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Basic Trends of Social Change in South Dakota: VI. Education in Transition

W. F. Kumlien

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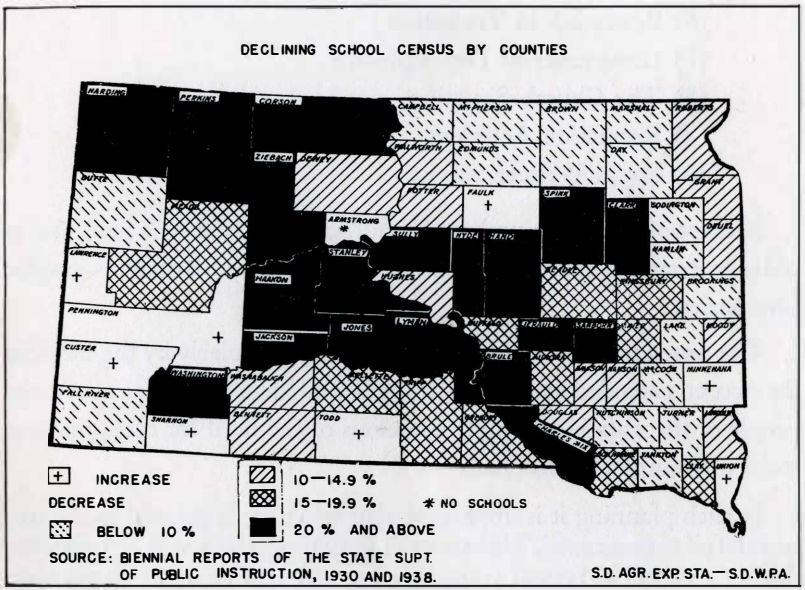

Between 1930 and 1938 there was a decided decline in the number of persons 6-21 years of age in many of the counties of South Dakota. A resulting rapid decline in the elementary grades has already shown up, but due to an increasing proportion of students attending high school, secondary enrollments have not as yet shown this decrease.

Department of Rural Sociology
Agricultural Experiment Station of the South Dakota State College of Agriculture and Mechanic Arts, Brookings, South Dakota

Explanatory Note

This is the third of a projected series of 10 bulletins carrying the gen eral title of "Basic Trends of Social Change in South Dakota." Appropriate subtitles for each field covered will appear as follows:

(1) Population Tendencies (Bulletin No. 327)
(2) Adjustment to Physical Environment
(3) Social Organization
(4) Family Relationships
(5) Public Health Facilities (Bulletin No. 334)
(6) Education in Transition
(7) Governmental Developments
(8) The Church Situation
(9) Recreation Activities
(10) Social Welfare Service

Because of the large number of significant trends in each field, and in order to conserve space, the series will be published largely as graphic summaries.

The timeliness of the study is occasioned particularly by the fact that the recent extended period of drought and depression has made the people of the state increasingly conscious of the need for economic and social planning in the future.

In such planning it is imperative that what has happened in the past be carefully scrutinized. This series of bulletins, which will be published during a period of several years, is being prepared so that federal, state, county and local planning agencies, as well as individuals, operating in the state may obtain a clearer view of the direction and implications of the more definite trends of social change in each of the fields listed above.

Whenever possible data was obtained for the years 1890-1940, although in many cases data was not available for a later year than 1936 or 1938.

This bulletin does not attempt to study the technical aspects of education but rather to treat the social institutional phases of the educational systems.

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Digest

1. Since 1924 the effects of declining birth rates and migration from the state have been reflected in declining elementary enrollments in South Dakota. Although the number of persons enrolled in elementary schools increased until 1924, the proportion of elementary students to the total school enrollment has been decreasing since 1890. On that date 97.6 percent of all students in school were enrolled in the elementary grades as compared with 70.3 percent in 1938. (Page 9)

2. The proportion of South Dakota students enrolled in high school increased from 1.3 percent of the total school population in 1890 to 24.4 percent in 1938. During the same period college enrollments rose from 1.0 to 5.3 percent of the total. (Page 9) On the basis of the 1930 age distribution and 1939 enrollment, 69.4 percent of the persons of high school age were actually enrolled in high school.

3. Since 1890 the average annual number of days each South Dakota child attended school has increased from 60 to 145. (Page 20)

4. Since 1890 the number of years children were required to attend school has been increased from 4 to 8. In 1890 the compulsory age span was 10 to 14 years as compared with the present span of 8 to 17 years. During the same period the minimum term was raised from three and one-half to eight months and the required attendance was increased from six consecutive weeks to a full eight or nine months term. (Page 22)

5. From 1890 to 1930 illiteracy in South Dakota declined from 4.2 to 1.2 percent of the population as compared with the United State's drop of 13.3 to 4.3 percent. (Page 24)

6. Adult education activities have been greatly expanded during recent years. Education for adults is now provided by the Extension Service; the Work Projects Administration; the CCC program; vocational re-

habilitation and industrial courses sponsored by the State Department of Public Instruction; and educational broadcasts of South Dakota broadcasting stations. During 1939 a total of 256,662 persons participated in three phases of Extension activities. (Page 26)

7. The trend in per capita expenditures for public education has been upwards for both South Dakota and the United States. At its peak, in 1930, per capita expenditures for South Dakota were $22.06 as compared with $18.77 for the United States. (Page 32)

8. A tendency toward centralization is found where both the township district (Hand county) and the small district type (Brookings county) of school organization prevails. In Brookings county the small rural school districts located adjacent to independent districts show a tendency to close their school when the enrollment drops below five and to send their pupils to the town schools, paying tuition and transportation charges. In Hand county a tendency toward centralization is evident within townships. In a number of cases one school has been moved to the center of the township and other schools in the township have been closed when the enrollment dropped below a predetermined minimum. (Pages 16 and 19)

9. As a high school education is now considered largely a preparation for life rather than merely a preparation for college, more vocational training is being offered in South Dakota high schools. During the 1938-39 term 62 high schools offered vocational agriculture; 96 schools offered vocational homemaking courses; and 12 offered instruction in trades and industries. (Page 38)

10. The higher certification requirements of recent years have materially increased the number of years of training received by South Dakota teachers. In 1936, 42.0 percent of the rural teachers had one year of college training; 22.0 percent had two years of college instruction; 3.8 percent had three years of training beyond high school; and 3.2 percent were college graduates. (Page 39)

Basic Trends of Social Change in South Dakota

VI. Education in Transition

By W. F. Kumlien[1]

I. Introduction

The Problem. In common with other states of the Great Plains Region, South Dakota has many problems of adjustment to both the physical and social environments. The school system is an important social institution that shows many evidences of both unusual progress and maladjustment. In recent years interest in school problems has become intensified by:

1. The rapid decline in the number of children under 20 years of age which caused our educational system to become over-expanded in the elementary grades. This is particularly true in the case of school buildings and equipment.
2. A decided trend toward the centralization of school facilities.
3. The increasing number of pupils enrolled in town schools. Since the town population in South Dakota has increased at the expense of the open-country population the rural school enrollment has consequently shrunk.
4. An increasing realization on the part of farm people of the need of a high school education. Consequently public school facilities have been rapidly expanded.
5. The drouth and depression period of the early 1930's which intensified the maladjustment of one room country schools. During this period there was a great shrinkage of resources, both in assessed valuation on which taxes are based and also in actual cash resources. There was also a heavy migration of population from the state, especially from those counties in which the drought was most severe. This tended to decrease the size of the schools to such an extent that it was extremely expensive to maintain them for the remaining pupils.

Purpose. It is the purpose of this study to portray in graphic form basic educational trends in South Dakota, to compare these trends with national trends, and to show differences among the various sections of the state.

1. **Acknowledgements.** This study was made possible by the generous cooperation of the State and Federal Work Projects Administration (formerly Works Progress Administration) with the South Dakota Agricultural Experiment Station. The official name of the project has been "Basic Trends of Social Change in South Dakota." The original project was designated as WPA Project No. 465-74-3-235. The WPA financed the larger share of the study by furnishing clerical helpers working under the technical guidance of an analyst, while the general project supervision and the cost of publishing the manuscript has been furnished by the experiment station. The author gratefully acknowledges the faithful assistance rendered by all those working on the study. Particular mention is made of the valuable contribution given by Miss Vera Petheram, project supervisor and analyst.

Scope and Method. This study has attempted to cover the main phases of the educational situation, emphasizing particularly the changes in school enrollments and in the number of persons of school age. Data have been secured for the state and the nation, and for counties where practicable. Wherever possible, the state data are compared with similar data for the United States. The sources for the data used in this study include records of the South Dakota State Superintendent of Public Instruction, reports of the United States Commissioner of Education, the Biennial Surveys of Education in the United States published by the Office of Education, United States Department of the Interior and, in a few cases, federal and state census data.

II. School Population and Attendance

The most important trends in the field of education have occurred in enrollments. The changes in enrollments have been very evident, and have had much to do with precipitating certain other trends in education.

Declining elementary enrollments; increasing secondary and college enrollments. Since 1890 there has been a marked decrease in the proportion of elementary school pupils to the total school enrollment (elementary, high school and college) in the state. The decline has been almost continuous since 1890, but has been much more rapid since about 1910. In 1890 97.6 percent of

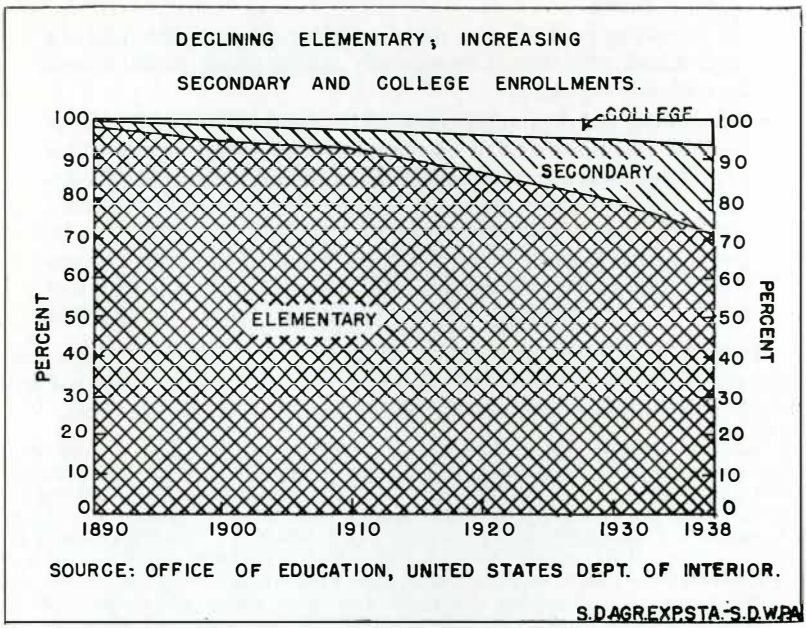

Fig. 1. Changes in the Percentage Distribution of Elementary, High School and College Enrollments, 1890-1938

all students in school were enrolled in the elementary grades, while by 1938 this proportion had dropped to 70.3 percent. (Fig. 1.)

The proportion of South Dakota students in high school increased from 1.3 percent of the total enrollment in 1890 to 24.4 percent in 1938. During the same period the college enrollments rose from 1.0 to 5.3 percent of the total.

Several factors have been responsible for this change in enrollments. In 1890 South Dakota was a new state and the educational system was not very well established. Consequently high schools were few and far between, and since there was less interest in secondary education at that period, there was naturally a larger proportion in the lower grades. As the state became more densely settled and the school system expanded it was natural that there should be an expansion in the number of students enrolled in secondary schools and colleges.

A second, and perhaps the most important factor, is the falling birth rate. The birth rate has been declining since 1890, but the decline did not become apparent until the middle twenties, immigration having concealed it prior to that time. The birth rate has also declined much more rapidly since 1920 than it did previously.

A third factor is the migration from the state during the drouth and depression of the last decade. Since the largest decrease in population between 1930 and 1935 took place in those counties in which there was the greatest loss in persons of school age, migration has apparently been a major cause of the decline in school enrollments. No doubt many of those moving out were the younger families who would have more children of school age.[2]

The decreasing proportion of students in the elementary grades is an important trend in educational readjustment. Between 1920 and 1938 the enrollment in the first grade fell from 18.2 to 11.5 percent of the total. (Fig. 2.) The decline continued with less intensity throughout the grades, but there was an increase in all years of high school.

