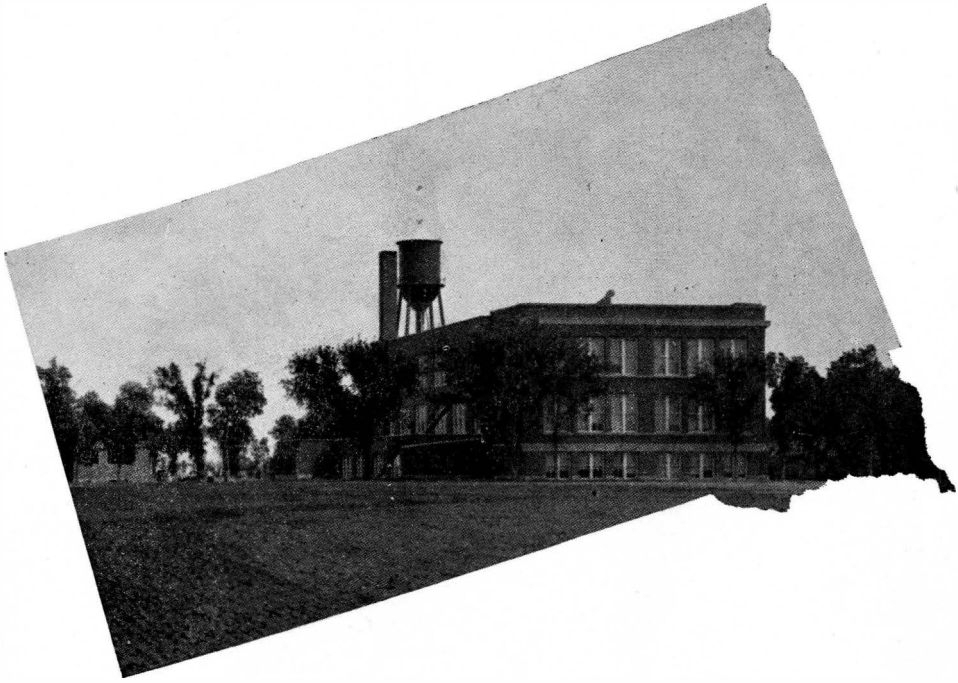
6-1-1950

Community School Districts in the Making

W. F. Kumlien

Community
SCHOOL DISTRICTS IN THE MAKING

BULLETIN 404 JUNE 1950



RURAL SOCIOLOGY DEPARTMENT
Agricultural Experiment Station
SOUTH DAKOTA STATE COLLEGE, BROOKINGS

Table of Contents

List of Tables and Exhibit—Appendix

List of Figures

COMMUNITY SCHOOL DISTRICTS IN THE MAKING

By W. F. Kumlien[1]

The major problem of public school education in South Dakota today centers in the gradual merging of our separate town and country administrative units into unified natural community school districts.

There are six different types of public school districts provided for by school law. However, the principal problem has narrowed down to combining rural school districts located in the surrounding trade and service areas, with that of independent school districts in the town center. In legal terminology the combined district often becomes an independent - consolidated administrative unit. Functionally, it can become a more complete combination of town and country, when conceived of as a community school district.

It would be an error to assume that the problem is new to South Dakota and that no attempts have been made during the first half century to weld town and country areas together into unified school districts (Figs. 1, 2, 3). Three separate types of districts were introduced from outside the state since the rural and independent schools were first organized. Basically, all three types of districts with their respective date of introduction were as follows: Township high school, (1907), independent-consolidated (1913), and county high school (1921).

Two of these types were on a high school level only. The independent-consolidated districts were organized to include both elementary and high school grades operating under one administration. All three units were designed with a general principle in mind, but were adapted to meet the needs of their particular local situations where they were first introduced. The main objective in each case was to equalize school costs and services of both rural and town areas.

These three types of districts succeeded in the north central states. However, when brought to South Dakota with its sparse population, none of the three types of districts has succeeded as well as originally hoped. Under Illinois or Indiana conditions, a township had sufficient school population and assessed valuation of property to make any one of the three types feasible. Under South Dakota conditions, however, the tax base has usually been inadequate, the enrollments too small, the districts too numerous, and the quality of education too limited, especially in the marginal or more sparsely populated areas.

Up to the present, the best methods of equalization of school costs have been made through state and county aid. The weak spot in these two sources of school income has been in distributing such aid without imposing any minimum eligibility requirements such as pertain to pupil enrollments, preparation and quality of teachers, building facilities, course of study, and transportation of pupils living outside of the town center.

State aid (financial support to schools) has helped in varying degrees, but has not solved the problem. This aid may have even delayed the solution in that some districts have continued intact without any fundamental changes to meet the needs of changing conditions. Unfortunately, many citizens are still thinking in terms of separate town and country areas with two sets of districts. While separate town and country districts were more or less natural in the horse and buggy days, improved roads have caused this set-up to become outmoded in most parts of the state today.

[1]Rural Sociologist, South Dakota Agricultural Experiment Station.

Community High School Attendance Centers in South Dakota, 1949-50

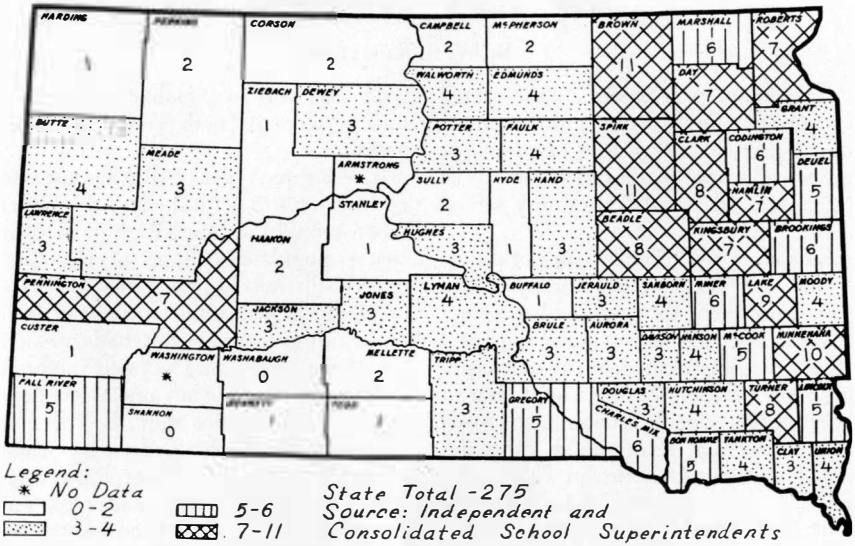


Fig. 1. The state has 275 four-year high schools as of 1949-1950. Note the wide variation in attendance centers per county

Where Beadle County Rural Districts Sent Their High School and Grade School Tuition Pupils in 1949-50

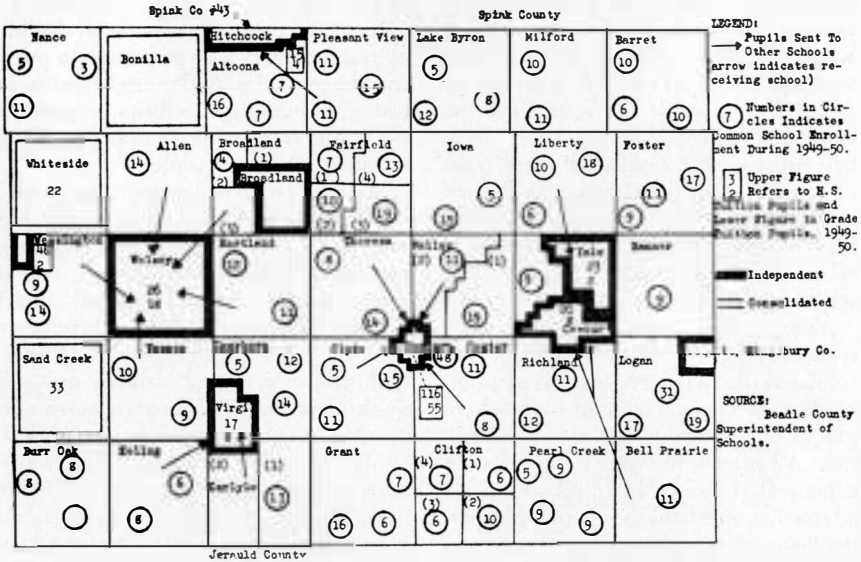


Fig. 2. Huron independent school district serviced 116 non-resident high school students and 55 grade tuition people in 1949-1950

