nonpublic schools could lead to an excessive entanglement between church and state—a factor already ruled on by the Supreme Court. On the other side, education was viewed as fundamentally a parental responsibility. Research indicated that the public schools do not maintain religious neutrality. Literature further suggested that more legislative and judicial decisions might be made in the future.

The population of this study included 384 randomly selected Gallatin County residents. Questionnaires were mailed to the sample population. Data obtained for this study was presented in a descriptive manner. Tables were developed from the data collected. These tables included raw scores and percentages for each survey item.

The survey instrument (see Appendix A) for Gallatin County
residents was devised by the writer and was examined by experts in the field of education to give it content validity.

The findings and interpretations were based on the responses from the survey instrument. All responses were computer tabulated. Six tables were developed from the data collected. These tables included raw scores and percentages for each survey item. A description of the main characteristics was presented preceding each table.

A majority of the Gallatin County residents involved in this study indicated that the nonpublic schools were performing satisfactorily, but the respondents were uncertain whether their tax dollars were being used efficiently. The respondents generally felt that the nonpublic schools were not doing a better job of educating their children, except in the area of discipline. The respondents indicated that nonpublic schools should be allowed to exist as an alternative to the public schools, but that no tax monies should be used to support them.

Of those respondents who were willing to volunteer financial support for a nonpublic school, most would donate in the range of $10 to $399 annually. The maximum tuition indicated was between $200 and $599, although the highest tabulated item was for "whatever it costs."

Given the choice of sending their children to a nonpublic school with its tuition costs or to retain their children in the public school, 36 percent of the respondents would retain their children in the public
school. For those who would choose to send their children to a non-public school, most respondents preferred Holy Rosary, Manhattan Christian, or a private school as their first choice.

The best means for making the public aware of a nonpublic school was simply by word-of-mouth according to the survey.

Conclusions

Based upon this study, the following were concluded:

1. Public education in Gallatin County, Montana, is performing satisfactorily. However, tax dollars are probably not being used efficiently.

2. The quality of public education has probably not improved over the past five years.

3. Nonpublic schools are an asset to Gallatin County. But, there is no need at present for increasing the number of nonpublic schools in Gallatin County.

4. Nonpublic schools probably provide better discipline than the public schools. Nonpublic schools most likely do not: (1) provide a better value system; (2) place more stress on reading, writing, and arithmetic; (3) better prepare college bound students; (4) better prepare vocational students than do the public schools.

5. Independent schools, parochial schools, and Christian schools should exist as an alternative to the public schools.

6. Gallatin County residents are not ready to support the concept of providing tax monies for nonpublic schools. Nor is there much willingness to volunteer financial support to a nonpublic school.
7. Some respondents who would send their children to a nonpublic school are willing to pay whatever the tuition would be to give their children a nonpublic education. Other respondents would set the maximum tuition to be paid at $600.

8. Holy Rosary, Manhattan Christian, and private schools are the first choice preferences for those respondents who would consider sending their children to a nonpublic school.

9. A majority of the respondents from Gallatin County would not send their children to a nonpublic school.

10. Of those respondents from Gallatin County who were willing to volunteer financial support for a nonpublic school, most would donate up to $400.

11. Probably the best means a nonpublic school has for becoming publicly known is simply by word-of-mouth. Many respondents also indicated sports coverage as a means for making a nonpublic school known.

Recommendations

Based upon this study, the following are recommended:

1. The survey instrument developed in this study should be revised. Respondents having children in a public school may have instinctively recorded negative attitudes toward nonpublic schools since their own children attend a public school. One suggestion to improve the survey instrument might be to state the questions in Section IV more neutrally; for example, Question 8: "If you were given a free choice to have your children educated in any school, where would you send them to receive the best education in reading, writing, and arithmetic?" Then the respondents could indicate the public school or one of the nonpublic schools as their choice.

2. The nonpublic schools should develop meaningful ways for their constituency to enhance the image of nonpublic education to the public.
3. Use a striated study checking whether different locations might have differing attitudes toward nonpublic schools. Since Bozeman has several nonpublic schools, perhaps its residents may be more favorably inclined toward nonpublic schools than Belgrade, which has no nonpublic schools.

4. Nonpublic schools would be wise to concentrate their effort to disseminate school publicity items by using the radio and news section of newspapers, with less concentration in taking out advertisements.
LITERATURE CITED
LITERATURE CITED


Erickson, Donald A. and George F. Madaus.  *Issues of Aid to Nonpublic Schools, Summary Analysis*, Boston College, Chestnut Hill, Mass: Massachusetts Center of Field Research and Social Services (September, 1971), 6-27.