In 1920 only 1.2 percent of the total number of children in school were in the last year of high school. By 1938 this proportion had risen to 5.9 percent. At the same time the number of persons enrolled in high school increased from 13,265 to 37,729. The elementary enrollment declined from 133,874 to 104,785. The peak enrollment in elementary schools was reached in 1923 when there were 139,763 pupils enrolled. No apparent peak has as yet been reached in high school enrollments, although within the last few years enrollments have remained at about the same level.[3]

The elementary enrollment has shown a more decided decline because the proportion of children who attend elementary school has remained more

2. It was found in a study of rural population mobility in South Dakota that the younger people moved about more readily than older ones. See W. F. Kumlien, Robert L. McNamara and Zetta E. Bankert, *Rural Population Mobility in South Dakota,* S. D. Agr. Exp. Sta. Bul. 315, Jan., 1938.

3. In 1937 there were 38,259 persons enrolled in high school, 37,729 in 1938, 39,412 in 1939, and 39,562 in 1940.

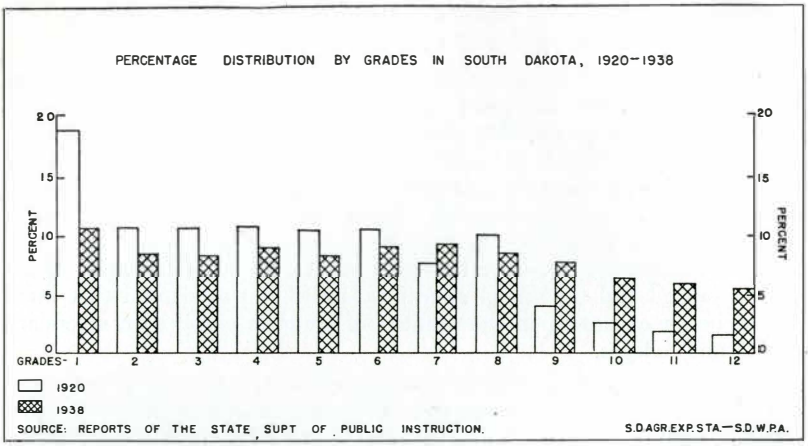

Fig. 2. Comparison of the Percentage Distribution of Elementary and Secondary Grades, 1920 and 1938

constant, while the proportion of those of high school age who are attending high school has been increasing rapidly. Fig. 9 shows the increasing proportion of persons 5 to 20 years of age attending school. Much of this increase in recent years has come about because of the increased high school attendance.

In addition to the regular school grades there has been a movement towards entrance into either kindergarten or nursery school before the age at which the child begins the regular school course. This movement has had many and various setbacks in South Dakota. Although it is not an especially widespread movement, the number of children attending kindergarten was 1533 in 1930. However, with the advent of the drought and depression after 1930 enrollments dropped rapidly and in 1934 there were only 671 children enrolled in any type of kindergarten. The period since 1934 has again seen an increase in children attending kindergarten and in 1938 there were 1344 enrolled.[4] In contrast, in the United States as a whole the number of children in kindergartens increased very rapidly between 1920 and 1930, and did not decline at nearly as rapid a rate as in South Dakota after 1930.

The whole pre-school and adult education movement reflects the growing realization of the importance of further extending educational opportunities both before and after the regular school life. The pre-school movement is an indication of the increasing importance of the child, which is a consequence of the smaller number of children.

A decrease in the number of persons of school age[5] occurred in all except eight counties of the state between 1930 and 1938. (See cover page.) In 16

4. Communication from the State Superintendent of Public Instruction, Nov. 18, 1938.

5. Persons 6-20 years of age.

counties the decrease amounted to less than 10 percent; in 14 counties the loss ranged from 10 to 14.9 percent; in 11 counties there was a decline of 15-19.9 percent; and in 20 counties there was a decrease of more than 20 percent. It will be noted that the heaviest decrease occurred in the west central counties of the state, the area in which migration was the heaviest during the drouth years.

This decrease in the school census is a new trend in the educational history of South Dakota. Up to 1930 there was a steady increase in the number of persons of school age, as shown in the following table.

Table 1. Number of Persons of School Age* in South Dakota, 1890-1938†

Year	Number
1890	86,177
1900	98,013
1910	167,020
1920	178,794
1930	214,503
1938	191,872

* In the earlier years this age varied somewhat, but only slightly.

† Source: Biennial reports of the State Superintendent of Public Instruction.

Before 1930 the increase in the number of persons of school age was general throughout the state, decreases occurring in only a few counties. Since 1930 there has been a sharp decline in almost all counties. Despite the fact that the greatest decreases were found in those areas from which there was the heaviest migration during the drouth years, migration is not entirely responsible since the shrinkage has been greater for persons of school age than for the general population. The recent decline has been a result of the cumulative effect of a sharply declining birth rate plus migration.

Between 1930 and 1938 a decline in elementary school enrollment took place in all except five counties of the state. In 15 counties the decrease was less than 20 percent; in 21 counties the decrease ranged from 20 to 29.9 percent; in 18 counties the decrease was between 30 and 39.9 percent; and in nine counties there was a loss of over 40 percent. (Fig. 3.)

For a number of years population experts have forecast that the effects of a falling birth rate would soon be reflected in lowered elementary enrollments. The year 1923 shows the first drop in elementary enrollment for the state as a whole. In some counties a decline was noted a year or two earlier and in other counties a year or two later than this date.

Although there has been a decline in elementary enrollment throughout the entire state, the greatest decrease was in the central and western areas. It is in these areas that the heaviest migration of population occurred between 1930 and 1935.

From 1890 to 1930 there was a steady increase in elementary enrollments in most counties of the state. The following table shows the increase and decline in elementary school enrollments.

Table 2. Elementary School Enrollments in South Dakota, 1890-1938*

Year	Elementary school enrollments
1890	78,043
1900	77,338
1910	118,577
1920	132,291
1930	134,286
1938	104,785

* Source: Biennial reports of the State Superintendent of Public Instruction.

As would be expected this decline shows a close correlation with the decrease in the number of persons of school age.

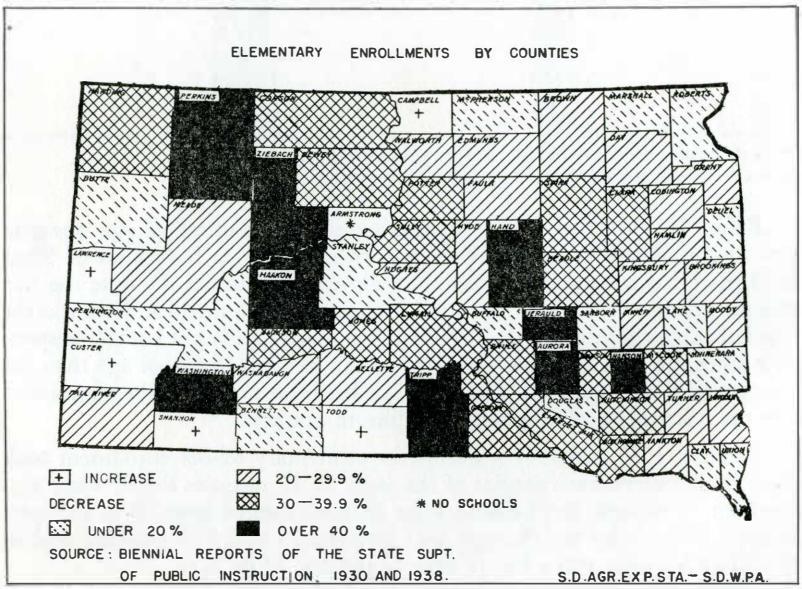

Fig. 3. Percentage Loss in Elementary Enrollment, by Counties, 1930-1938

There has been a widespread gain in secondary enrollments which is in sharp contrast to the decline in elementary enrollments between 1930 and 1938. While practically all of the counties suffered a loss in grade school pupils, over three-fourths of the counties gained high school students during this period. (Fig. 4.) It is interesting to note that the 16 counties in which a drop in secondary enrollments did occur were for the most part counties in which the greatest losses in elementary enrollments were found.

The large percentage increase in secondary enrollments for Custer, Shannon, Bennett, Todd, Harding and Corson may be partially explained by the comparatively recent settlement of these counties. Since these counties are

large, sparsely settled and have few high schools within their borders, many children live a considerable distance from the nearest high school. As the cost of board is prohibitive for many families, large numbers of children have not continued their education beyond the elementary grades. The establishment of FERA dormitories in 1934 probably gave a big impetus to high school attendance in these areas. Another explanation may be that there has not been the amount of migration in these counties that there was in the west-central counties.

In the following table is shown the rapid increase in secondary enrollments in South Dakota from 1890 to 1938.

Table 3. Secondary School Enrollments in South Dakota, 1890-1938*

Year	Secondary school enrollments
1890	1,068
1900	3,568
1910	7,676
1920	14,734
1930	31,338
1938	37,729

* Source: 1890—Report of the Sec. of the Int., Vol. 5. 1900—Report of the Comm. of Ed., Vol. 11, 1900. 1910—1938 Reports of the State Superintendent of Public Instruction.

If the shrinkage in the number of persons of school age is due primarily to the declining birth rate a decline in elementary enrollments would naturally precede a reduction in secondary enrollments. It is probable that, if

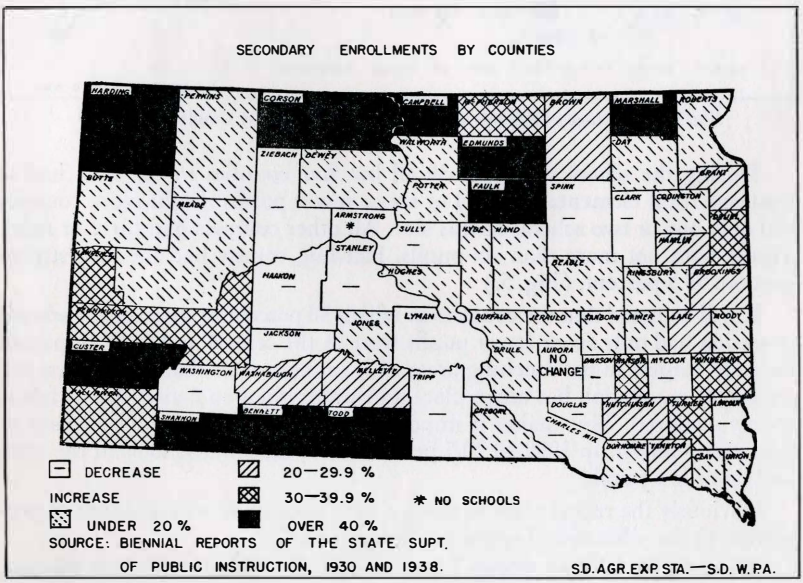

Fig. 4. Percentage Gain in Secondary Enrollment, by Counties, 1930-38

present population trends continue, there will be a drop in secondary enrollments in many counties within the next few years and possibly even in the state as a whole. As previously noted a decrease has already taken place in 16 counties. Due to migration to the cities secondary enrollments will probably continue to rise for some time in those counties having large urban centers.

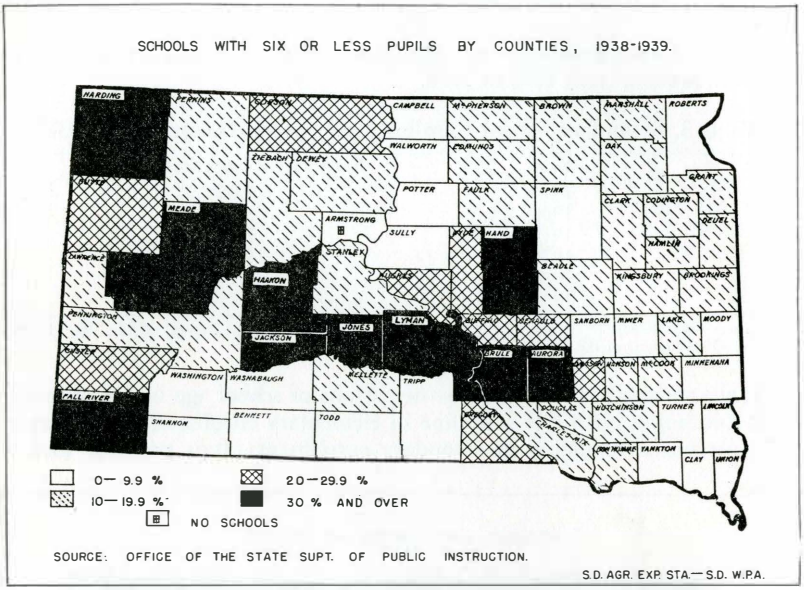

Fig. 5. Percentage of Schools with Six or Less Pupils, by Counties, 1938-39

During the school year 1938-39 all but five counties in the state had at least one rural elementary school of six or fewer pupils. Eight more counties had only one or two schools of this size. All other counties had three or more schools with not more than six pupils. Harding county had the largest proportion, 53.5 percent. (Fig. 5.)