Suggested Rural School Districts Within Transportation Distance of Elk Point

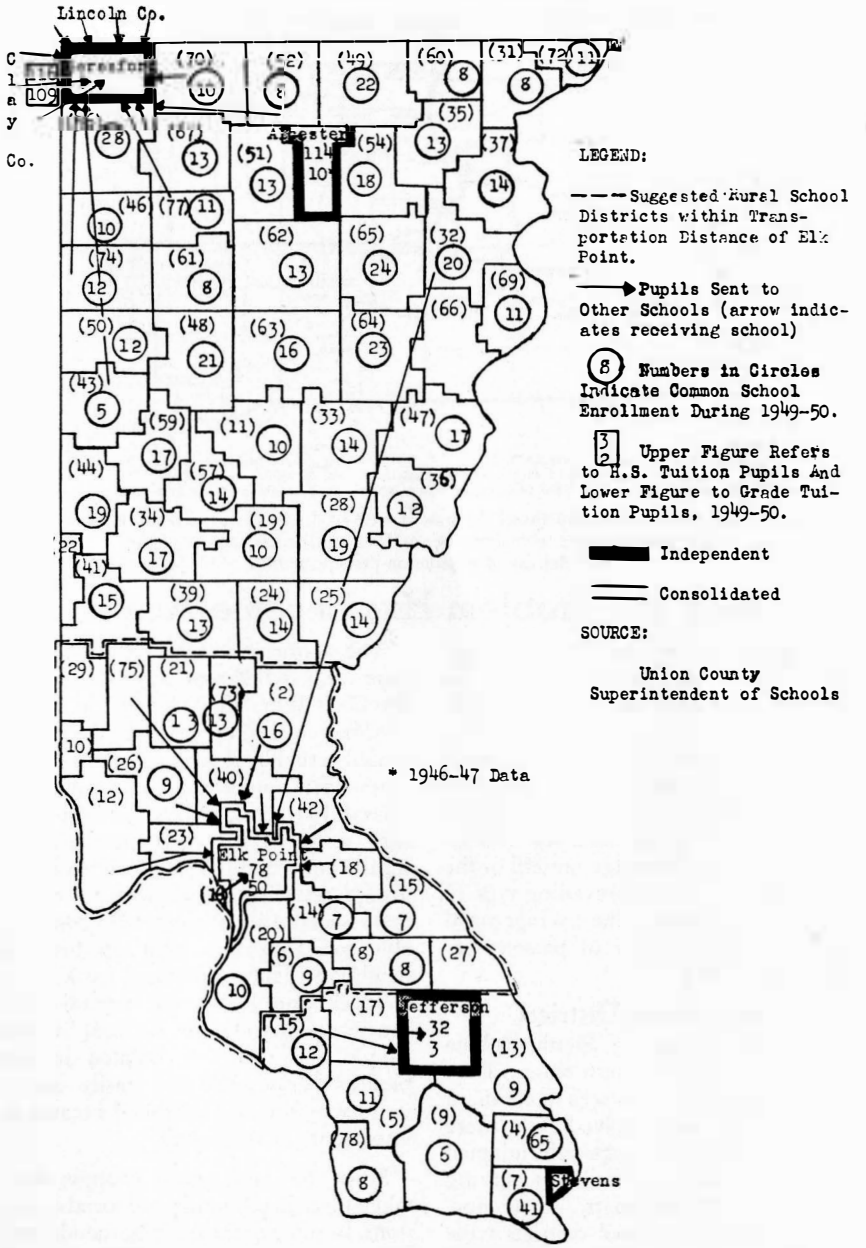


Fig. 3. The consolidated district of Elk Point could have a much wider tax base by including the 21 rural school districts in the dotted trade area.

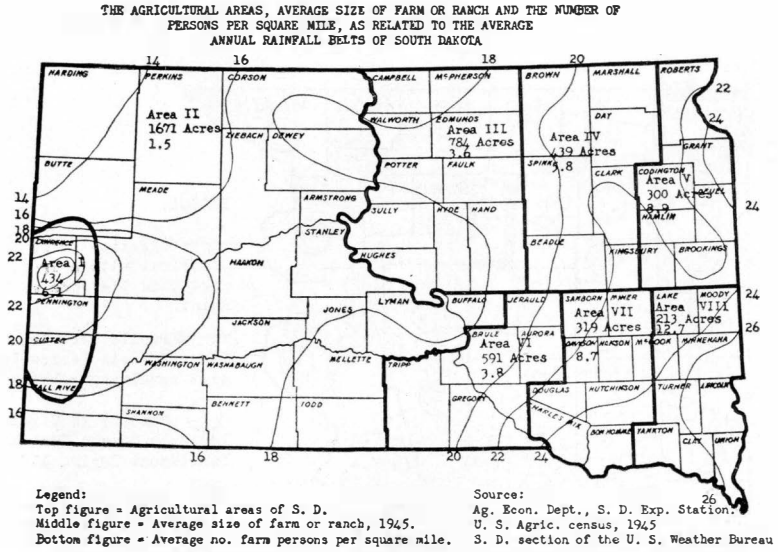


Fig. 4. The western three-fourths of the state is west of the 20-inch rainfall belt. Most of these counties have township-size rural school districts because of the low density of population per square mile

Why the Problem Has Become Acute

The problem has evolved out of existing school district conditions. All six types of districts were patterned after those of thickly populated states, but they were not adapted to the less humid and sparsely populated Great Plains region. To fully appreciate this condition it is essential to understand the association of the annual average rainfall of the area, with that of the prevailing type of farming or ranching, the average-sized farm, and the number of persons per square mile (Fig. 4).

Rural School Districts

The early settlers of South Dakota came largely from eastern states. They brought with them a pattern of common schools which had evolved in a more humid region and was especially adapted to small rural neighborhoods serving from 15 to 30 neighbors. These one-room, one-teacher school districts were located within a two-mile limit from the most distant family and soon coincided with the rural neighborhood.

The southeast and eastern parts of the state were settled soon after the close of the Civil War. The Homestead Act of 1862 had opened the way, but the war retarded actual land settlement until 1867. These early homesteads could not legally exceed 160 acres, which brought these early settlers fairly close together. It is significant that these neighborhood groups established their own set of primary social institutions where considerable solidarity was built up between neighbors. They exchanged work, visited back and forth, and attended the nearby country church. As rural life was simple and relatively isolated in this pioneer period, one can easily understand why the neighborhood became so important as a social unit.

Since that time many changes have taken place in economic and social conditions. In some of the neighborhoods both horses and oxen were used for field work and even for transportation. As settlement expanded westward, farmers dis-

covered that the quarter-section homesteads were too small and, occasionally, well-to-do settlers purchased additional deeded land adjoining the homestead. As settlements extended west beyond the 20-inch rainfall belt, (Fig. 5), the neighborhoods became farther apart and the basis was laid for larger rural districts. In fact, during the decades of the "seventies" and "early eighties," several of the successive territorial superintendents of public instruction recommended the establishment of larger common school districts. General Beadle, who had supervised much of the land surveying during settlement under the Homestead Act, recommended strongly that township rural districts be adopted over the entire state as a standard unit to replace the smaller neighborhood districts.

Finally, however, some of the eastern counties objected to the township district and obtained permission from the Legislature to return to the small district system. It is significant that partically all of this group of counties lay within, and east of, the 20-inch rainfall belt. During the first 60 years of statehood, rural school district organization, with some minor changes, has remained pretty much intact. Some "patchwork" changes have taken place here and there but the general pattern remains the same.[2]

Unorganized County Districts

This second type of school district does not differ essentially from the other rural or common school districts of the state. The main difference lies in the relationships between the county superintendent and the board members in an unorganized county school district as compared with the relationships of the county superintendent and the board members in a county that has many rural districts. The situation in the latter case encourages a more formal relationship, especially when there are several hundred board members. However, in an unorganized county, the county superin-

[2]First Annual Report of the Superintendent of Public Instruction, 1890, pp. 66-70.

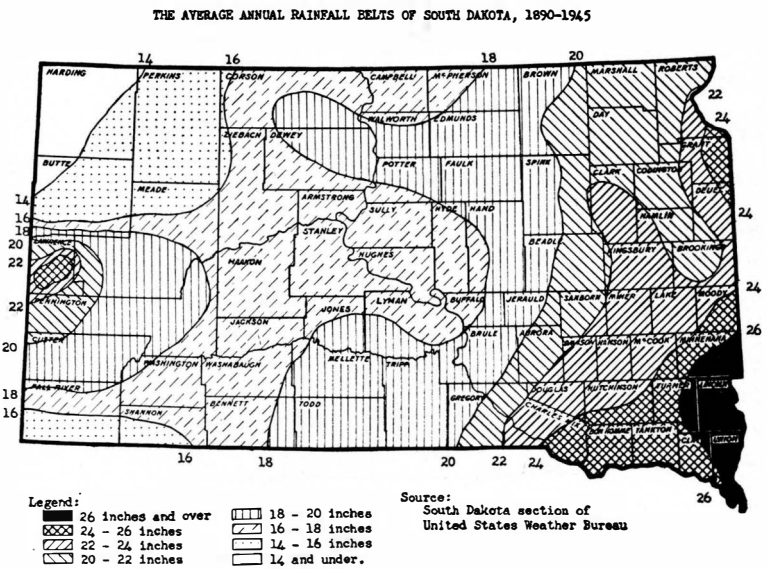


Fig. 5. Compare the ten rainfall belts of the state with the eight agricultural areas shown in Fig. 4

tendent has only three board members, plus a clerk, and a treasurer with whom to work. With only three board members and a large area of jurisdiction, more authority is often delegated because of precedent, confidence, and primary relationships as an expedience in running the schools. This relationship lends itself well to professionalism in school administration, such as exists between a board of education and a city superintendent. This plan of organization has many advantages for certain West River and central South Dakota counties where the farms or ranches are large and the number of people per square mile is few (Fig. 6).

Three such unorganized county districts now operate in South Dakota in the unorganized counties containing Indian reservations. Reference is made particularly to Shannon, Todd, and Washabaugh counties. It is significant that while this type of unorganized county district was established only in the unorganized counties, the general plan has worked so well that many organized counties have also considered the possibility of using such a county plan because of the simplicity of operation.

Independent School Districts

A third type of school district system gradually grew up for people living in villages and small towns. Many of these smaller villages were outgrowths of rural neighborhoods where open country trade units had conveniently located. Some village settlers had started out on homesteads, but for one reason or another had relinquished their holdings, and moved into the villages to become storekeepers, railroad employees, operators of grain elevators, publishers of newspapers, or had adapted themselves to various opportunities for making a living.