Tussman, Joseph. The Supreme Court on Church and State, New York: Oxford University Press, 1962, 204.

APPENDIXES
RESTIDENT-OPINION QUESTIONNAIRE

I. Please indicate the position of the individual(s) completing this form. Check one blank.

___ husband
___ wife
___ husband and wife
___ single male
___ single female

II. Indicate how many of your children will be attending school 1976-1977. (Use as many blanks as necessary.)

___ preschool
___ K - 6
___ 7 - 12
___ college/vocational school
___ no longer attending school
___ I have no children

III. Please indicate the number of years you have lived in Gallatin County. (Check one blank.)

___ less than one
___ one to three
___ more than three

IV. This scale has been prepared so that you can indicate how you feel about public and nonpublic schools. Please put an X on the space at the right indicating how you feel about each statement.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Uncertain</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. I am satisfied with the public schools in my district.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. The public schools in my district are using my tax dollars efficiently.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. The quality of public education over the past five years has improved.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. The nonpublic schools in Gallatin County are an asset to the residents of Gallatin County.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. The number of nonpublic schools in Gallatin County should be increased.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. I feel the nonpublic schools provide better discipline than the public schools.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. I feel the nonpublic schools teach a better value system than do the public schools.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. I feel the nonpublic schools stress more reading, writing, and arithmetic than the public schools.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. I feel nonpublic schools better prepare college-bound students.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. I feel nonpublic schools better prepare vocation-bound students.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Independent schools (no religious affiliation) should exist as an alternative to public schools.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Parochial schools (church sponsored) should exist as an alternative to public schools.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. Christian schools (not church controlled, but parent controlled) should exist as an alternative to public schools.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. Tax monies should be provided for nonpublic education.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. I would be willing to volunteer financial support to a nonpublic school.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
V. If you would be willing to volunteer financial support for a nonpublic school, please indicate to what extent you would be willing to do so. (Check the appropriate blank.)

- $10 - $99 yearly
- $100 - $299 yearly
- $300 - $499 yearly
- $500 - $799 yearly
- $800 - $1,299 yearly
- over $1,299 yearly

VI. Please indicate all the nonpublic schools in Gallatin County with which you are familiar. (Check the appropriate blank.)

- Christian Center
- Holy Rosary
- Manhattan Christian
- Mount Ellis Academy
- Other (please specify): ____________________________

VII. If any of your children attend a nonpublic school, please indicate how many. (Place the number on the blank.)

- Christian Center
- Holy Rosary
- Manhattan Christian
- Mount Ellis Academy
- Other (please specify): ____________________________

VIII. If your children presently attend a public school, would you consider sending them to a nonpublic school? (Check the appropriate blank.)

- Yes
- No
- Uncertain

IX. If you were to send your children to a nonpublic school, indicate your order of preference for any of the nonpublic schools listed. (Put a 1 on the blank for first choice, 2 for second choice, etc.)

- Christian Center
- Holy Rosary
- Manhattan Christian
- Mount Ellis Academy
- Christian non-denominational parent-controlled private (not church related)

X. If you considered a nonpublic school, what would be your upper limits for tuition? (Amounts are for one child per year.)

- $100 - $199
- $200 - $299
- $300 - $499
- $500 - $699
- $700 - $899
- $900 - $999
- $1,000 - $1,199
- whatever it costs

XI. Please indicate how you were made aware of nonpublic schools in Gallatin County.

- newspaper ads
- Bozeman Chronicle’s School News
- radio news or ads
- sports coverage
- word-of-mouth
- school representative
- this questionnaire
- other (please specify): ____________________________

XII. If your child (children) attend(s) a nonpublic school, you may indicate below why you send them there.

- __________________________________________________
- __________________________________________________
- __________________________________________________
- __________________________________________________
July 21, 1976

Dear Resident:

You have been selected at random from residents of Gallatin County to participate in a professional project investigating the attitudes of individuals towards nonpublic schools in Gallatin County.

In order to get an accurate picture, it is very important that a high percentage of responses be obtained. Your support and cooperation are asked in helping make this study a success. Total time involved in responding to the questionnaire will probably be less than ten minutes.

I assure you that all responses will be treated in a confidential and professional manner. No attempt will be made to identify or compare the responses of individuals or communities. The numbers appearing on the questionnaire will be used only in the event that you indicate an interest in obtaining a brief summary of the results, and/or to send you a reminder to return your completed opinionnaire. A self-addressed, stamped envelope is enclosed for returning your completed opinionnaire within five days' time.

Thank you very much for taking the time to participate in the study.

Sincerely,

Ivan Groothuis

Dr. Greg Stefanich
Dept. of Elementary Education, MSU
Project Supervisor

IG/mh

Enclosures