It will be noted that the counties in which 30 percent or more of the schools in session had only six or fewer pupils were in the central and western part of the state, largely in the ranching areas. It is in these areas that the greatest migration of population has taken place and where the population that is left is widely scattered. This makes it impossible for the present school districts to have many pupils. In 1939-40 20.5 percent of all the rural schools in the state had six or less pupils.

Obviously the relative cost of maintaining such small schools is out of proportion to the educational opportunities provided.

The solution of the problem is not so obvious. Probably the best solution at the present time is to close small schools and provide transportation for the

Table 4. Distribution of Rural Schools by Size During the School Year 1939-40*

Enrollment range	Number of schools	Percent
1-2	26	.6
3-4	239	5.9
5-6	568	14.0
7-8	725	17.8
9-10	665	16.4
11-12	543	13.4
13-14	420	10.3
15-20	649	16.0
21-25	139	3.4
26-30	53	1.3
31-35	13	.3
36-40	7	.2
41 or over	16	.4

* Source: Article by G. O. Titus, Deputy State Superintendent of Public Instruction, in the *South Dakota Educational Association Journal* for March, 1940.

pupils to neighboring districts where larger schools are in session. It may be that two small schools might combine making a school of more efficient proportions.

Brookings is one of 20 northeastern counties in which the small, one-room school district is the prevailing type of school organization. The early settlers transplanted[6] this pattern of school organization from the more humid eastern states from which they had come. At that time is was not so evident that the low average rainfall in South Dakota would make intensive farming and close settlement impossible. Consequently it was not immediately apparent that the eastern type of school organization would prove impracticable.

Due to the constant influx of settlers during the period of settlement the inadequacy of this small unit of school organization was not apparent. It was not until immigration began to slow up and the birth rate commenced to decline that the inadequacy of this type of organization became evident. About 10 years ago a rather definite decline in enrollment began in some of the schools. Since that time a decline has taken place in all schools of the county. By February 15, 1940, six schools had closed due to an insufficient number of pupils and 13 other schools were operating with five or fewer students. In other words, 17 percent of the schools in the county were either closed or operating with five or fewer pupils. (Fig. 6.) This figure does not take into consideration the large number of other schools which are operating with less than 10 pupils.

6. In 1862 the territorial constitution authorized county commissioners to divide the county into school districts as they deemed to be for the best interests of the public. Apparently the county commissioners of all the counties which were settled at that time felt that the small district system, such as they were accustomed to in the states from which they had come, was the best form to adopt. In 1883 the legislature provided for township district organization but did not force the small districts which were already in existence to disband.

Table 5. Various Size Rural Schools Operating Within Brookings County, 1940*

Schools	Number of pupils enrolled
6	Closed
13	5 pupils or less
30	6-10 pupils
26	11-14 pupils
37	15-25 pupils
Total 112	

* Source: Data prepared by Verna Simon, Deputy County Superintendent of Schools, Brookings County, and included in an unpublished thesis.

Even schools which now have 15-25 pupils have suffered a sharp decline in enrollment during recent years. Ten years ago many of these schools had an enrollment of as many as 40 pupils. At the present time no rural school in the county has more than 26 pupils.

The operation of schools for less than 10 pupils, particularly for five pupils or less, is usually a costly procedure. For example, during the 1938-39 term the per pupil cost in a district of four pupils was $156.87 as compared with a

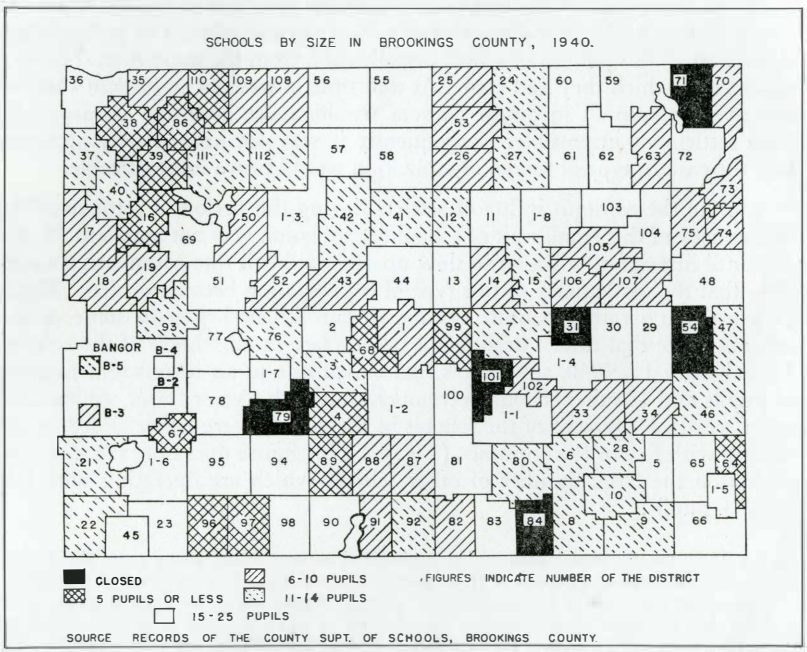

Fig. 6. Brookings County School Districts, Classified According to Size of School Enrollment, February 15, 1940

cost of only $38.48 per pupil in a district having 26 students. In other words, the per pupil cost for the small school was over four times as great as for the larger school. It is increasingly evident that the small school district pattern plus declining birth rates has occasioned a real problem in school administration. The cost of operating schools for less than five pupils is prohibitive, but how are children in the district to be educated if the schools are closed?

If the trend toward declining enrollments continues it will probably necessitate a reorganization of the entire rural school system. Several alternatives are available for permanent reorganization.

1. Keep the present district organization intact but close school when the enrollment drops below a specified minimum. Send children who live within the district as tuition pupils to the nearest school, paying transportation when the distance is greater than four miles.
2. Farm children might be transported to independent districts as tuition students. This plan would probably be much less expensive then maintaining a large number of small schools. It would have the further advantage of giving farm children more educational opportunities than is possible in a one-room country school of four or five pupils. This plan would make for centralized school systems, combining town and country.
3. Another alternative would be to reorganize the rural school system on a county-wide district basis. Under this plan several county schools would be established at centralized points and farm children would be brought to these centers by bus.
4. A fourth alternative would be for several school districts to consolidate. If this is done, however, great care should be taken to include a large enough area to insure a sufficient number of students. There are now 94 consolidated districts in the state. In the main, those which have had a large enough unit of support have been conspicuously successful. On the other hand, those with too small a unit of support have been a great burden to the taxpayers. In all probability, any form of consolidation should include at least two or three townships.

Hand is one of approximately 40 South Dakota counties in which the township district is the prevailing type of school organization. As Hand County was not extensively settled until after the legislative act of 1883 authorizing township school districts, the township district was uniformly adopted throughout the county.[7] By that date it had become rather evident that the low annual rainfall and consequent sparse settlement of central South Dakota did not lend itself to the small district type of school organization.

Until recent years the township type of organization, with three or four schools per township seemed satisfactory. About ten years ago, however, a

7. See footnote on page 15.

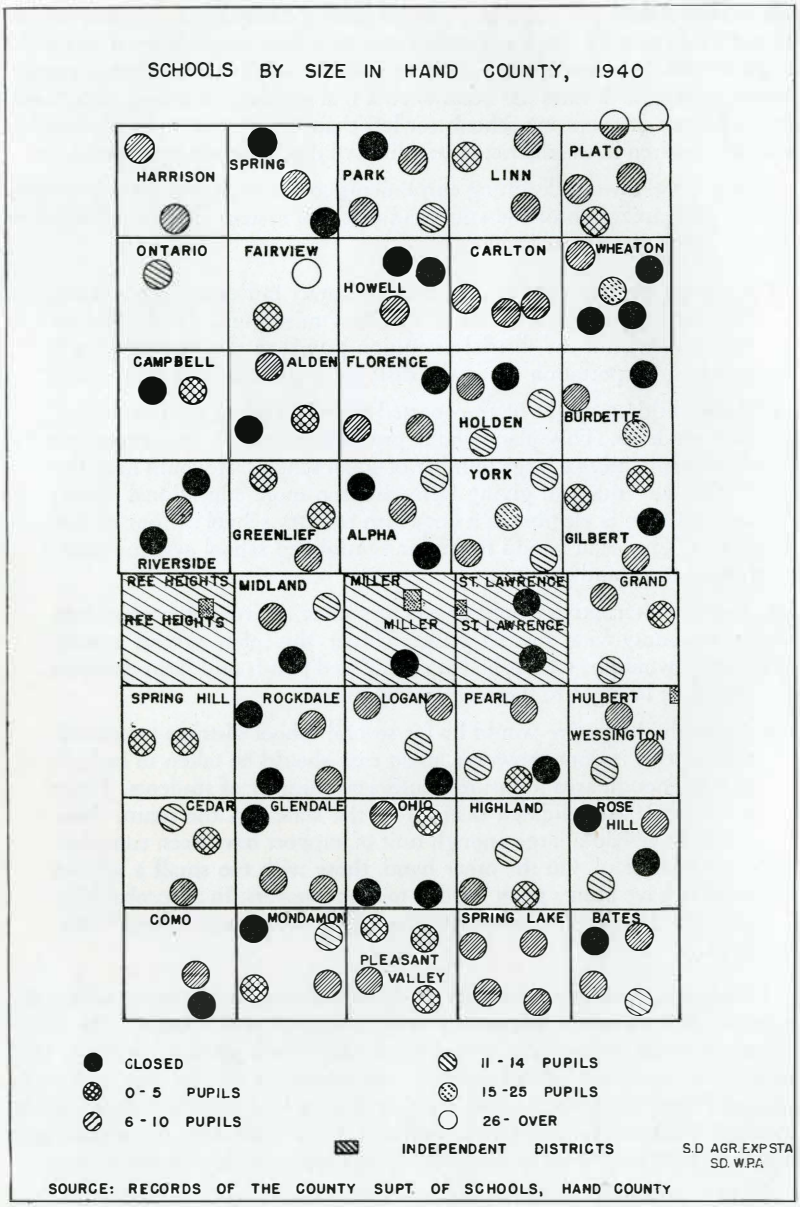

Fig. 7. Hand County Schools, Classified by Size of Enrollment, 1940

rather definite decline in enrollment began in some of the schools. Since that time a decline has taken place in practically all schools of the county. Although both have been factors, the heavy outward migration which occurred in Hand County between 1930 and 1935 has probably been more responsible for the shrinkage in enrollment than has the declining birth rate. By 1940, 34 schools had closed and 20 other schools were operating with five or fewer pupils. In other words, approximately 42 percent of the schools in Hand County are either closed or operating with five or less pupils. Forty-eight of the remaining schools have 10 or fewer pupils. In some townships as many as three of the four schools have closed. (Fig. 7.)

Table 6. Various Size Schools Operating Within Hand County, 1940*

Schools	Number of pupils enrolled
34	Closed
20	5 pupils or less
48	6-10 pupils
17	11-14 pupils
3	15-25 pupils
2	26 & more pupils
Total 124	

* Source: County Superintendent of Schools, Hand County.

The operation of schools for less than 10 pupils is usually a costly procedure. On a cost-per-child basis the expense of operating a school for five or less pupils is four or five times as great as for a normal size school. Certain trends of adjustment may be observed:

1. One of the school buildings is sometimes moved to the center of the township and all other schools closed when the enrollment drops below a specified minimum. Pupils who remain in the area formerly served by the closed school attend the centralized school, the school board paying transportation costs. Schools in other parts of the township which have a sufficient number of pupils continue to operate.

   Figure 7 shows townships which have solved their problem in this manner. In Wheaton township, for example, three schools have been closed, the centralized school is operating with an enrollment of 19 and another school in the northwestern corner is operating with eight pupils. In Spring township, two of the three schools have been closed. The remaining school is in the center of the township and serves the entire area. In Riverside one of the schools has been moved to the center of the township and the other two schools have been closed. In a number of other townships in which one or two schools have been closed a tendency toward centralization is evident. The temporary expedient of centralizing schools might prove to be permanently workable.
2. In addition several alternatives which have been tried in different parts of the state and which might have application to Hand County are discussed on page 17.

Everything considered, the establishment of one centralized elementary school in each township would for the present appear to offer the most satisfactory solution.

Increasing average attendance. The average number of days of school attendance in South Dakota has more than doubled since 1890. (Fig. 8.)