These small villages or towns gradually introduced their own type of school, also inherited from the East. Many of these early town districts had at first

Total Rural School Enrollment By Counties, 1949-50

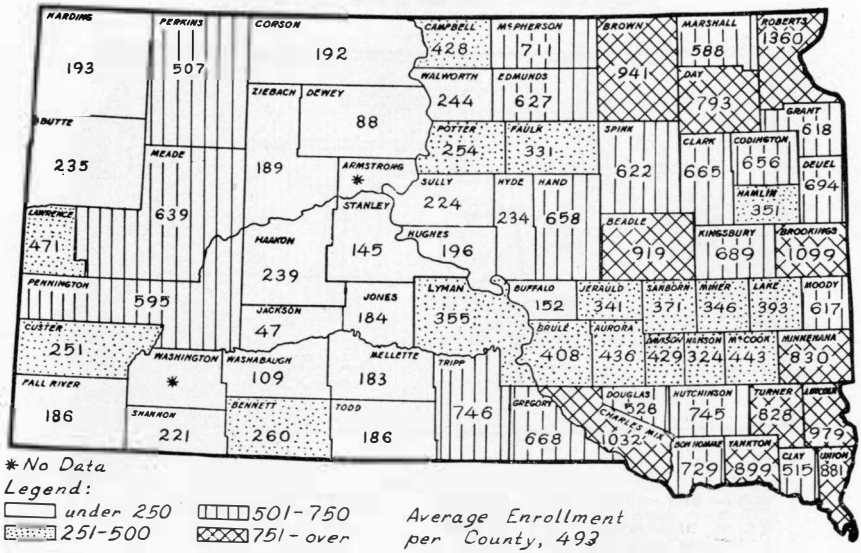


Fig. 6. Most of the West River counties have an average total enrollment of less than 250 rural school pupils. Only three eastern counties have more than 1000

Total Number of High School Tuition Pupils by Counties, 1949-50

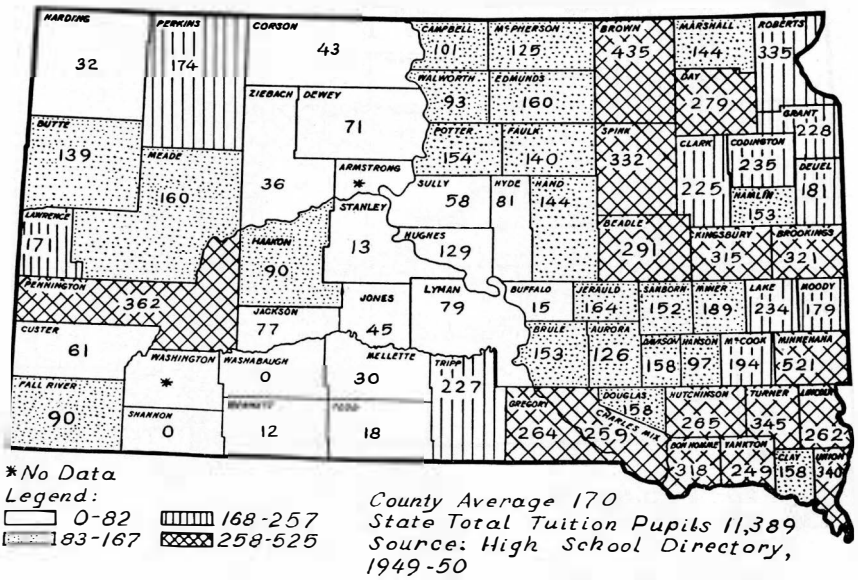


Fig. 7. Out of more than 31,000 high school students, over 11,000 are rural tuition students totaled by counties

established one-room, one-teacher schools, but gradually grew into graded schools and eventually introduced high school departments. At first the Legislature was reluctant to grant these districts a charter. For many years the smaller villages and towns remained unincorporated. Later however, (1919), all newly incorporated towns, except those with consolidated schools, were required to reorganize into independent school districts.

These small trade and service areas grew rapidly and developed distinctive characteristics of their own. High schools were introduced about 1900. Gradually some rural boys and girls attended high school as non-resident pupils. High school attendance by non-resident pupils was not possible in all parts of the state, as distances to schools were great and transportation facilities were poor. Many of the rural schools introduced at least one year, if not more, of high school work in addition to the elementary grades in these sparsely settled areas. By 1908 some of these beginning high school classes attached to rural schools, began to close. It was found impractical for one teacher to spread her efforts over more than eight elementary grades.

Township High School Districts

A fourth type of school district was introduced for high school purposes only, in 1907. The records show that this type of school district has never been popular in South Dakota. In this district system, only one township was included in the area, and this did not furnish an adequate tax base. There have never been more than six of these districts established in the state, two of which are closed. Obviously our South Dakota townships have too sparse a population for a stable resident enrollment of more than 30 or 40 high school pupils.

Total Number of Grade School Tuition Pupils by Counties, 1949-50

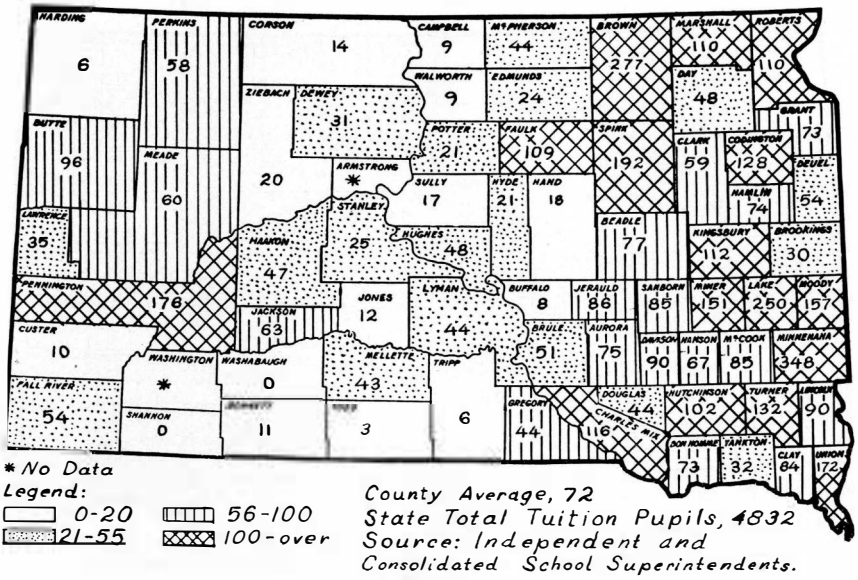


Fig. 8. The number of rural grade school tuition students in the state now totals approximately 5,000 or 45 percent of the high school students

Independent-Consolidated School Districts

Compensating somewhat for the lack of popularity of the township high school in bringing town and country together, a fifth type of school district was introduced as early as 1913. This was known as the independent-consolidated school district. In most cases the tax base was not large and transportation costs were high. Where the school was located in the open country or a very small village, the tax on agricultural land in certain cases proved to be nearly confiscatory.

Soon after World War I the land boom greatly aggravated the situation in the southeastern part of the state. The situation was alleviated by a law, which provides that the tax on agricultural land shall not be more than 8 mills if the assessed valuation of such land is more than $17 per acre; provided, further, the school is located in an incorporated town.[3]

There was no limitation placed on the location of these schools, provided the districts, or parts of districts consolidating met the other requirements of the law.

The peak number of 108 independent-consolidated school districts in the state was reached in 1923. The number of schools dropped down to 80 in 1933-34. The greatest number of failures among consolidated schools were those that were located in the open country. In such cases farm families had to bear all the expenses including transportation. In many of these districts the consolidated district area did not exceed a township in size. With this limitation on the tax base these schools could not compete with larger districts and consequently many were forced to close because of lack of adequate income. In 1943-44 not a single

[3]The maximum levy on agricultural land was raised for the 1931 biennium to 12.80 mills as an emergency measure.

Where Bennet County Rural Districts Sent Their High School and Grade School Tuition Pupils in 1949-50

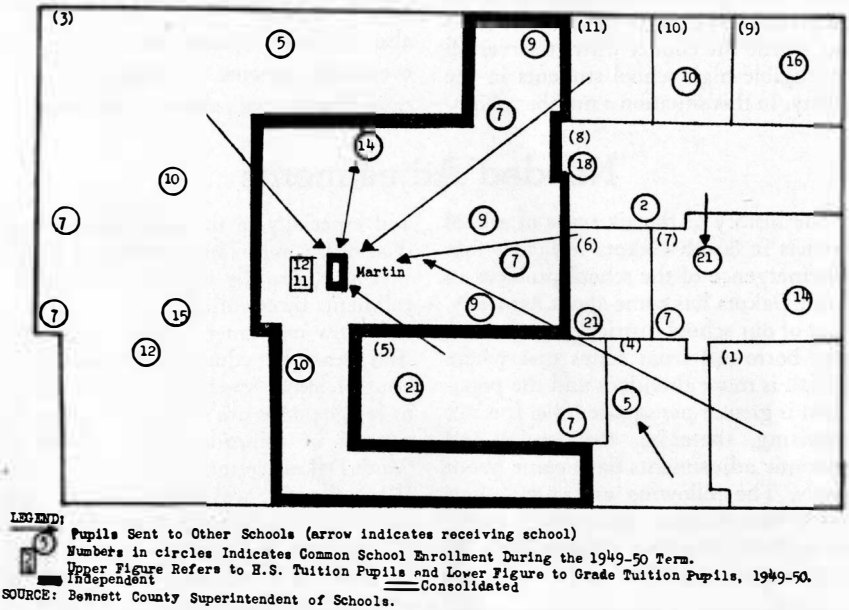


Fig. 9. The town of Martin, with its trade territory, is an independent school district superimposed on the Bennet County high school district. This is the only county high school in the entire state

consolidated school located in the open country had a high school enrollment of 50 pupils.

County High School Districts

A sixth type of district known as a county, or centralized, high school district was organized in Bennett county in 1921. It is the only one of its kind in South Dakota although a few other counties have considered the possibility of reorganizing under such a plan.

This type of district fits particularly well into several counties of the state which have only one main community or town center, centrally located. In these county high school districts, provision is made for emphasizing both agriculture and home economics, as well as any other subject that may be desirable if needed in a particular county. It may be noted that the cost of maintaining such a county or centralized high school, may not exceed what is now being paid under the present plan in each county for high school students of rural districts to attend high schools as tuition students. Incidentally, if the whole county is included in this particular type of county high school district, the tax base is broader, which frequently reduces the cost per high school pupil.

Another advantage of the counties mentioned above, in which there is but one principal community center, is that there would be little, if any, rivalry between the high school center and neighboring small towns. In most cases the smaller towns do not maintain high schools, but restrict themselves to grade pupils only. Under such a plan, transportation is not provided for rural school pupils attending a nearby school, but is furnished only to those attending the county high school. Martin, in Bennett

county (Fig. 9), is located in two districts. The independent districts serve the grade school pupils in the trade territory, while the county district serves all the eligible high school students in the county. In this situation a number of outside rural school districts are sending tuition grade school pupils to Martin also. As roads improve, Martin itself may eventually become a community trade center for a large part of Bennett county.

Needed Adjustments

The history of the six types of school districts in South Dakota indicates that the emergence of the school problem in South Dakota has come about naturally. Most of our school district patterns have been borrowed from states east where rainfall is more abundant and the population is greater per square mile. It is not surprising, therefore, that social and economic adjustments have come about slowly. The following are observations which have become increasingly apparent to those who have lived in the state for a number of years:

1. Differences in physical environment compel considerable local adaptation in school district reorganization. Climatic records during the past 60 years have shown conclusively that there are vital differences in the amount of average annual rainfall in different sections of the state. Types of agriculture, the average size of farm or ranch, and the number of persons per square mile in agricultural areas, are closely correlated with the average rainfall in the area (Fig. 4). Another correlation is the number of high school attendance centers (Fig. 1). Where the average annual rainfall is 20 inches or more, the towns with their schools are closer together and enrollments are greater. The influence of physical environment is further shown by the number of closed schools, and the number of school districts and small enrollments (Figs. 10 and 11).