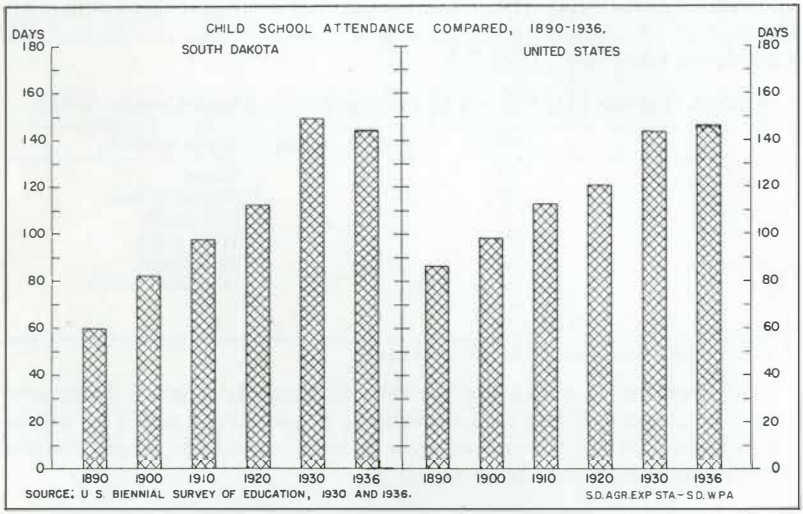

Fig. 8. Comparison of School Attendance, South Dakota and the United States, by Decades, 1890-1936

Until 1930 the average number of days each child attended school in South Dakota was less than in the United States as a whole. Since 1930, however, South Dakota has had a slightly better attendance record than the nation. Starting with an average attendance of only 60 days per year in 1890, South Dakota had increased her average attendance to 145.8 days by 1936.

South Dakota's improved attendance record has been achieved by progressively more rigid and inclusive compulsory attendance laws and by increasing the length of the school term. Some of this improvement in attendance may also be the result of the increased interest in education and of a growing feeling that education is necessary in making a satisfactory living.

Throughout the entire half century South Dakota has had a larger average percentage of persons 5-20 years of age attending school than has the United States.

In 1930, 71.4 percent of the males and 79.7 percent of the females of these ages were attending school in South Dakota as compared with 70.2 percent and 69.7 percent respectively for the United States as a whole. (Fig. 9.) The

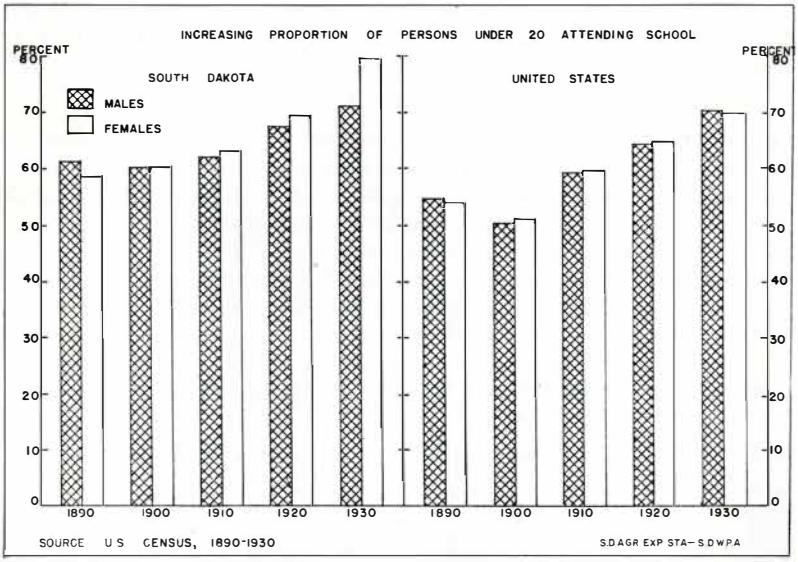

Fig. 9. Comparison of the Proportion of Persons Under 20 Attending School, South Dakota and the United States, by Decades, 1890-1930

fact that a larger proportion of females than males continue in school may be explained by the fact that South Dakota is predominantly an agricultural state. Many boys drop out of school to work on their fathers' farms upon completing the eighth grade. Since the girls are less of an economic asset they are more likely to continue their education beyond the elementary grades.

In South Dakota 78.8 percent of both sexes were attending school and in the United States 69.9 percent. This represents an increase of 18.6 percent since 1890 in South Dakota and an increase of 15.6 percent in the United States.

The following table shows the increasing proportion of persons of certain age groups who are attending school.

Table 7. Proportion of Persons Attending School by Age Groups, 1890-1930*

	5 - 14 years of age			15 - 20 years of age		
Year	Number	Number attending school	Percent attending school	Number	Number attending school	Percent attending school
1890	78,421	53,581	68.3	35,479	15,745	44.4
1900	99,348	69,681	70.1	47,817	18,833	39.4
1910	126,954	95,573	75.3	71,069	28,644	40.3
1920	141,031	115,522	81.9	70,839	28,919	40.8
1930	153,353	131,256	85.6	82,364	40,578	49.3

* Source: U. S. Census of Population, 1890-1930.

The group 5 to 14 years of age showed the greatest increase in the proportion attending school, from 68.3 percent in 1890 to 85.6 percent in 1930. Of those persons 15-20 years of age 44.4 percent were attending school in 1890 and 49.3 percent in 1930.[8]

Compulsory school age raised. The changes in the compulsory school age laws have had much to do with South Dakota's average school attendance. Since 1883 the following drastic changes have been made in the compulsory attendance laws: (1) the age span has been increased from 10-14 years to 8-17 years, (2) the minimum term has been increased from 14 weeks to eight months, (3) the minimum attendance required has been increased from six consecutive weeks to an entire eight or nine months term, and (4) the number of exemptions have been reduced.

Table 8. Compulsory School Attendance Requirements in South Dakota*

Year	Ages	Minimum term	Attendance required	Grade exemption
1883	10 - 14	14 weeks	6 consecutive weeks	
1891	8 - 14	14 weeks	6 consecutive weeks	
1901	8 - 14	12 weeks	8 consecutive weeks	
1909	8 - 14	16 weeks	12 consecutive weeks	6th grade
1915	8 - 16	8 months	entire term	6th grade
1917	8 - 16	8 months	entire term	8th grade
1921	8 - 17	8 months	entire term	8th grade

* Source: School Laws of South Dakota.

From 1883 to 1891 the law required that at least 14 weeks of school should be offered during the year and that all children between the ages of 10 and 14 should attend a minimum of six consecutive weeks. In 1891 the lower age limit was set at eight, increasing the age span two years. In 1901 the minimum attendance was set at eight consecutive weeks. In 1909 the law was amended to require that 16 weeks of school should be offered during each year and that pupils were to be in attendance a minimum of 12 consecutive weeks. In 1915 two more years were added to the upper limit of the age span, making school attendance compulsory between the ages of eight and 16; the minimum school term was set at eight months; and attendance was required throughout the entire term. In 1921 one more year was added to the upper age limit, making attendance compulsory from the 8th to the 17th birthday unless all elementary grades were completed prior to that time. Since 1921 the law has remained virtually unchanged.

The following exceptions to the compulsory attendance law are allowed:

1. Completion of eighth grade or equivalent.

8. An attempt was made to correlate the number of children attending elementary and high schools with the commonly accepted ages for these two groups (6-13 years and 14-17 years), but it was found that because of the number of persons attending elementary school who were less than six years of age and more especially those who were over 13 years of age, a comparison was not practicable.

2. Physical or mental conditions such as to render attendance impracticable or harmful to himself or others.

3. Serious illness in immediate family, making child's presence at home an actual necessity or his or her presence in school a menace to the health of the other pupils.

4. Attendance at an approved private school for a like period.

5. Otherwise instructed by competent persons for a like period in public school branches; provided, that such instruction be given entirely in the English language.

6. Between April 1 and November 1, should there exist an extreme need for child's assistance at home, he may be excused from attendance for a time not to exceed 40 school days; provided that such child has completed the sixth grade or its equivalent.

7. May be excused for one hour per week to attend religious instruction conducted by some church or churches.

Increasing length of time spent in school. There has been an increase in the median length of time spent in school by persons 18 years of age and

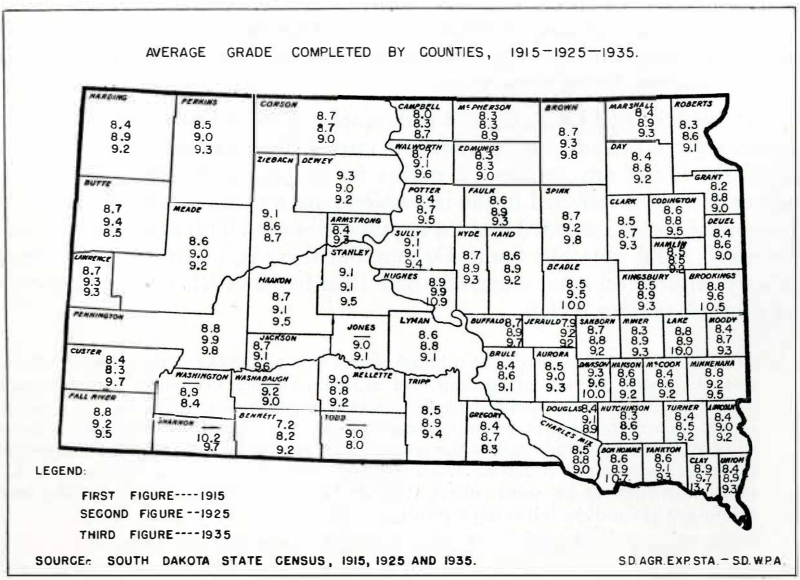

Fig. 10. The Average School Grade Completed by Counties, at 10 Year Intervals, 1915-1925-1935

over[9] in practically every county of the state from 1915 to 1935. In 1915 the median length of school attendance in most of the counties ranged from 8 to 8.9 years. (Fig. 10.)

Twenty years later, 1935, the median length of time spent in school was above nine years in practically every county of the state. Clay County, with a median school attendance of 13.7 years, ranked the highest of any county in the state. Clay's high comparative ranking may be explained by the fact that the State University is located within its borders.

The extent of education in Hughes, Beadle, Brookings, Lake, Davison, and Bon Homme Counties ranged from 10 to 10.9 years in school. It is interesting to note that a college or normal school is located within the borders of all but one of these counties. The 10.9 median of Hughes County may be due to the fact that a considerable number of professionally trained persons are employed at the state capital in Pierre.

Illiteracy on the decline. Although illiteracy[10] has declined sharply since 1890 in both the United States and South Dakota, the percentage of illiteracy in the nation as a whole has been much greater throughout the entire period. In 1930 the percentage of illiteracy in the United States was over four times as great as the South Dakota figure.

From 1890 to 1930 illiteracy in South Dakota declined from 4.2 to 1.2 percent of the population as compared with the United States' drop of 13.3 to 4.3 percent. (Fig. 11.)

The fact that illiteracy increased in South Dakota between 1890 and 1900 may be explained by the large influx of persons of certain foreign nationalities which occurred during those years.

In 1930 South Dakota ranked fifth among the states of the Union in the percentage of literate people. This low rate of illiteracy has a definite effect upon the life of any locality. It makes for an increased interest in schools which in turn is reflected in the increasing length of time spent in school. It may make for an increased interest in public libraries. This may not be so evident in a rural state like South Dakota, but there is, no doubt, much more library service and adult education here than in states where the proportion of illiterate persons is high.

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9. This median is derived from the original census data pertaining to the extent of education of persons 18 years of age and over in South Dakota. Composite scores for each year were computed by multiplying the percentages of persons having various amounts of educational training, by arbitrary weights assumed to represent the average number of years of attendance for each of the several levels as reported in the census. The weight for a common school education was determind at 8; for high school training at 12; normal graduate at 14; some college study at 14; college degree at 16; special school training at 13; and the following formula was applied:

$$\text{mean} = \frac{8\ \text{pct.}c + 12\ \text{pct.}h + 14\ \text{pct.}n + 14\ \text{pct.}s + 16\ \text{pct.}co + 13\ \text{pct.}ss}{100}$$

10. The Census Bureau defines as illiterate any person 10 years of age or over who is not able to read and write, either in English or in some other language.