2. There are disadvantages in small districts. The size of school districts is significant with reference to the density of population, community resources, and especially to the amount of school district income. This is reflected clearly in Fig. 6, dealing with total school enrollments by counties.

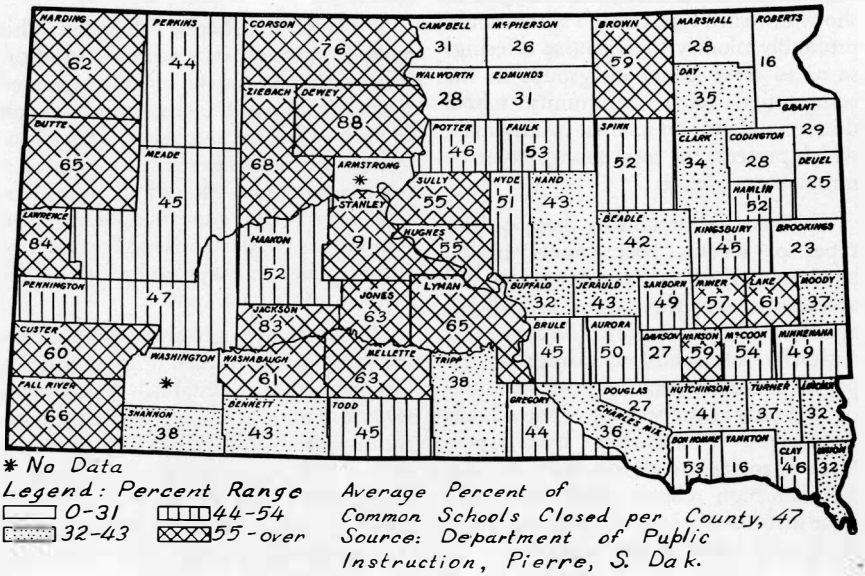
3. Low enrollment schools close first. Ten years of educational research in South Dakota reveal that schools with 6 or fewer pupils are closely related to the percent of common schools closed in South Dakota counties (Figs. 10 and 11). When the state was first settled the early homesteaders did not always fully realize the influence of rainfall on types of farming, size of farm, and the number of persons per square mile (Figs. 4 and 5). Thus it can be seen that counties in western and central South Dakota have suffered a much larger percentage of closed common schools than those in the eastern third of the state lying within the 20-inch rainfall belt.

4. Low income is a serious handicap in school operation. This factor is more obvious under South Dakota conditions because a large proportion of school income is derived from land and property tax, especially in our rural school districts. State aid has gradually increased, and if raised to the average of the 48 states, our school areas in western and central South Dakota would greatly benefit therefrom. There are other ways, however, that local school income could be increased as will be brought out later.

Types of Possible School District Reorganization in South Dakota

Because of the close relationship between the size of villages, towns, and cities to community school districts,

Percent of Common Schools Closed in South Dakota Counties as of 1949-50, Based Upon the Largest Number of Schools Ever to Operate in Each County



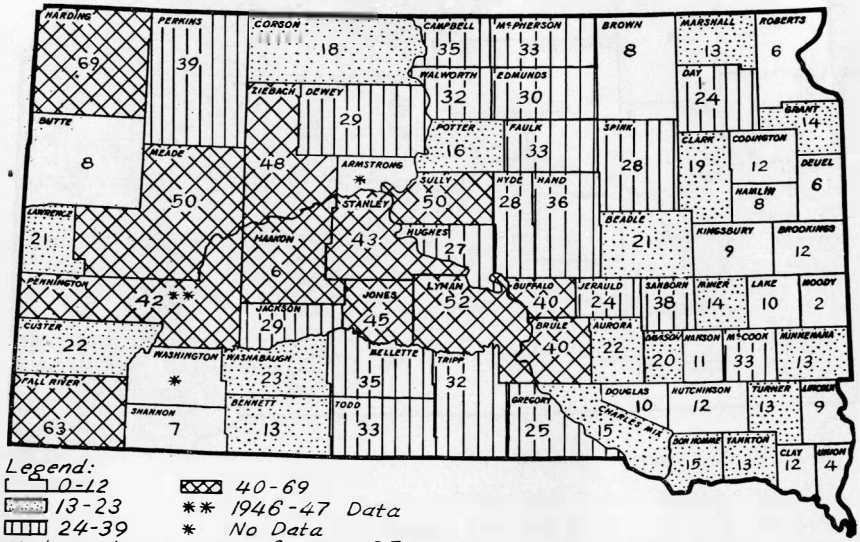
* No Data

Legend: Percent Range
0-31 | 44-54
32-43 | 55-over

Average Percent of Common Schools Closed per County, 47
Source: Department of Public Instruction, Pierre, S. Dak.

Fig. 10. Counties west of the Missouri river have the largest percent of closed rural schools, as shown by the legend

Percent of Rural Schools By Counties Which Have Enrollments of Six or Fewer Pupils, 1949-50



Legend:
0-12 | 40-69
13-23 | ** 1946-47 Data
24-39 | * No Data

Median Average per County - 25
Source: Department of Public Instruction

Fig. 11. A similar trend toward closed rural schools is noticable in the percent of rural schools with six or fewer pupils by counties

(Fig. 12), the various types of school districts in the state have been mapped to show how each type of high school could profitably modify their course offerings so as to serve better all groups in the community. Each community school district is placed on its own county map, which presents the total county situation somewhat in detail.

The basis for presenting these various types of schools (See county maps) has been arrived at from approvals and accreditments by three sets of accrediting agencies—federal, region, and state. The authority for published ratings on approval or accreditment is given voluntarily and only at the request of the schools themselves. Committees from these three agencies are chosen from various member high schools which have had their institution approved and accredited along with other similar schools.

Specifically, the accrediting agencies are:

1. The U. S. Office of Education. This agency, through its divisions, sponsors four vocational courses of study operated generally among the larger high schools in each of the various states. These four vocational courses pertain to agriculture, home economics, trades and industries, and distributive education. The rules, regulations, and standards for each of these courses are made up by high school committees in each state.

Obviously, all high schools do not have the same needs for each of these courses, but may request to establish departments for one or all four courses where the community needs are well defined and evident. The high schools establishing such departments may receive federal aid by meeting certain basic requirements relative to that particular course of study,

The Relationship Between the Size of Village, Town and City, to Community School Districts

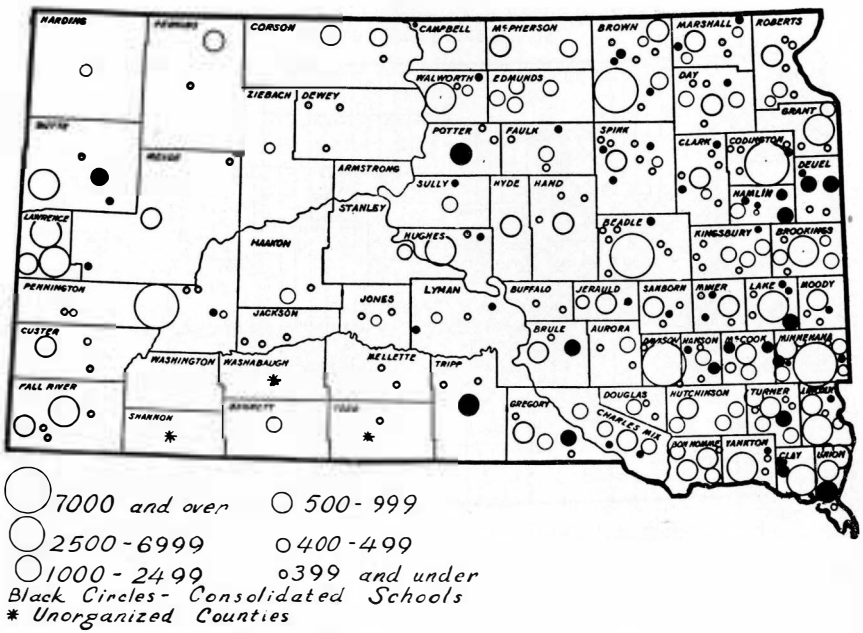


Fig. 12. A close relationship frequently exists between the size of the village, town or city together with the size of enrollment and the effectiveness of the community school districts

based on the preparation and quality of teachers, classroom facilities, and the number of pupils enrolled.

The U. S. Office of Education is national in scope. Its accrediting functions in high schools operate largely through the above four types of vocational curricula.

2. The North Central Association. This agency is regional in scope and is voluntarily maintained by member institutions of collegiate rank and of secondary schools.

The North Central Association is self-supporting through its member schools. Its rules, regulations, and published list of schools accredited are made up by elected officers and officials. Its official committees are selected from its own institutional personnel. Changes in the rules, regulations, and accreditment are printed annually and sent out to the various member schools.

3. The South Dakota Department of Public Instruction. This agency derives authority through the State Constitution and by changes in the school law from time to time. While its functions are primarily supervisory and administrative, it also approves and accredits work done by the various schools of the state. Naturally, the high schools cooperate closely with the regional and national Office of Education.

Criteria for a Successful "Community School" District

A joint committee of the Department of Rural Education, National Education Association, and a similar committee from the American Rural Sociological Society, have suggested the 14 points below, describing what the characteristics should be of a successful consolidated school district. These points have been modified briefly for adaptation to South Dakota conditions.[4]

1. Such a school district should coincide quite closely with the composite trade and service area of a village, town or city in which a four-year high school is located. (The minimum-sized community town center should have at least 400 population and good prospects for growth.)

2. The reorganized school district should have a reasonably complete elementary and high school curriculum, including special provisions for adults.

3. It should have a program of well-balanced, extra-curricular activities.

4. There should be at least 25-30 pupils per grade, and preferably a minimum enrollment of 100 pupils in high school.

5. The school should be the center of many community activities.

6. The teachers should be well-trained and experienced.

7. School attendance should be consistently high at all age levels.

8. Transportation of pupils from outside the town should be both adequate and economical.

9. An independent-consolidated school district may have more than one elementary attendance center, but should have at least one high school. (It may be desirable, especially in the more sparsely settled areas of the state, to retain certain elementary rural schools until roads are much improved.)