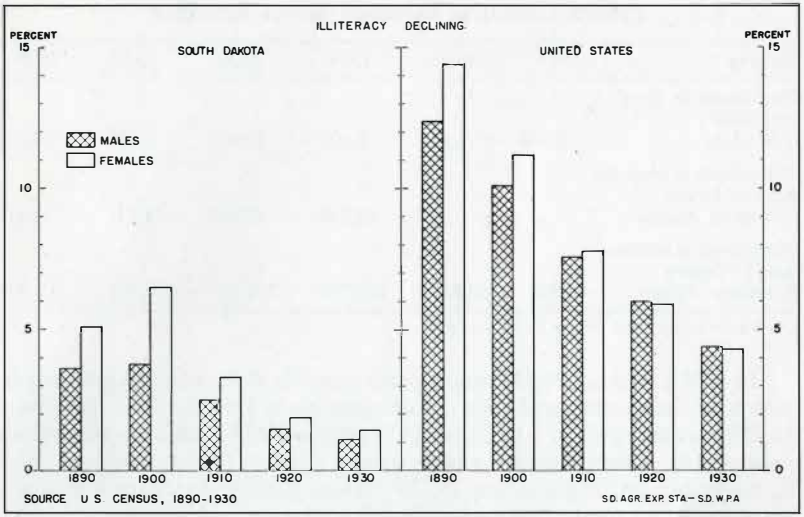

Fig. 11. Comparison of the Decline in Illiteracy, South Dakota and the United States, by 10 Year Periods, 1890-1930

At present, the states having high percentages of illiteracy are found entirely in the southern and southeastern part of the United States. The very low rates of illiteracy are found in the northern and western part of the country where, although the number of foreign-born is higher than in the South, they have come, in large part, from countries with low illiteracy rates. Education is also more universal in the North than in the South.

Increasing emphasis on adult education. Until recent years adult education in South Dakota was largely limited to activities of the Extension Service and correspondence courses offered by the various colleges of the state. In recent years these activities have been greatly expanded and many additional adult education programs have been inaugurated. Recent innovations include the adult education activities of the Work Projects Administration(formerly Works Progress Adminstration); vocational education in CCC camps; vocational rehabilitation and trade and industrial courses under auspices of the State Department of Public Instruction; and educational broadcasts by South Dakota radio broadcasting stations.

Extension Service. The South Dakota Extension Service probably is the most widespread agency of adult education in South Dakota. In Fig. 12 is shown the extent of its present activities in the state.

The county agricultural agents are in charge of the work done with the men in the various counties, and also with the boys' 4-H clubs. The home extension agents have charge of women's extension clubs and girls' 4-H clubs.

Table 9. Growth of Extension Service Activities*

Activity	1915	1920	1924	1930	1934	1939
Enrollment in Boys' and Girls' 4-H Clubs	2,568	6,867	6,927	10,873	7,815	10,735
Attendance at meetings held by Home Extension Agents			83,648	27,602	71,741	44,378
Attendance at meetings held by County Extension Agents	44,901	68,883	220,790	101,155	96,956	201,549

* Reports of the South Dakota Extension Service.

In 1938 a total of 294,633 people participated in the various Extension Service activities as compared with 226,682 persons in 1930. In 1939 there were 10,735 boys and girls in 4-H Clubs; 2433 attended 4-H Club Camp and short courses; 140 women attended a farm women's camp; 10,910 persons enrolled in leadership training courses; 10,220 persons participated in monthly program service on rural organization; 14,107 were enrolled in home demonstration series; 44,378 persons attended meetings held by Extension Agents; 201,549 persons attended meetings held by county agricultural extension agents; and 161 persons were enrolled in cow testing associations.

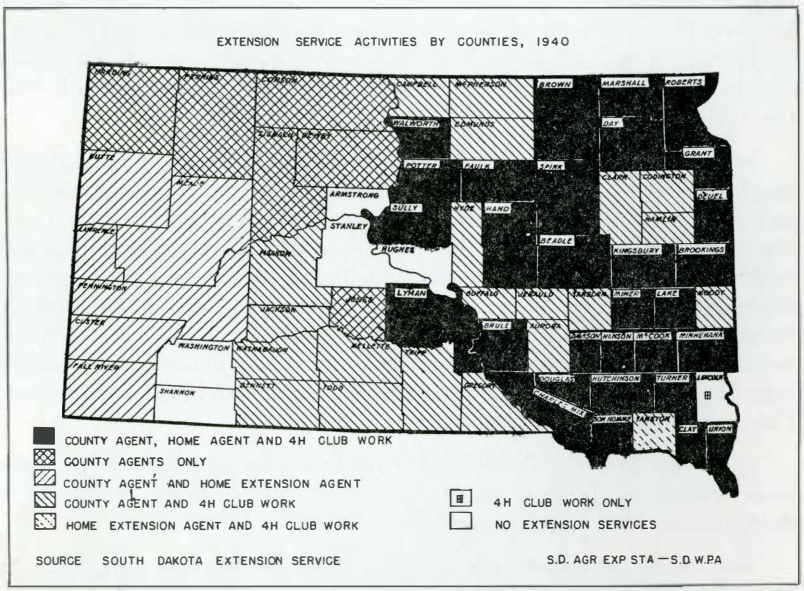

Fig. 12. The Distribution of County Agents, Home Extension Agents and 4-H Club Work, by Counties, 1940

Extension and Correspondence Courses. The extension activities of South Dakota colleges have increased over 400 percent since 1920. During the same period the number of persons enrolling in correspondence courses has more than doubled. Summer school attendance has decreased approximately a third during this period.

Adult Education Activities of the Work Projects Administration. A total of 7,358 adults were enrolled in various educational activities of the Work Projects Administration during 1938. Of this total 132 were enrolled in literacy and naturalization education; 160 were enrolled in public affairs forums; 193 studied in parent education classes; 1,812 benefited from home-making instruction; 1,476 received vocational training; 1,938 received guidance in avocational and leisure time activities; 123 persons took correspondence courses; 170 attended nursery schools; and 1,218 participated in various other forms of adult education.

Adult Education in Public Night Schools. The attendance at public night school declined sharply between 1930 and 1934. This decline was no doubt due to the fact that other adult education activities largely superseded the regular public night school classes.

Adult Education Sponsored by the State Department of Public Instruction. The number of persons enrolled in adult trade and industrial classes increased from 65 in 1928 to 804 in 1936. During the same period the number participating in the vocational rehabilitation program increased from 114 to 224. The number enrolled in Americanization classes declined from 858 in 1922 to none in 1936. This decline may be explained by the fact that few immigrants have come to South Dakota in recent years and by the fact that the WPA has maintained Americanization classes in recent years.

Educational Broadcasts. In 1934 only five South Dakota broadcasting stations provided educational broadcasts as compared with 11 in 1938.

CCC Educational Program. Education in CCC camps has consisted of vocational, technical, business and academic instruction. Classes are carried on in the evenings and enrollment is voluntary. Instruction is accomplished by means of lectures, discussion groups, recitation, shop and laboratory demonstrations, exercises and field trips. Although data as to how many young men have received instruction in CCC camps is not available it is known that large numbers have benefited from this program.

III. School Organization and Support

Two very important elements in the educational system are the organization of the schools and their support. A brief discussion of both will be included in this section.

Tendency towards larger, more unified, and more completely equipped schools. There has been a gradual trend away from the common school districts during the period since 1890. Independent town school districts and consolidated districts account for most of the changes, but some township and county high school districts have also been established.

In 1890, 98.6 percent of the districts in the state were common districts, usually a township in size and containing several schools. By 1938 this type of district had declined to 89.5 percent of the total number of districts. (Fig. 13.)

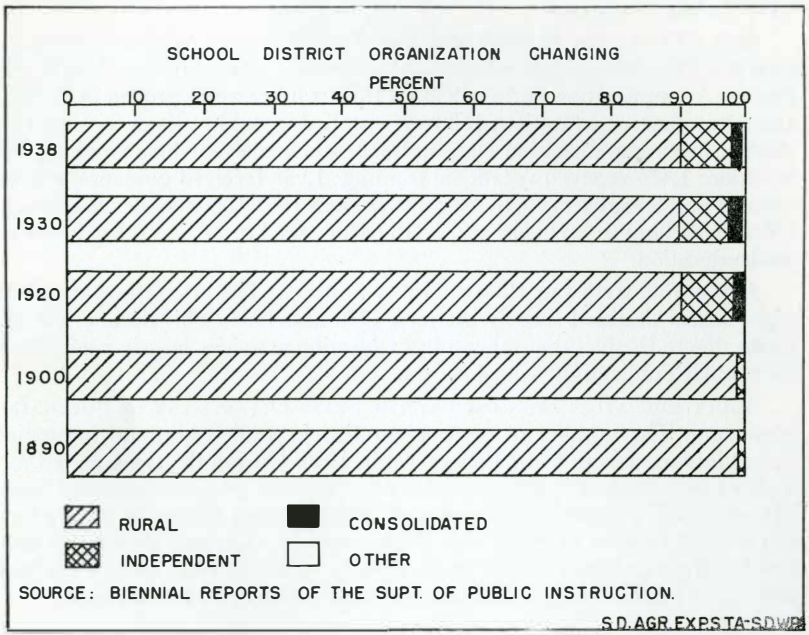

Fig. 13. Percentage Distribution of Rural, Independent and Consolidated School Districts, by 10-Year Intervals, 1890-1938

There is a double system of rural school districts in South Dakota. In 1862 the county commissioners were authorized to divide their counties into school districts in such a manner as they deemed to be for the best interest of the public.[11] Apparently the county commissioners of all counties believed at that time that the small district set-up was the most desirable form.

In 1883 the legislature provided for the township district organization.[12] However, there were some who were so strongly attached to the old district system that they were exempted from the provisions of this law. Thus began our double system of small and township districts. The small districts have one school and generally have between fifteen and twenty families within their borders. The township districts comprise a whole township and have several schools within their borders. In most instances these schools were originally located so that no family was more than a mile or so from a school.

11. Chapter 81 of the Laws of Dakota for 1862.

12. Chapter 44 of the Laws of Dakota for 1883.

The rural schools are still under this dual system of small and township districts. In some counties almost all the township districts have been broken down into small districts, although there may still be one or two townships in their original district organization. In other counties the township districts may cover the larger part of the county, but there may be a few townships which have been divided into small districts. In other counties the division may be more nearly equal.

In addition there are independent districts and consolidated districts. The independent districts are all cities, towns, and adjacent territory which have been organized as independent districts and are governed under special legislative provisions. The independent schools were granted charters to organize in 1875. There are two types, graded and ungraded, the graded having two or more teachers, and the ungraded schools only one teacher. The consolidated school districts combine several schools into one system with a central school. Most of these are organized around a small village school district, although there are a number of strictly rural consolidated schools in the state. These districts were authorized in 1913.

Township high school districts were authorized in 1917, and county high schools in 1923. By 1938 there were 10 township high schools and 2 county high schools in the state.

There has been an almost constant increase in the average value of school property and equipment[13] per child in the school census since 1890. The excep-

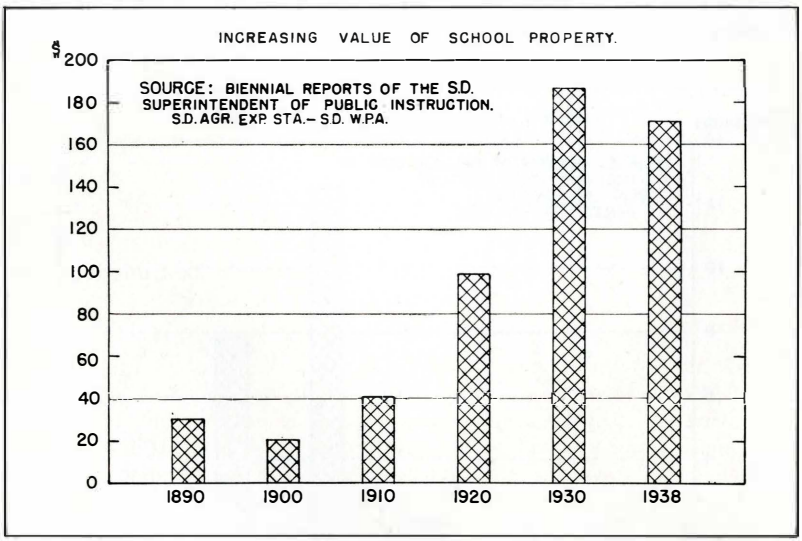

Fig. 14. Value of School Property in South Dakota, by 10 Year Periods, 1890-1938

13. School property and equipment includes the school buildings, the land on which they are built as well as the land used for playgrounds, the furniture, and other equipment.

tions occurred in the decade between 1890 and 1900, and between 1930 and 1938. The peak value was $186.56 in 1930. By 1938 it had declined to $171.14 per child. (Fig. 14.)

The decrease between 1890 and 1900 may be accounted for by the fact that the population of the state increased more rapidly during this decade, than the school system could expand. Between 1930 and 1938 the depression and drought made very drastic retrenchments necessary in the school system. As a consequence there has been a tendency to get along without purchasing new furniture and equipment, or constructing new buildings unless it was absolutely necessary. Accordingly the depreciation of present buildings and equipment has made for a decided decline in the total value of school property.

The amount of resources available for the education of each South Dakota child is determined by (1) the valuation of property within the state, (2) the number of children of school age and (3) income of property owners or taxpayers. Although the number of persons of school age steadily increased from 1890 to 1930, the value of South Dakota property underwent considerable fluctuation. The value of property depends upon (1) the extent of improvement and (2) current economic conditions. From 1890 through 1910 the value of South Dakota property slowly but steadily increased. This gain was largely due to the improvement of farm property. Since the number of persons of school age also increased during these years, the gain in resources per child was comparatively slight. By 1920, however, the economic boom of the war years had boosted the valuation of state property to 15 times the 1890 figure. In spite of the increasing number of persons of school age, this high valuation

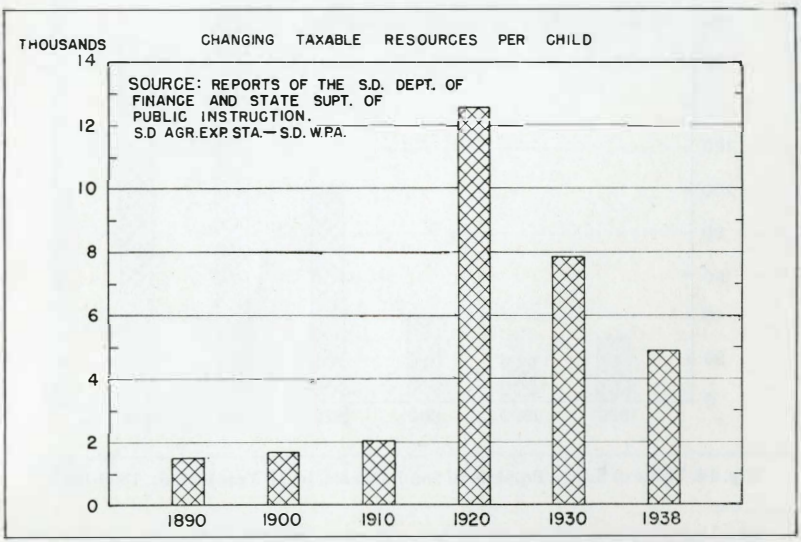

Fig. 15. Taxable Resources Per Child in South Dakota, by 10 Year Periods, 1890-1938

raised the amount of resources available for the education of each child to $12,623.71. (Fig. 15.)

The collapse of the farmers' purchasing power which followed the war, had lowered the resources available per child to $7,878.21 by 1930. In spite of the fact that the number of children in the school census declined between 1930 and 1938, the further shrinkage in the value of property within the state brought about by the drouth and depression years resulted in a further reduction in the amount of resources available per child.

The average number of days schools were in session has increased rapidly in both South Dakota and the United States. In 1936 the average number of days schools were in session was practically the same in both South Dakota and the United States. (Fig. 16.)

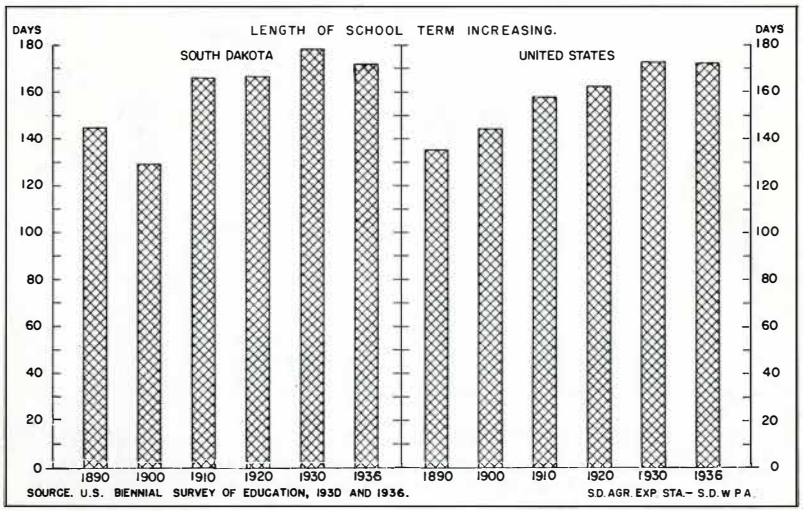

Fig. 16. Comparison of the Average Length of School Term in South Dakota and the United States, by Decades, 1890-1936

This increase in the length of the school term is a direct reflection of the increasing belief in the importance of education. It also shows the effects of the increasing requirements of the South Dakota compulsory attendance laws.

Increasing cost of public schools. The trend in per capita expenditures for public education has been upwards for both South Dakota and the United States. However, throughout the entire period from 1890-1936 the per capita expenditure has been greater in South Dakota than in the United States. In 1936 per capita expenditures for education declined both in South Dakota and the United States as a whole. (Fig. 17.)

During most of the entire period South Dakota has been declining in rank among the states although the expenditures per capita have been increasing. In 1890 South Dakota ranked fifth among the states of the union in

per capita expenditures for education. By 1930 South Dakota's rank had dropped to 14th but had risen to 10th place in 1936.

The drop in per capita expenditures which occurred both in South Dakota and the United States as a whole between 1930 and 1936 reflects the widespread retrenchment which accompanied the depression. It is a matter of record that salaries were slashed and many school activities were sharply curtailed during the depression years.

At its peak, in 1930, per capita expenditures for South Dakota were $22.06 as compared with $18.77 for the United States.

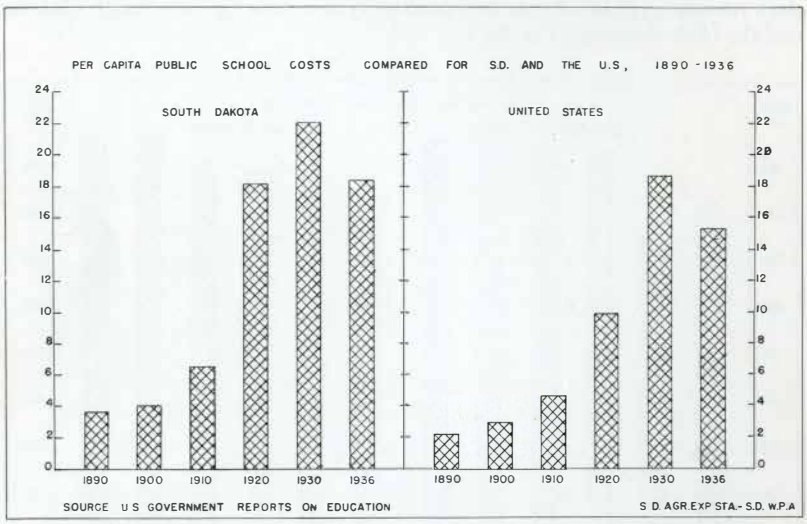

Fig. 17. Comparison of Per Capita Public School Costs, South Dakota and the United States, by 10 Year Intervals, 1890-1936

During the period from 1890 to 1938 the cost of education per child enrolled in South Dakota schools has increased at a greater rate than the cost per capita. The cost per child has increased almost 500 percent as compared with an approximately 400 percent per capita increase. In 1938 the cost per child was $85.35 as compared with the per capita cost of $18.02. (Fig. 18.)

The peak cost of $119.06 per child was reached in 1930. During the next four years the cost per child was almost halved. Since 1935 the cost per child has steadily increased but still lacks $35 of reaching the 1930 peak.

From a cost of $4.69 in 1890 the per capita cost of education rose to a peak of $28.94 in 1924. Beginning in 1931 the per capita cost of education declined sharply until 1934. Since that time there has been a gradual increase.

Since the proportion of persons of elementary school age is gradually declining in South Dakota, it is to be expected that the cost per child enrolled will continue to rise at a greater rate than the cost per capita.

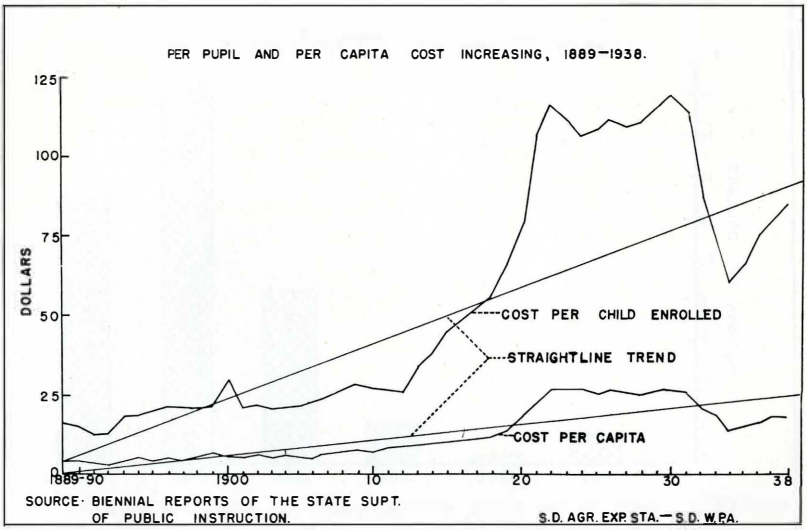

Fig. 18. Comparison of the Trends in Per Pupil and Per Capita Cost of Education in South Dakota, 1889-1938

Although the South Dakota public school debt was almost $6,000,000 less in 1938 than in 1930, the trend during the past 50 years has been upward. During this period the amount of indebtedness has ranged from the low 1900 figure of approximately half a million to the 1930 peak of $18,500,000. (Fig. 19.)

South Dakota's mounting school debt may be attributed to the following factors: (1) An insufficient taxing unit to support schools; (2) a wide disparity between school levy and actual revenue due to widespread delinquency caused by low farm income; (3) the loss of school funds in closed banks; (4) the expense of additional services such as free textbooks and transportation; and (5) bonded indebtedness incurred by replacing wornout buildings with new ones.

Due to the fact that the income from the general property tax is inadequate, it has required a longer time to retire school bonds than would otherwise be the case. Consequently, bonded indebtedness has increased at a more rapid rate than bonds have been retired.

The rapid rise in school indebtedness from 1920 to 1930 may be explained by the fact that during this period many districts floated bonds to finance new school buildings.

Upon first thought it appears difficult to understand how a $6,000,000 reduction in public school indebtedness was effected during the drouth and depression period between 1930 and 1938. Upon closer consideration several explanations may be found. One of the major reasons was the policy followed by the federal government in making grants and loans during this period. Before the federal government would make grants or loans to impoverished

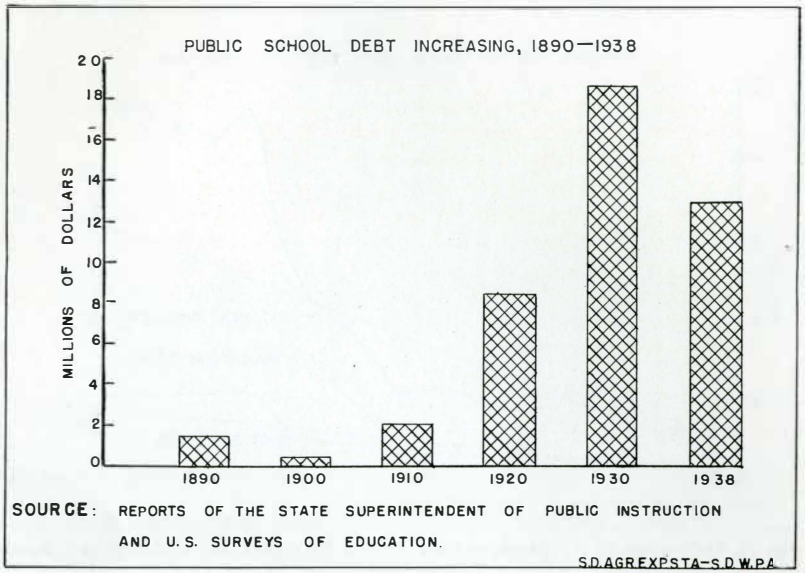

Fig. 19. Public School Debt in South Dakota, by Decades, 1890-1938

school districts, the districts were required to raise their delinquent levies. When this was done the money thus secured was sufficient, in many cases, to reduce the registered warrant indebtedness to the point where it placed the districts upon a cash basis.