10. The school plant should be adequate and reasonably modern. It may also be desirable to accumulate a reserve building fund for future construction.

11. The school plant should not be too dependent upon funds from outside the county where the school is located.

12. There should be good town-country cooperation. Both town and country groups should be represented on the school board.

13. A well-balance pupil-teacher ratio is desirable.

14. There should be an adequate tax base for school operation.

[4]Adaptations for South Dakota conditions are indicated within parentheses.

A Proposed Solution

1. South Dakota obviously needs fewer but larger school systems.

2. Primarily, the crux of the problem lies in excessive costs for small and marginal school districts. Such a situation demands more state aid as well as more responsibility for a greater use of resources in local school districts. A continuation of the present dual system of town and country school districts can hardly be justified on the grounds of efficiency. The most practical solution seems to be to combine common school districts with community town centers.

3. The process of combining districts which have high schools in town centers with the adjoining rural districts into one community district is certain to be a long term program. It must be approached through communities of the state on a local level, which in turn would logically lead to county and state action.

4. While there are six different types of school districts at present, the problem is essentially one of cooperation between town and country areas. The trend in population growth shows that an increasing proportion of South Dakota citizens live in villages, towns, and city areas. The latest available census figures show that 53 percent of the population lived in non-farm villages, towns, and cities, while only 47 percent lived on farms. If town and country areas are to be brought into closer cooperative relationship, one of the first phases of the problem must be reached through better transportation facilities for rural children. For this reason the logical next step would be to suggest how this long term program can be brought about.

5. Previous attempts to combine town and country districts have been, thus far, only partially successful.

(a) As previously suggested, township high school districts, consolidated districts, and county high school districts have never been fully accepted in all parts of the state. Consolidated schools have survived better in the 20-inch rainfall belt than in central or western South Dakota (Fig. 12). Here again the principle of more adequate and well-distributed rainfall, more persons per square mile, and greater resources play their part. Another limiting factor has been that people have adjusted themselves to the imported patterns of small districts. It has been difficult for them to perceive the advantages of larger districts in the sparsely populated areas of the state.

(b) A question which might logically arise is the slowness with which change has taken place in modifying school laws. It is an established fact that it takes from 20 to 30 years for the adoption of a new social invention to be accepted after being first introduced. Most South Dakotans still resist the idea that they are residents of a less humid area in one of the Great Plains states. We must bring about a definite change in our thinking concerning public school education if we are to keep pace with older states not subject to alternate drought and prosperity cycles.

Town Centers Around Which Community School Districts Could Be Organized

1. Largest urban centers in South Dakota: There are six such cities which range upwards from 10,000 in population. These urban centers have a sufficient tax base for adequate school support and, therefore, do not always encourage the surrounding rural districts to become a part of their district. The six cities follow: Aberdeen, Huron, Mitchell, Rapid City, Sioux Falls, and Watertown.[5]

[5]The population of all civil and political units has been taken from the preliminary and unofficial returns of the 1950 South Dakota Census.

These larger urban centers all have independent districts at present. Judging from the past experience of rural people in South Dakota and from other nearby states, these larger city centers have been considered too large to combine with adjoining rural districts into independent-consolidated school districts. Even though the urban and rural districts do not consolidate, a good community school relationship could be brought about through course offerings such as vocational agriculture, home economics, trades and industries, and distributive education based on the vocational needs of the respective student bodies. The locations of these urban centers in the state are shown in Fig. 12, and their various accreditments are described in Table 3. These cities are already offering valuable service, especially in vocational training, to their surrounding trade and service areas.

The city of Huron in Beadle county is offered as a typical example of this larger urban group in South Dakota (Fig. 2). This type of community center fits in well with the newer concept of community school districts.[6] In the type of vocational courses offered for both town and country people, it might be well if the teachers would organize special committees to help guide the policies of each course and to help sponsor special extra-curricular activities in connection with the high school pupils enrolled. At present, each of these six largest urban centers in the state has a surprisingly large enrollment of rural high school and elementary tuition pupils from the trade and service areas surrounding each city Table 3).

2. Smaller urban community centers (2500-9999): South Dakota has several such cities: Belle Fourche, Canton, Deadwood, Hot Springs, Lead, Madison, Milbank, Mobridge, Pierre, Vermillion, and Yankton. These community centers are independent districts. None of these independent school districts, however, has reorganized as independent-consolidated schools.

There are a few of this size in other Middle Western states. Only one town of nearly 2500 has an independent-consolidated school district—located at Winner, South Dakota. As a rule, South Dakota farm people have not been as much interested in combining with these larger places as they have with the smaller towns. Incidentally, this also has been true of other primary social institutions such as the church, library, and recreation groups.

To illustrate this particular group of cities from 2500 to 9999 population, see Fig. 13 and Table 3 of Butte county with special reference to Belle Fourche. This city is the county seat of Butte county and probably more urbanized than most cities of similar size in the state. Belle Fourche is very well-located for getting rural districts interested in joining with it as an independent-consolidated school district. This is probably due to the fact that a large number of tourists visit it each year in connection with the Black Hills and the irrigation project.

Belle Fourche is also approved by the North Central Association and now offers vocational home economics as well as a course in industrial arts. By expanding their tax base they could well afford to offer other vocational courses such as agriculture and commercial courses which would be of interest to both farm and town people. The city of Belle Fourche is located in the west end of the Belle Fourche irrigation project and has a wide trade and service territory from all sides of the city. The somewhat smaller town of Newell (Table 4) is on the eastern end of the county and has a good patronage of agricultural and home economics students from its surrounding trade and service territory.

[6]Hamlin, Herbert, Agricultural Education in Community Schools, Ch. 1, "The Community School Concept."

Where Butte County Rural Districts Sent Their High School and Grade School Tuition Pupils in 1949-50

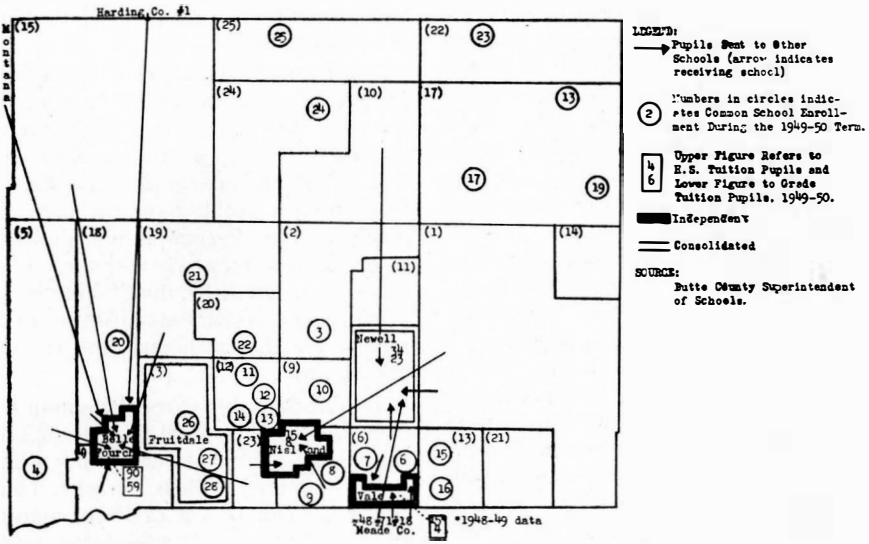


Fig. 13. Belle Fourche was selected as typical of medium-size town of between 1,000-2,499 population. The preliminary 1950 census, however, indicated that the population was 3,517

3. Medium-sized towns (1000-2499): This group of medium-sized towns includes 28 independent school districts as well as the three largest consolidated school districts in the state. Under South Dakota conditions this size of town is usually considered the most ideal for serving both town and country people. According to the official high school directory for 1949-50, most of these towns have approximately one-half of their high school enrollment from the town where the school is located and the other half from their respective trade and service territory.

To illustrate this group we have selected Highmore in Hyde county (Table 3, Fig. 14). Particular note should be taken of the location of Highmore. This county is one of 14 or 15 counties where there is only one main community center. Eighty-one rural high school tuition students and 21 grade school tuition pupils attend from the surrounding territory. The district itself is independent, but because it is the county seat and the only community center of any size, it is an ideal location for an independent-consolidated school.

In this same group of medium-sized towns, a map of Union County is shown to illustrate the second largest town located in an independent-consolidated school district in the state (Fig. 3). Elk Point is also a county seat town and is ideally located to expand its tax base by adding several common school districts. At least nine of these districts are already sending tuition pupils to Elk Point. The dotted lines have been inserted to suggest certain districts which might wish to be included in the Elk Point independent-consolidated district.

4. Minimum-sized towns, (400-999): This group of 70 minimum-sized towns includes the lower minimum suggested for a community school district. A town which is less than 400 in population does not usually have a sufficient tax base on its agricultural land to pay large trans-

Where Hyde County Districts Sent Their High School and Grade School Tuition Pupils in 1949-50

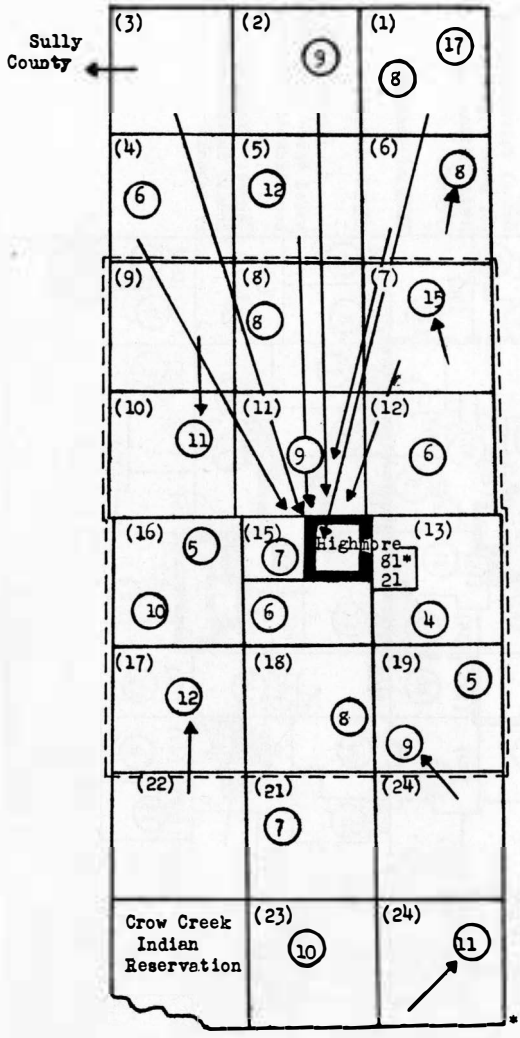


Fig. 14. Hyde county sends most of the rural high school and grade school tuition students to Highmore, the county seat. The dotted lines surrounding Highmore indicate the rural school districts within transportation distance that could be included as a part of Highmore district tax base.