Another explanation is that the federal government has paid a part of the teacher's salaries in hundreds of districts. Consequently, a considerable portion of the money raised by local taxation was left to apply on debts.

Widespread retrenchment, including the slashing of teachers' salaries and the curtailment of building programs has tended to keep the debt from mounting and, in some cases, left a surplus to apply on old debts.

The following discussion shows some of the difficulties which have developed in the administration of the permanent school fund. This school fund has been an important source of financial support for many of the schools of the state.[14]

The Organic Act of Dakota Territory, dated March 2, 1861, set up the original territorial government and provides "that sections 16 and 36 in each township of said territory, shall be, and the same are hereby, reserved for the

14. Each year the interest earned by the permanent school fund is apportioned to the various counties on the basis of the number of persons 6-20 years of age in their populations. The counties reapportion this money on the same basis to the rural, independent and consolidated districts within their borders. In 1938 the total apportionment of $1,276,-217.01 amounted to $6.65 for every person of school age (6-20 years) within the state. On the basis of the number of persons actually enrolled in school the apportionment amounted to nearly $9 per pupil.

purpose of being applied to schools in the states hereafter to be erected out of the same."

The Enabling Act which admitted South Dakota to the Union, reiterated the provisions of the original territorial act. In addition the Enabling Act provides that "all lands herein granted for educational purposes shall be disposed of only at public sale, and at a price not less than $10 per acre, the proceeds to constitute a permanent school fund, the interest of which only shall be expended for the support of the schools." Carrying out the intentions of the Enabling Act, the South Dakota Constitution further provided that the proceeds of the sale of lands should constitute a perpetual trust, never to be diminished, and that only the income of the fund should be used. Article VIII, section 2, of the Constitution provides that the proceeds "shall be and remain a perpetual fund for the maintenance of public schools in the state. It shall forever remain inviolate, and may be increased, but shall never be diminished, and the state shall make good all losses thereof which may in any manner occur."

The permanent school fund has been built up by the sale of public school lands. During the 50 years of statehood the permanent school fund has grown to $18,765,770. During that time a total of $41,213,018 (interest and school land rentals) has been prorated to the counties according to the school census.

The Constitution of South Dakota also provides a method of investment by which the money in the permanent school fund is apportioned to organized counties according to population. Counties were authorized to lend it to municipalities on bonds, or to farmers within the county, up to a limit of $5000 and one third the appraised value of each improved farm. Each county is obliged to make good any losses incurred through its lending operations.

Article VIII, section 11 of the constitution reads: "The several counties shall hold and manage the same as trust funds, and they shall be and remain responsible and accountable for the principal and interest of all such monies received by them from the date of receipt until returned because not loaned; and in case of loss of any money so apportioned to any county, such county shall make good out of its common revenue."

All of the counties of the state have availed themselves of the opportunity of borrowing money from the permanent school fund for the purpose of investment. Counties were required to pay 5 percent interest on this money. Accordingly the county commissioners loaned this money to farmers at a higher rate of interest, taking a mortgage on farm land as security. Unfavorable agricultural prices and drouth have caused many of these farmers to default on their payments. At the same time the valuation of the land has shrunk to a fraction of its former value. Consequently the counties which have foreclosed their mortgages now hold land which is valued at less than the amount of the original loan. As a result the counties have fallen in arrears in their interest payments to the permanent school fund. If all the foreclosed land held by some counties were sold it would not be sufficient to repay the principal and accumulated interest which they owe the permanent school fund. (Fig. 20.)

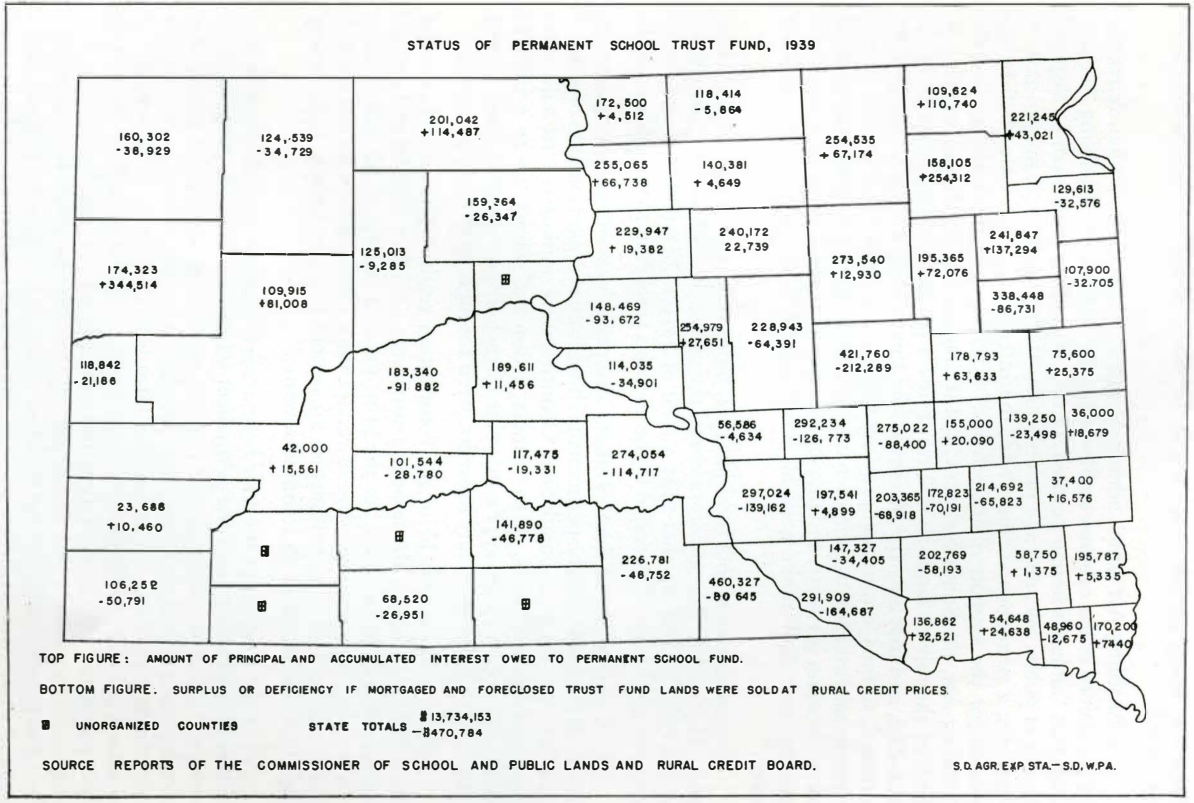

Fig. 20. Status of Permanent School Trust Funds, by Counties, December 31, 1939

An amendment to the constitution which was passed by the 1939 legislature to be referred to the people in the 1940 general election, proposes to return all land and assets as well as liabilities to the Department of School and Public Lands. Proponents assert that more land (a total of 986,293 acres consisting of 696,321 foreclosed and 289,972 delinquent loan acres) will be returned than the net acres of land sold. However, it is apparent that these lands, if turned over to the Department of School and Public Lands, may not be sold for less than $10 per acre, nor will they be subject to taxation. Therefore, opponents of the proposed amendment estimate that if sold at current Rural Credit prices a net loss of $470,784 would result.[15]

The top figure in Fig. 20 shows the amount of principal and interest owed to the permanent school fund by each county in the state as of December 31, 1939. The lower figure indicates the amount that the value of foreclosed county lands exceeds or falls below the amount owed to the permanent school fund. Foreclosed county lands have been evaluated by the Rural Credit. It will be noted that 35 of the counties would gain and 29 would lose by turning over their assets to the Department of School and Public Lands. Counties which would lose by the amendment are naturally those who would have a surplus over and above the principal and accumulated interest which they owe the permanent school fund if their foreclosed land holdings were sold. Counties which would gain by the amendment are those in which a balance would still be owed the permanent school fund if all foreclosed land were sold at current Rural Credit prices.

IV. Curriculum and Teaching Personnel

School Curricula Tending to Better Fit People to Meet Practical Life Situations. There has been a growing tendency toward including in the curriculum of the schools in South Dakota those courses which will give a more practical preparation for life. This is in line with the trend in all parts of the country. Since this is a predominantly agricultural state, special emphasis is laid on vocational agriculture and homemaking courses.

The number of high schools in the state which offer vocational agriculture courses increased from 33 in 1923-24 to 62 in 1938-39. The number offering vocational homemaking courses increased from 50 to 96 during the same period. In 1938-39 there were 12 high schools which received federal aid for trades and industries.

At the present time vocational agriculture and homemaking are quite widespread in the high schools of the state. (Fig. 21.) This is particularly true of the area east of the Missouri River. The trades and industries courses are found only in the larger high schools. In addition to these vocational courses many of the high schools of the state teach one or more commercial subjects such as typewriting, shorthand or bookkeeping.

15. When computed on the basis of the estimated valuation set by appraisers from the office of the Commissioner of School and Public Lands, a loss of more than $4,000,000 would result to the permanent school fund if the amendment should pass. This figure has been computed by Oral Holm, a graduate student in agricultural economics at South Dakota State College, and included in an unpublished master's thesis.

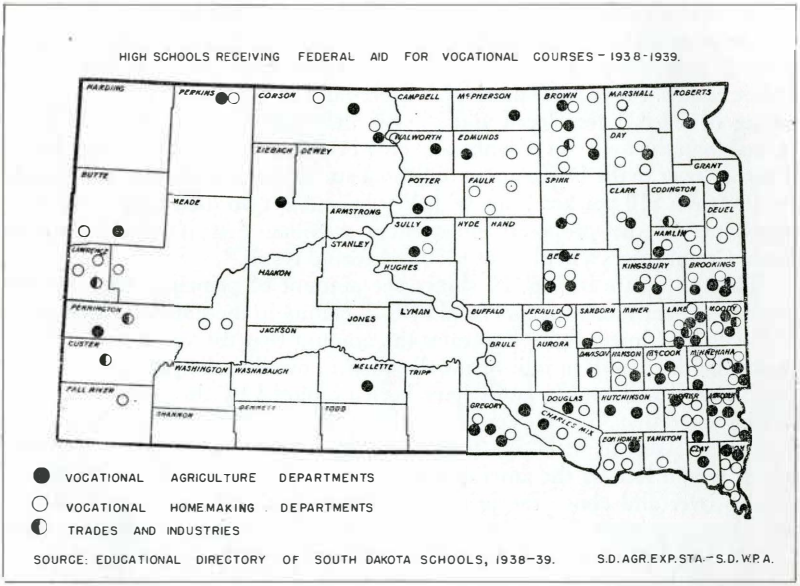

Fig. 21. High Schools Receiving Federal Aid for Agriculture, Homemaking and Trades and Industries Courses, 1938-39

This same trend is also evident to some extent in elementary schools.

Trend toward better qualified teaching personnel. The increasing number of higher grade certificates being issued is one indication of the increasing extent of education of South Dakota teachers. At the same time, the legislature has been raising the requirements for the certification of teachers, which will automatically raise the amount of education which the teachers must possess.

There are also some concrete data which show this increasing amount of education. In 1918 a survey of the educational system of South Dakota[16] showed that in the rural schools of the state, some teachers had apparently not finished their elementary-school course. Fifty-eight and three-tenths percent of the rural and 76.2 percent of the village teachers had completed a four-year high school course. Very few had had any college work, but 54.2 percent of the rural teachers and 64.9 percent of the village teachers had attended regular courses at professional schools.

In 1930-31 the teachers in the rural schools of South Dakota showed a considerably larger number of years of schooling than in 1918. The table below compares the extent of education of rural teachers in South Dakota and the United States. In general the South Dakota teachers are somewhat less well trained than the teachers in the United States as a whole.

16. Bureau of Education, Dept. of the Interior, Bulletin, 1918, No. 31, *The Educational System of South Dakota,* G.P.O. 1918, p. 213.

Table 10. Training of South Dakota Rural Teachers*

Training	United States	South Dakota
	Percent	
Three years of High School or less	3.2	2.1
Four years of High School	9.0	5.3
Six to twelve weeks of College	9.9	16.7
Half-year of College	6.1	4.2
One year of College	33.0	42.0
Two years of College	28.7	22.0
Three years of College	6.0	3.8
Four years of College	3.0	3.2
More than four years of College	.7	.1

* Source: S.D.E.A. Journal, February, 1936, Page 249.

There has been a very decided increase in the number of higher grade teaching certificates issued. This is a direct reflection of the increased academic requirements being established for teachers in South Dakota schools. In 1890 no teacher in the public schools had a certificate of higher grade than first, and 49.3 percent had only a third grade certificate. These certificates were granted upon examination and have been discontinued.