LEGEND:

→ Pupils Sent to Other Schools (arrow indicates receiving school)

(5) Numbers in circles Indicates Common School Enrollment During the 1949-50 Term.

5/7 Upper Figure Refers to H. S. Tuition Pupils and Lower Figure to Grade Tuition Pupils, 1949-50.

▬ Independent ═══ Consolidated

- - - Suggested Rural School Districts within Transportation Distance from Highmore.

SOURCE: Hyde County Superintendent of Schools.

Where Brookings County Rural Districts Sent Their High School and Grade School Tuition Pupils in 1949-50

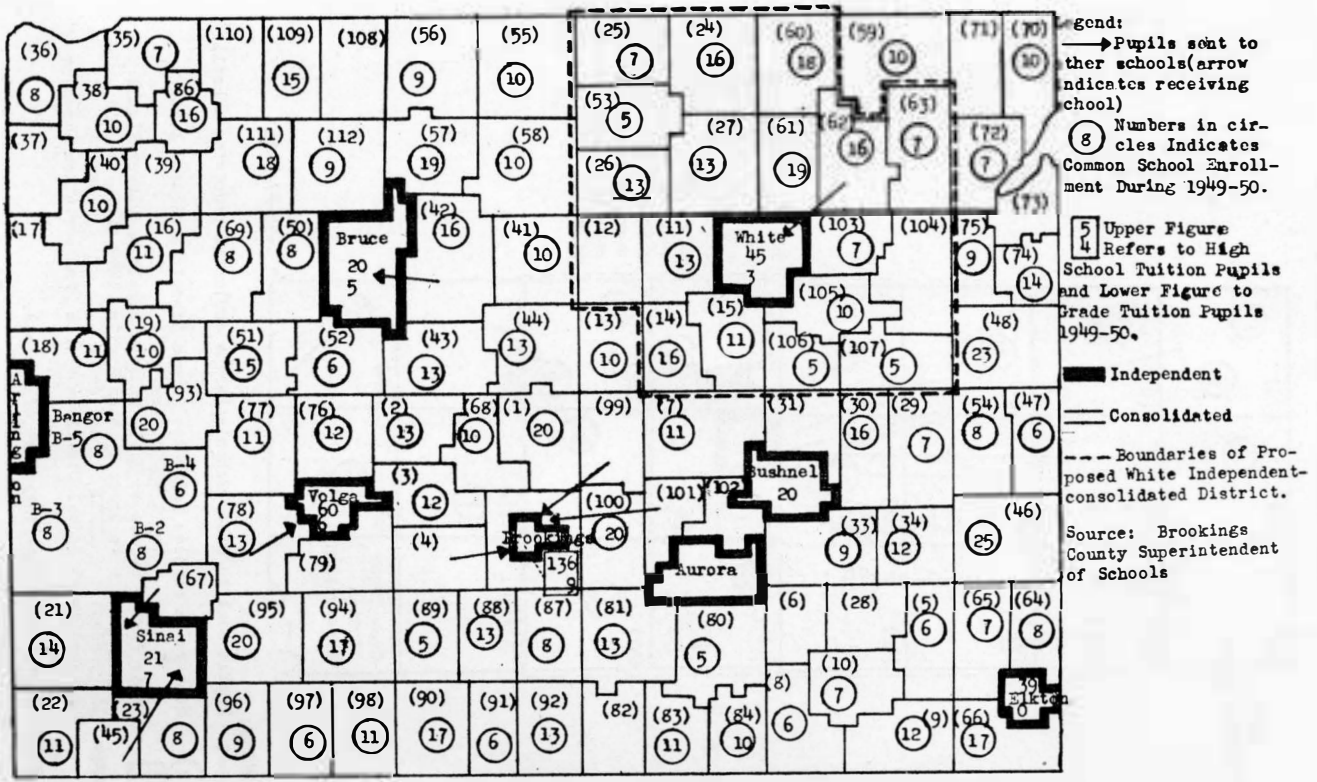


Fig. 15. The town of White, with slightly less than 500 population, attempted to interest its surrounding official school districts in consolidating with it. A preliminary unofficial test vote was taken, but the idea was dropped temporarily due to lack of interest among the rural people

portation costs. Transportation charges constitute a sizeable proportion of an independent-consolidated school budget. Thus the town centers of 400 population or above can save on costs appreciably by not having too many students to transport in proportion to the total school enrollment. This has been checked with South Dakota consolidated school budgets and seems to be a well-established fact. In the larger, more thickly populated states, 1000 population for the community center is considered a workable minimum. Under our physical and spatial conditions, however, the minimum has been reduced to 400 because of the pioneering stage of our development. Out of this group of 70 minimum-sized towns, 55 are independent school districts and 15 are independent-consolidated districts.

Brookings county (Fig. 15) has been selected to illustrate how the typical small town of White with its "minimum-sized" population of 471 has been considering reorganizing from an independent district into one that is independent-consolidated. A carefully prepared preliminary survey has been made to demonstrate to 17 surrounding rural districts that it would be to their advantage to make such a change. The present White district cannot expand much further with its present resources. It is well located, however, to serve a large number of rural districts and thus extend the tax base so as to offer better school service to both town and country.

Castlewood, (Fig. 16), a recently reorganized independent-consolidated school district in Hamlin county, has been chosen to illustrate further how this size town center (400-1000) has succeeded in expanding its resources so as to serve the entire community area better.[7] The reorganization of the Castlewood independent district took place in 1948 without the aid of any special campaign on a statewide basis. An excellent survey was made of the rural districts to be invited to join. A number of preliminary meetings were held with the officers of individual districts before the final meeting of all districts was held. The boards of education were brought together to explain and discuss every detail and to point out what facilities the school had for taking care of the extra rural pupils, not only in high school but in the elementary grades as well. The situation was then talked over with the various school boards as to what additional services, if any, should be added and what it would cost each district.

Another significant step was to assure the rural schools that a demand for a new building would not be made at once, but deferred until the cash could be accumulated. There was no attempt to high pressure any of the rural schools, and they were given plenty of time to look into the situation thoroughly. Personal interviews with the rural pupils disclosed that a good feeling exists between the rural and town groups. Both felt that the change, providing an enlarged tax base, improved the service to town and country people. Probably the most significant thing about the preliminary reorganization move was the frankness and sincerity used in presenting both the advantages and disadvantages to the various rural groups involved. The final point which helped them to decide to join the reorganized group was the frank discussion by the rural boards as to what the alternative would be if the Castlewood high school service had to be dropped from the community.

Five out of seven school districts in Hamlin county, are independent-consolidated. At least two of these districts are now definitely considering how to expand their tax base by bringing in additional rural school districts. The action of these reorganizations has no doubt in-

[7]Exhibit 1, appendix. A news story, datelined from Castlewood, South Dakota, as of August 2, 1949, describes how the reorganization took place, and how some of the problems have been solved.

Where Hamlin County Rural Districts Sent Their High and Grade School Tuition Pupils in 1949-50

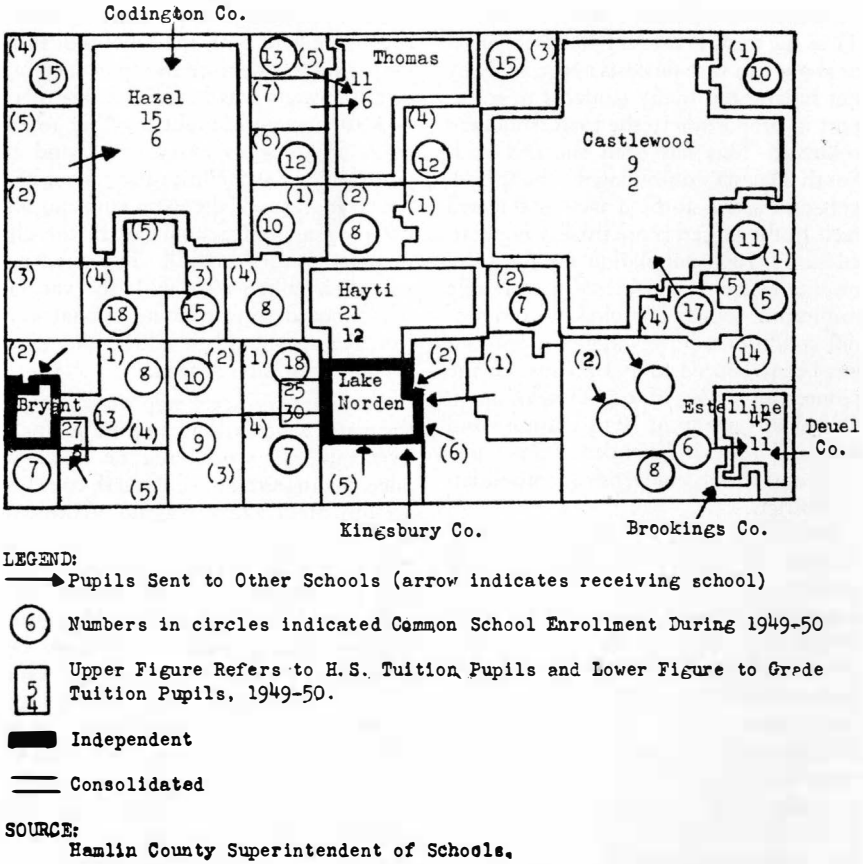


Fig. 16. An unusually successful venture in consolidation was made by the Castlewood Independent district in 1948-1949

fluenced certain neighboring independent schools in other counties to change over to become independent-consolidated school districts or community units.

5. Small-sized hamlets or villages (399 or less): This group of 156 small places is a miscellaneous collection of all six types of school districts in the state. Ninety-eight districts are independent, 59 are independent-consolidated, while three are unorganized districts. This group may be considered most marginal as far as reorganization is concerned (Fig. 12). Four small towns located in independent districts are cited here for illustrative purposes. Yale, Cavour, and Virgil are typical of this class. Broadland was also in this group until a few years ago, but is now closed. Many of these towns are fairly old, but for one reason or another have never grown beyond a certain point. In fact, many of them are smaller in population than they were several years ago.

The present trend might indicate that the closing of many of the schools in

these small hamlets or villages is probably just a matter of time. A large proportion of the high schools in these districts now have less than 50 pupils and some have less than 10. A total of 30 high schools have closed since 1908, leaving a remainder of 275. Thus in 42 years, an average of five schools per year, offering from one to four years of high school work, have closed and not reopened.

It is quite likely that this trend will continue for a number of years to come. Some schools were poorly located because they were surrounded by other nearby schools with whom they could not compete. Many of these same little towns have never been natural community areas and may never grow into more than a neighborhood hamlet. A number of these same little towns have never had more than 50 pupils even during their peak years. There will be some towns of less than 400 that will doubtless grow in population over a period of years. It is quite likely, however, that in time, 150 four-year high schools will be able to serve the entire state, giving better quality service through the reorganization of school districts.

Summary and Conclusions

1. The "community school concept" is relatively new in educational terminology and can be made to have much more vital content for both town and country people than it has had during the first half of this century.

2. Borrowed patterns of township and county high school districts, as well as consolidated school districts, have not been fully adapted as yet to South Dakota environmental conditions.

3. The significance of reorganized school districts based on "natural community patterns" has not been fully recognized, to date, by either town or country groups.

4. It is a well-established fact that it takes from 20 to 30 years to complete the adoption of a new social invention after it has once been introduced. The adaptation of any of the three types of districts attempting to combine town and country areas has been retarded in a less humid section like the Great Plains. The early settlers imitated and accepted these three types of school districts because they worked well in the more humid regions. The problem is that of selling the idea of enlarging the tax base by including more area to serve the "natural" community more efficiently.

5. The reorganization of school districts on a community basis is a much larger task than merely passing a law. South Dakota communities differ widely in their varying stages of growth and development. Our present number of 275 high schools will doubtless continue to decrease in numbers just as they have in the past 30-40 years. The rural schools have closed slightly over 47 percent of the original peak numbers by counties. Since 1918 an average of 68 common schools have closed per year. Over 60 per cent of small schools offering from one to four years of high school work have closed since 1908.[8]

6. Because of the persistence of local pride, the process of adjustment through reorganization of school districts will probably proceed slowly.

7. A sizeable number of school districts in towns of 400 or more population are more or less amenable to reorganization by local action under our existing school laws. The adoption of such a plan, however, will not be soon. An urgent need exists for minor simplifications in school legislation to facilitate local community action by permissive voluntary effort. A few well-distributed, successful community reorganizations of school districts would do wonders in getting such a movement under way.

[8]Authority for this data has been taken from the high school directories since 1908.

Appendix

Table 1. Number and Percent of Common Schools Closed in South Dakota Counties as of 1949-50, Based Upon the Peak Number of Schools Ever Operated in Each County

	Peak number	Present number	Closed schools	Percent closed
The State	5902	3112	2790	47
Aurora	84	42	42	50
Beadle	136	79	57	42
Bennett	40	23	17	43
Bon Homme	131	65	66	53
Brookings	113	90	23	23
Brown	195	79	116	59
Brule	90	50	40	45
Buffalo	25	17	8	32
Butte	63	21	42	65
Campbell	74	51	8	31
Charles Mix	150	96	54	36
Clark	103	68	35	34
Clay	65	35	30	46
Codington	69	50	19	28
Corson	87	21	66	76
Custer	60	24	36	60
Davison	52	38	14	27
Day	118	77	41	35
Deuel	73	55	18	25
Dewey	43	5	38	88
Douglas	66	48	18	27
Edmunds	98	68	30	31
Fall River	70	24	46	66
Faulk	75	35	40	53
Grant	88	62	26	29
Gregory	115	64	51	44
Haakon	77	37	41	52
Hamlin	67	28	39	52
Hand	125	71	54	43
Hanson	61	25	36	59
Harding	87	33	54	62
Hughes	44	20	24	55
Hutchinson	112	66	46	41
Hyde	51	25	26	51
Jackson	36	6	30	83
Jerauld	61	35	26	43
Jones	60	22	38	63
Kingsbury	116	64	52	45
Lake	87	34	53	61
Lawrence	107	18	89	84
Lincoln	101	69	32	32
Lyman	132	49	83	65
McCook	102	47	55	54
McPherson	105	78	27	26
Marshall	78	55	23	28
Meade	154	84	70	45
Mellette	51	19	32	63
Miner	72	31	41	57
Minnehaha	127	65	62	49
Moody	68	43	25	37
Pennington	113	60	53	47
Perkins	121	68	53	44
Potter	52	28	24	46
Roberts	134	112	22	16
Sanborn	70	36	34	49
Shannon	26	16	10	38
Spink	144	69	75	52
Stanley	181	17	164	91
Sully	64	29	35	55
Todd	56	31	25	45
Tripp	135	84	51	38
Turner	109	69	40	37
Union	81	55	26	32
Walworth	76	55	21	28
Washabaugh	28	11	17	61
Yankton	76	64	12	16
Ziebach	72	23	49	68

Table 2. "Community School Attendance Areas"* in South Dakota, 1949-50

County	H. S. tuition pupils	Grade tuition pupils
Aurora		
Plankinton	51	49
Stickney	39	9
White Lake	36	17
	126	75
Beadle		
Bonilla	28†	0
Cavour	20	8
Hitchcock	15	4
Huron	116	35
Virgil	17	8
Wessington	46	2
Wolsey	26	18
Yale	23	2
	291	77
Bennett		
Martin	12	11
Bon Homme		
Avon	49	3†
Scotland	133	31
Springfield	46	4
Tabor	20	1
Tyndall	70	34
	318	73
Brookings		
Brookings	136	9
Bruce	20	5
Elkton	39	0
Sinai	21	7
Volga	60	6
White	45	3
	321	30
Brown		
Aberdeen	150	47
Barnard	24	52
Bath	6	7
Claremont	27	42
Columbia	24	1
Frederick	31	18
Groton	77	46
Hecla	49	10
Stratford	10	20
Warner	22	21
Westport	15	13
	435	277
Brule		
Chamberlain	83	12
Kimball	50	20
Pukwana	20	19
	153	51
Buffalo		
Gann Valley	15	8
Butte		
Belle Fourche	90	59
Newell	34	25
Nisland	15	8
Vale	0	4
	139	96
Campbell		
Herreid	70	6
Pollock	31	3
	101	9
Charles Mix		
Geddes	35	42
Lake Andes	30	40
Platte	93	2
Ravinia	27	21
Wagner	74	11
Pickstown	0	0
	259	116
Clark		
Bradley	17	2
Clark	82	13
Garden City	11	5
Logan	7	0
Raymond	13	8
Thorp (Garden City)	4	0
Vienna	13	23
Willow Lake	78	8
	225	59
Clay		
Burbank	0	0
Meckling	21	31
Vermillion	110	21
Wakonda	27	32
	158	84
Codington		
Florence	28	4
Henry	31	70
South Shore	29	4†
Wallace	13	19
Watertown	130	30
Waverly	4	1
	235	128
Corson		
McIntosh	27	3
McLaughlin	16	11
	43	14
Custer		
Buffalo Gap	10	9
Custer	51	1
	61	10
Davison		
Ethan	34	14
Mitchell	74	64
Mount Vernon	50	12
	158	90
Day		
Andover	28	9
Bristol	50	7
Lily	12	0
Pierpont	18	11
Roslyn	19	7
Waubay	46	10†
Webster	106	4
	279	48

Table 2. (Continued)

County	H. S. tuition pupils	Grade tuition pupils
Deuel		
Astoria	36	1
Clear Lake	81	27
Gary	18	12
Goodwin	32	1
Toronto	14	13
	181	54
Dewey		
Eagle Butte	28	15
Isabel	22	12
Timber Lake	21	4
	71	31
Douglas		
Armour	56	19
Corsica	60	10
Delmont	42	15
	158	44
Edmunds		
Bowdle	40	6
Hosmer	23	1
Ipswich	80	3
Roscoe	17	14
	160	24
Fall River		
Ardmore	2	3
Edgemont	12	3
Hot Springs	67	32
Oelrichs	4	11
Provo	5†	5
	90	54
Faulk		
Cresbard	40	42
Faulkton	70	33
Onaka	12	16
Orient	18	18
	140	109
Grant		
Big Stone	20	25
Milbank	129	15
Revillo	44	18
Strandburg	35	15
	228	73
Gregory		
Bonesteel	39	39
Burke	101	22
Dallas	18	2
Fairfax	24	21
Gregory	82	2
	264	86
Haakon		
Midland	27	25
Philip	63	22
	90	47
Hamlin		
Bryant	27	8
Castlewood	9	2
Estelline	45	10
Hayti	21	12
Hazel	15	6
Lake Norden	25	30
Thomas	11	6
	153	74
Hand		
Miller	105	4
Ree Heights	19	11
St. Lawrence	20	3
	144	18
Hanson		
Alexandria	37	26
Edgerton (Farmer)	13	13
Emery	20	19
Fulton	18	9
	97	67
Harding		
Buffalo	32	6
Hughes		
Blunt	13	8
Harrold	11	9†
Pierre	105	31
	129	48
Hutchinson		
Freeman	51	16
Menno	62	37
Parkston	109	41
Tripp	43	8
	265	102
Hyde		
Highmore	81†	21
Jackson		
Belvidere	12	19†
Interior	17	11
Kadoka	48	33
	77	63
Jerauld		
Alpena	40	37
Lane	12	7
Wessington Springs	112	12
	164	56
Jones		
Draper	13	11
Murdo	17	0†
Okaton	15	1
	45	12