By 1900 a small percentage of the teachers had state certificates and the number holding third grade certificates had begun to decline. By 1938, 29.2 percent of the teachers held various high school certificates for all of which completion of a four year college course, with certain courses in education, was required. Another 30.4 percent held state certificates for which two years of normal school or college work is required.

Thirty-five and eight-tenths percent of the teachers had first grade certificates, which are issued after one year of normal training beyond high school. Teachers holding a first grade certificate may teach only in rural schools. A state certificate is required for any person teaching in a town school. The second grade certificates are gradually disappearing since they are no longer being issued.

Table 11. Certificates Held by Teachers Employed in South Dakota Public Schools, 1890-1938*

Years	High School Certificates		Life Diploma		State Certificates		First Grade		Second Grade		Third Grade		Others		Total	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
1938	2452	29.2	233	2.8	2547	30.4	3003	35.8	29	0.3	....	....	129	1.5	8392	100.0
1930	1566	17.5	332	3.7	2138	24.0	3837	43.1	859	9.6	....	....	176	2.0	8908	100.0
1920	....	....	125	1.9	768	11.4	1740	25.9	2900	43.2	1087	16.2	93	1.4	6713	100.0
1910	....	....	52	0.9	1039	17.4	740	12.4	2729	45.6	1357	22.7	62	1.0	5979	100.0
1900	....	....	....	....	175	4.0	384	8.8	2599	59.6	1200	27.5	....	....	4358	100.0
1890	....	....	....	....	....	....	163	5.5	1327	45.2	1447	49.3	....	....	2937	100.0

* Source: Biennial Reports of the State Superintendent of Public Instruction.

V. Summary, Implications and Conclusions

Below are the more significant trends in education. In each case the trend is followed by its respective social implications:

1. Decreasing Elementary and Increasing High School and College Enrollments

a. Factors responsible for decreasing elementary enrollments.

1. A declining birth rate. The birth rate in South Dakota has declined almost a third since 1921. In 1921 there were 25.7 births per 1000 of the population as compared with 17.1 in 1938.
2. Heavy migration from the state during the drouth and depression years. Mobility studies have shown that a majority of the families who left the state had young children.

b. Factors responsible for increasing high school and college enrollments.

1. A general recognition of the value of high school and college training.[17]
2. The increasing availability of high schools. In 1900 there were only 61 high schools in the state as compared with 405 in 1938.
3. The increasing emphasis upon a vocational curriculum.
4. The improvement in highways and automobiles, making it possible for farm children to drive to and from school.
5. The advent of high school dormitories.

c. In many of the rural schools the enrollments are so small that the schools are relatively inefficient and expensive to operate.

d. In many cases, larger school plants and more elaborate equipment have been built up than are now necessary to care for present enrollments.

e. The slump in rural elementary enrollment may eventually compel a complete reorganization of the one-room rural school system.

f. Conceivably, a solution may be found in a centralized elementary and high school system located in towns. Under this system the present school districts would be retained and the children would be sent to the centralized schools as tuition pupils, transportation being provided by school bus.

g. If such a plan were adopted tuition and transportation costs would probably be less expensive for local districts than maintaining separate schools for less than five pupils.

h. Since elementary enrollments are also rapidly declining in the town schools it is likely that the independent school plants will be large

17. This attitude is also a factor in the increasing length of time spent in school, the increasing average attendance, and the decline in illiteracy.

enough to eventually accommodate both the town and country children.

i. For country pupils a centralized school system would mean better school houses, better trained teachers and better curricula.

j. Care should be taken not to overexpand high school and college facilities beyond current needs since they, too, will eventually be feeling the effects of the decline in the number of persons under 20 years of age.

2. Increasing Average Attendance

a. Factors responsible for increasing average attendance.

1. The extension of the compulsory school age.[18]
2. Strengthening of laws governing the length of the school term.
3. An increasing interest in education.

b. An increasing average attendance helps solve the unemployment problem by keeping youth off the employment market.

c. The school system can function more efficiently with an increased average attendance.

3. Compulsory School Age Raised

a. Universal recognition of the value of education has resulted in a series of progressively higher compulsory education standards. The age span, the length of term and the minimum amount of attendance required have all been increased.

b. Raising the compulsory school age will tend to:

1. Reduce unemployment of persons included in the compulsory age range.
2. Bring better trained recruits to many fields of employment.
3. Give at least an elementary school education to many who would otherwise be kept out of school to work.
4. Make education more vocational since many will terminate their training as soon as they reach the upper limit of the compulsory age span.
5. Lower the general educational standards since compulsory education laws are inclusive rather than selective.

4. Increasing Length of Time Spent in School

a. Factors responsible for the increasing length of time spent in school are.

1. Widespread recognition of the value of education.
2. Stricter compulsory attendance requirements.
3. Lack of available employment,

18. The compulsory attendance law is also a factor in declining illiteracy and the length of time spent in school.

which causes many who would otherwise get jobs, to continue their schooling.

b. Significance of the increasing length of time spent in school.

1. High school facilities have been greatly expanded during the past 25 years in response to the demand for additional schooling.
2. College enrollments have also grown phenomenally due to the increased demand for cultural and professional training.

5. Illiteracy on the Decline

a. Factors responsible for a decline in illiteracy.

1. A decrease in the number of foreign-born from countries with high illiteracy.
2. A growing recognition of the value of education.
3. The effect of compulsory school laws.

b. Implications of the decline in illiteracy.

1. The standard of living will be raised.
2. A greater interest in schools, libraries, museums and other cultural media will be fostered.
3. A more enlightened public opinion and policy will result.

6. Increasing Emphasis on Adult Education

a. Factors responsible for the increasing emphasis on adult education.

1. People have discovered that their need for information does not end with formal schooling.
2. Farm people have been particularly anxious to receive information on newer and more practical methods in both agriculture and homemaking.
3. Competition for employment awakens people to a need for education as educated adults have better chance for employment.

b. Results of the increasing emphasis on adult education.

1. Many of the foreign-born have learned the English language, American history and American ideals in Americanization courses.
2. Farmers and farm homemakers have been able to materially raise their standards of living through making use of information supplied them by the extension service.
3. More industrial and mechanical courses for adults have been introduced into the public schools.
4. More night classes and short courses have been introduced into the public schools.
5. Extensive adult education programs have been conducted by the Work Projects Administration.
6. A greater variety and volume of correspondence courses are being offered by public and private colleges of the state.

7. Changes in the Cost and Support of Public Schools

a. Factors responsible for the increasing cost of public schools.

1. As the settlement of the state progressed there was a larger amount of resources available on which to collect taxes for the support of the schools.
2. The increasing emphasis on better schools and better methods of teaching have increased the amount of money required to support the schools.
3. The decline in elementary enrollment has naturally increased the cost of education per pupil enrolled.
4. Introduction of scientific and mechanical education calls for greater expenditures for equipment than for the traditional academic subjects.
5. Better and more expensively trained teachers are demanding more compensation for their services.

b. Results of an increasing cost of public education.

1. Present day students have much better educational advantages than their parents.
2. The general property tax has been found to be an inadequate and inequitable tax base. It is increasingly evident that education must find another source of revenue if education is to advance.
3. The high cost of education has caused people to examine critically the efficiency of the present educational system. They have found a large number of rural schools operating at a tremendous cost for only four or five pupils. Accordingly, they are increasingly coming to realize the economic desirability of establishing a centralized school system.

8. Tendency Toward Larger, More Centralized But Fewer and More Completely Equipped Schools

a. Factors responsible for the tendency toward centralized schools.

1. Declining elementary enrollments, particularly in rural schools. In Hand county 42 percent of the rural schools have either closed or are operating with fewer than five pupils.
2. The increasing per pupil cost in small rural schools. In one Brookings county school of three pupils the annual per pupil cost was $233.19 as compared with $38.48 in a school having 26 students. In other words, the per pupil cost for the small school was seven times as great as for the larger school.
3. The desire to give children better educational opportunities than is possible in a small one-room rural school.
4. Good roads and modern transportation facilities have made centralization possible.

b. Probable results of the tendency toward centralized schools.

1. Conceivably, the time may come when schools will all be located in trade centers. Pupils from the country will be transported to these centers by bus, local school districts paying the tuition and transportation costs to the town schools.
2. Centralized schools will undoubtedly cut the cost per pupil, since small, expensive units will be abolished.
3. Centralization will provide better trained teachers and better equipment.
4. Centralized schools will materially reduce the demand for teachers.
5. Centralization of schools will probably raise teacher training standards.
6. The number of teacher training institutions will probably be reduced but the quality of the product will probably be raised.

9. School Curricula Tending to Better Fit People to Meet Practical Life Situations

a. Schooling is now considered as an essential preparation for life rather than as merely a preparation for college.

b. There is a growing appreciation of the fact that there should be an effort made to give persons some vocational training in high schools. Since agriculture is the predominant occupation in this state it is natural that agriculture and homemaking courses should be widespread in the high schools.

c. Most people today pursue higher education with the thought of preparing themselves for better professional and technical positions rather than for the sake of acquiring culture.

10. Trend Toward Better Qualified Teaching Personnel

a. Factors responsible for better qualified teaching personnel.

1. With the increasing emphasis on better schools there has naturally been a demand for better qualified teachers.
2. As teachers became more plentiful it became easier to raise the standards and eliminate those with poorer qualifications.
3. As schools became more clearly identified with practical life situations teachers were required to understand both the practice and theory of their subjects.

b. Probable results of better qualified teaching personnel.

1. School work will be made richer and more interesting to the pupils.
2. Teaching will gain prestige among the professions.
3. Schools will come to play a more important role in community activities.

Conclusions

1. In proportion to the total population, those enumerated in the school census, or persons 6-20 years of age, have rapidly declined since the peak period in the early twenties. There has been, however, a consistent increase from 1890-1940 in the proportion of persons of school age actually attending school.

2. There has also been a consistently increasing emphasis on education during the entire period of the state's history. Both the compulsory school age and attendance requirements have been raised. While not required, there has been a considerable increase in nursery school and kindergarten attendance as well as in various adult education agencies.

3. School costs per pupil have risen because of increased demands for an enriched curriculum and for better school plants and equipment. Since the number of elementary school pupils are declining the cost per pupil will continue to rise unless the number of schools are reduced and the systems are more centralized.

4. A beginning has already been made toward centralization which is resulting in fewer but better schools. As the school population declines further this tendency will become more marked.

5. The qualifications of teaching personnel have been progressively raised since the early years of the state. As the future demand for rural school tachers becomes less, it is likely that the same trend for higher qualifications will continue.

6. There is a marked tendency toward more practical curricula in the present day public school systems. This is particularly evidenced by the increase in vocational courses on both a secondary school and college level. Vocational agriculture and homemaking, as well as various types of commercial courses, have been introduced into a large number of public high schools. This appears to be a permanent trend in secondary education.

South Dakota Among the States[19]

1. Enrollment, Attendance and Length of Term

26th in percentage of total enrollment attending elementary schools.
23rd in percentage of total enrollment attending high schools.
30th in number of pupils enrolled in private and parochial schools.
30th in percentage of daily average attendance.
29th in average number of days attended by each rural student.
21st in average number of days attended by each urban student.
25th in average length of school term per rural school.
33rd in average length of school term per urban school.
41st in enrollment in adult education classes (1932).
31st in number of extension workers per 100,000 population (1932).
17th in persons 5-17 years of age per 1000 population (1930).

2. Expenditures and Indebtedness

10th in per capita cost of education per pupil enrolled.
30th in total expenditures for education in rural areas.
41st in total expenditures for education in urban areas.
20th in school debt per pupil enrolled.
18th in indebtedness per urban pupil in average daily attendance.
17th in indebtedness per rural pupil in average daily attendance.
2nd in percentage of school receipts derived from local sources.
43rd in percentage of receipts from state sources.
9th in receipts from public school lands.
39th in mean annual salary of teachers, supervisors, and principals (1932).
30th in mean annual salaries of rural teachers.

3. Higher Education

35th in number of higher educational institutions.
26th in number of students enrolled in institutions of higher education per 1000 population 18-21 years of age.
37th in number of college freshmen.
20th in number of volumes in college and university libraries per capita population 20-24 years of age (1932).

4. Miscellaneous

1st in percentage of one-room school buildings.
22nd in percentage of mean annual salary of rural teachers (1932).
5th in percentage of retarded persons (1930).

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19. Ranked from the highest. Unless otherwise specified data are as of 1936.