Table 2. (Continued)

County	H. S. tuition pupils	Grade tuition pupils
Kingsbury		
Arlington	79	28
Bancroft	5	0
DeSmet	77	28
Erwin	11	8
Iroquois	24	21
Lake Preston	67	21
Oldham	52	6
	315	112
Lake		
Chester	51	17
Madison (Central)	8	5
Madison (Franklin)	10	50
Madison (Eastern)	62	12
Madison (Orland)	16	23
Ramona	18	21
Rutland	51	35
Wentworth	0	60
Winfred	18	27
	234	250
Lawrence		
Deadwood	25	1
Lead	70	8
Spearfish	76	26
	171	35
Lincoln		
Canton	105	27
Harrisburg	36	8
Hudson	42	45
Lennox	74	10
Worthing	5	0
	262	90
Lyman		
Kennebec	18	12
Presho	29	17
Reliance	23	12
Vivian	9	3
	79	44
McCook		
Bridgewater	58	10
Canistota	36	24
Montrose	32	33
Salem	52	7
Spencer	16	11†
	194	85
McPherson		
Eureka	71	41
Leola	54	3
	125	44
Marshall		
Weston (Amherst)	2	4
Britton	19	57
Kidder	15	8
Lake City	15	10
Langford	40	13
Veblen	53	18
	144	110
Meade		
Faith	36	33
Piedmont	4	0
Sturgis	120	27
	160	60
Mellette		
White River	30	29
Wood	0	14
	30	43
Miner		
Argonne	16	16
Canova	27	0
Canova (Burbank)	42†	0†
Carthage	34	75
Fedora	20	5
Howard	50	55
	189	151
Minnehaha		
Baltic	27	80
Brandon	47	50
Colton	28	39
Dell Rapids	43	7
Garretson	74	14
Hartford	19	13
Humboldt	48	12
Lyons	53	49
Sioux Falls	167	53
Valley Springs	15	31
	521	348
Moody		
Colman	41	50
Egan	43	40
Flandreau	72	52
Trent	23	15
	179	157
Pennington		
Hill City	17	3
Keystone	1	4
New Underwood	51	4
Quinn	35	17†
Rapid City	223	132
Wall	28	15
Wasta	7	1
	362	176
Perkins		
Bison	33	8
Lemmon	141	50
	174	58
Potter		
Gettysburg	89	17
Hoven	62†	0
Lebanon	3	4
	154	21

Table 2. (Continued)

County	H. S. tuition pupils	Grade tuition pupils
Roberts		
Corona	18	26
New Effington	33	9
Peever	17	3
Rosholt	38	23
Sisseton	148†	17
Summit	29	3
Wilmot	52	29
	335	110
Sanborn		
Artesian	50	20
Forrestburg	11†	21
Letcher	49	12
Woonsocket	42	32
	152	85
Spink		
Ashton	6	16
Athol	8	11
Brentford	38	50
Conde	30	20
Doland	50	16
Frankfort	9	9
Mellette	9	3
Northville	18	8
Redfield	132	13
Tulare	19	34
Turton	13	12
	332	192
Stanley		
Fort Pierre	13	25
Sulley		
Agar	13	4
Onida	45	13
	58	17
Todd		
Mission	18	3
Tripp		
Colome	75	‡
Winner	135	1
Witten	17	5
	227	6
Turner		
Centerville	62	31
Chancellor	26	6
Davis	6	6
Hurley	50	28
Marion	44	3†
Monroe	19	1
Parker	74	49
Viborg	64	8†
	345	132
Union		
Alcester	114	10†
Beresford	116	109
Elk Point	78	50
Jefferson	32	3
	340	172
Walworth		
Glenham	39	3
Java	18	4
Mobridge	14	0
Selby	22	2
	93	9
Yankton		
Gayville	43	7
Irene	84	12
Yankton	111	6
Volin	11	7
	249	32
Zieback		
Dupree	36	20
Totals	**11,389**	**4832**

*Communities operating public high schools, but also serving tuition pupils (H.S. and grade) attending from surrounding districts.

†1946-47 data

‡No data

Table 3. Accredited Independent High Schools with Their Rural Tuition Pupils

Town	Population	ACCREDITMENT North Central	Voc. H.Ec.	Voc. Ag.	Trades and Industries	Distributive Education	Rural Tuition Pupils High School	Grades
Aberdeen*	18,103	x	x	x	x		150	47
Alcester	499	x	x	x			114	10
Alexandria*	570	x					37	26
Arlington	917	x	x				79	28
Armour*	734	x	x	x			56	19
Belle Fourche*	2,603	x	x				90	59
Beresford	1,590	x	x	x			116	109
Britton*	1,340	x	x				19	57
Brookings*	5,218	x	x	x			136	9
Bryant	535	x					27	8
Canistota	562	x	x				36	24
Canton*	2,538	x	x	x	x		105	27
Centerville	985	x	x				62	31
Clark*	1,314	x	x	x			82	13
Colome	360	x					75	
Custer*	1,894	x	x		x		51	1
Deadwood*	3,412	x	x				25	1
De Smet*	903	x	x	x			77	28
Doland	455	x		x			50	16
Edgemont	1,082	x	x		x		12	3
Eureka	1,390	x	x				71	41
Faith	360	x	x		x		36	33
Faulkton*	640	x					70	33
Flandreau*	1,850	x	x	x	x		72	52
Garretson	575	x	x				74	14
Gregory	1,100	x	x	x			82	2
Groton	953	x	x	x			77	46
Highmore*	1,004	x					81	21
Hot Springs*	2,770	x	x		x	x	67	32
Howard*	1,173	x	x				50	55
Huron*	11,146	x		x	x	x	116	35
Ipswich*	887	x	x				80	3
Lake Preston	872	x	x				67	21
Lead	5,016	x			x	x	70	8
Lemmon	1,650	x	x				141	50
Lennox	1,097	x	x	x			74	10
Madison (Central)*	5,328	x	x		x	x	8	5
Milbank*	2,778	x	x	x			129	15
Miller*	1,463	x	x	x			105	4
Mitchell*	9,894	x	x		x	x	74	64
Mobridge	3,127	x	x		x		14	0
Onida*	523	x					45	13
Parker*	1,153	x	x	x			74	49
Parkston	1,301	x	x	x			109	41
Pierre*	4,218	x	x				105	4
Platte	879	x	x	x			14	0
Rapid City*	17,262	x			x	x	223	132
Redfield*	2,248	x	x	x		x	132	13
Salem*	1,219	x	x	x			52	7
Scotland	1,054	x	x	x			133	31
Sioux Falls*	42,343	x		x	x		167	53
Sisseton*	2,056	x	x	x	x	x	148	17
Spearfish	2,354	x	x				76	26
Sturgis*	2,251	x	x	x			120	27
Tyndall*	1,177	x	x	x			70	34
Vermillion*	3,608	x	x				110	21
Viborg	615	x	x				64	8
Volga	545	x	x	x			60	6
Wagner	1,122	x	x	x			74	11
Watertown*	10,984	x		x	x	x	130	30
Waubay	777	x	x				46	10
Webster*	2,076	x	x	x			106	4
Wessington	324	x		x			46	2
Wessington Springs*	1,222	x	x	x			112	12
Wilmot	538	x		x			52	29
Yankton*	6,843	x	x		x	x	111	6

*County seat towns

Table 4. Accredited Independent-Consolidated High Schools with Their Rural Tuition Pupils

Town	Population	ACCREDITMENT			Rural Tuition Pupils	
		North Central	Voc. HEc.	Voc. Ag.	High School	Grade
Bonesteel	501				39	39
Castlewood	442		x		9	2
Chester	555	x	x	x	51	17
Clear Lake*	825	x	x		81	27
Elk Point*	1,272	x	x		78	50
Estelline	559				13	13
Gary	519				18	12
Gettysburg*	1,264	x	x	x	89	17
Humboldt	404				48	12
Hurley	535		x		50	28
Irene	414				84	12
Kimball	941	x			50	20
Montrose	423	x			32	33
Newell	642			x	34	25
Selby*	568				22	2
Spencer	485	x	x		16	11
Wakonda	444	x	x		27	32
Winner*	2,306	x	x	x	135	1

*County Seat Towns

Exhibit A. Newsstory of School District Reorganization in Castlewood, South Dakota

TAXES EASED BY UNITING NINE SCHOOLS

(Hamlin County Republican)

$16,800 Building Fund Included in Year's Achievements

Castlewood, S. D., Aug. 2, 1949—Consolidation of nine common school districts in this region has proved to be a success during its first year of operation, M. A. Sorenson, superintendent, reports.

Taxes have been equalized in the community, eliminating a heavy load that had been carried as a result of increasing costs of education during and after the war. A new building fund of $16,800 has been set aside and by December will amount to $30,000. Much of this money was obtained from cash on hand in the districts and the sale of the common school buildings.

120 From Country

School buses have brought 120 rural pupils in the 100 square mile consolidated district to school each day taking responsibility from the parents. Hot lunches have been provided at 20 cents per meal. Needed community cooperation has been received since the adoption of the plan a year ago, the superintendent said.

During the year there has been a capital outlay of $12,000 representing money spent in modernizing the school plant, lighting improvements, building remodeling and the purchase of a school dwelling.

Tuition Insufficient

The question of consolidation came up the spring of 1948 when tuitions were not sufficient to meet yearly costs and the tax load was raised to the limit. The area faced the possibility of registering warrants and issuing bonds without any major improvements having been made in the local educational structure. But school officials knew too that farmers in the region would question the consolidation plan after the experiences of the 1920's in South Dakota.

However a survey of the proposed consolidation district was made and at public meetings the plan was discussed. Patrons from the nine common schools attended similar meetings of smaller groups and discussed informally the problems of their particular districts.

Large Majority Given

As a result of favorable sentiment evidenced in these meetings petitions were circulated and a plan of the proposed new district was drawn and presented to the state superintendent of schools. In an election May 25, 1948 voters in the common school districts approved consolidation 256 to 73, while in the independent district, an area of 18 square miles around Castlewood, the vote in favor was 117 to 3.

With an enrollment of 160 grade pupils and 60 high school students the facilities of the school have been utilized to the utmost this year.

"It seems as if the consolidation will assure the future educational needs of the community," Sorenson said.