

1973

A Historical Treatment and Analysis of Attempts at Reorganization by Chrisman, Scotland and Ridgefarm

Harold Edward Means

Eastern Illinois University

This research is a product of the graduate program in [Educational Administration](#) at Eastern Illinois University. [Find out more](#) about the program.

Recommended Citation

Means, Harold Edward, "A Historical Treatment and Analysis of Attempts at Reorganization by Chrisman, Scotland and Ridgefarm" (1973). *Masters Theses*. 3748.
<https://thekeep.eiu.edu/theses/3748>

This is brought to you for free and open access by the Student Theses & Publications at The Keep. It has been accepted for inclusion in Masters Theses by an authorized administrator of The Keep. For more information, please contact tabruns@eiu.edu.

PAPER CERTIFICATE #2

TO: Graduate Degree Candidates who have written formal theses.

SUBJECT: Permission to reproduce theses.

The University Library is receiving a number of requests from other institutions asking permission to reproduce dissertations for inclusion in their library holdings. Although no copyright laws are involved, we feel that professional courtesy demands that permission be obtained from the author before we allow theses to be copied.

Please sign one of the following statements:

Booth Library of Eastern Illinois University has my permission to lend my thesis to a reputable college or university for the purpose of copying it for inclusion in that institution's library or research holdings.

8-3-73
Date

I respectfully request Booth Library of Eastern Illinois University not allow my thesis be reproduced because _____

Date

Author

A Historical Treatment and Analysis of Attempts at
Reorganization by Chrisman, Scotland and Ridgefarm
(TITLE)

BY

Harold Edward Means

B.S. in Ed., Eastern Illinois University, 1956

M.S. in Ed., Eastern Illinois University, 1968

Field Experience 601

~~THESIS~~

SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS
FOR THE DEGREE OF

Specialist in Education

IN THE GRADUATE SCHOOL, EASTERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY
CHARLESTON, ILLINOIS

1973

YEAR

I HEREBY RECOMMEND THIS THESIS BE ACCEPTED AS FULFILLING
THIS PART OF THE GRADUATE DEGREE CITED ABOVE

DATE

DATE

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The writer would like to express his appreciation to the Superintendents of Scotland, Ridgefarm and Chrisman for their assistance in obtaining the information for this paper.

The writer would also like to express his gratitude to Dr. Smitley for his assistance in planning of the paper.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
ACKNOWLEDGMENT	ii
TABLE OF CONTENTS	iii

Chapter

I. INTRODUCTION	1
Purpose of the Study	
Source of the Data	
Scope of the Study	
Description of the Communities	
A Criteria for Schools	
Limitations of the Study	
II. LOG OF ACTIVITIES	5
III. THE HISTORY OF REORGANIZATION	10
This Attempt Fails	
Ridgefarm and Scotland Take Action	
Three Way Talks Begin	
Three Way Talks End	
Scotland and Chrisman Begin Talks	
The Legal Wheels are Turned	
Information is Provided for Voters	
Success at Last	
IV. ANALYSIS OF ATTEMPTS AT CONSOLIDATION	18
Ridgefarm High School Board Vetoes	
Reorganization	
Three Way Talks End Abruptly	
Chrisman-Scotland Talks Lead to Merger	
Advantages of Chrisman Scotland Merger	
Disadvantages of the Merger	

V. PRESENT ALTERNATIVES FOR FURTHER CONSOLIDATION . . . 23

An Intermediate Merger with Ridgefarm

An Intermediate Merger with Shiloh

A Permanent Type Merger with Shiloh and Ridgefarm

A Permanent Type Merger with Crestwood and Paris Districts

VI. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS 27

Conclusions

Recommendation: Reject Paris Reorganization

Recommendation: Consolidate with Shiloh with Idea of Later Attracting Ridgefarm or Newman

APPENDIX 32

BIBLIOGRAPHY 46

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This paper consists of a historical review and analysis of school district reorganization activities and needs of Chrisman Schools and the schools of neighboring Scotland and Ridgefarm. The paper is designed to fulfill the requirements for the Field Experience (Education 601) at Eastern Illinois University.

The writer has been employed as principal of Chrisman High School for the past four years and has been privileged to serve on some of the consolidation survey committees and to attend a number of consolidation meetings and to keep a record of these. It has been an enriching educational experience to be present and watch ideas develop into realities. The consolidation idea in these communities did not occur overnight but began seriously four years ago and was nurtured since through numerous meetings and discussions. Following the approval of voters on March 25, 1972, Edgar County Unit District #6 was formed. This district represented a consolidation of Chrisman Community Unit District #5, the Scotland Grade School District #23, and the

Scotland High School District #162. The officials of Ridgefarm Community Unit District #9 had withdrawn from the three way meetings in March of 1971.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the paper and intent of the writer is to examine earlier attempts at consolidation, to analyze failures and successes of the past, to examine future possibilities, and to make recommendations for further reorganization.

Source of the Data

Most of the data for this paper was obtained first hand by the writer attending the consolidation meetings from 1968 until 1972 when the Scotland-Chrisman merger occurred. The writer attended these meetings and kept records concerning them. Other information was obtained by interviewing school officials, the county superintendent, and the county treasurer.

Scope of the Study

This paper will discuss aspects of attempts at consolidation between Scotland, Ridgefarm and Chrisman. In later chapters possible alternatives for further reorganization will be discussed.

Description of the Communities

The Chrisman School District serves a community of thirteen hundred population and a wide rural area with about the same population. The town of Chrisman has no manufacturing industry but is thriving at a time when many small Illinois towns are losing their identities and becoming "ghost towns." Chrisman has a number of restaurants; garages; stores; businesses; banks; and several professional men including two physicians, a dentist, a veterinarian, and an attorney.

Scotland is a community of about 250 people and lies four miles east of Chrisman. Scotland is nearly completely a rural residential community with very few businesses.

Ridgefarm is in Vermilion County six miles north of Chrisman on Route 1. Ridgefarm, with a population of nearly 900, has only a few small businesses.

A Criteria for Schools

A possible blueprint for the schools of the future can be found in the results and recommendations of the Governor's Commission on Schools in regard to school district organization.

This Commission has recommended that every elementary district have an assessed valuation of \$32,691 per student.

Each high school district should have an assessed valuation of \$74,816 per student while a unit district should have \$23,646 per student.¹

In regards to enrollment the committee strongly recommends that the minimum figure for unit districts be 1,500 pupils, 1,000 pupils for elementary districts and 500 pupils for high school districts.²

Limitations of the Study

The fact that the Chrisman-Scotland reorganization resulted in a small intermediate district tends to limit the results of the study. Had Ridgefarm also been in the merger it still would only have been an intermediate consolidation at best. The most significant thing about the merger is that it is a beginning.

¹ Governor's Commission on Schools, Final Report of the Committee on School Organization, Opportunities for Excellence (Springfield, Illinois, 1973), pp. 28-30.

² Ibid., 98.

CHAPTER II

LOG OF ACTIVITIES

On November 12, 1968, the writer attended a steering committee meeting at Chrisman High School. It was decided to hire Dr. Shuff to make a feasibility survey.

On January 30, 1969, the writer attended a meeting at Chrisman High School when the combined boards met with the professional team. The writer was assigned to the finance committee.

On February 20, 1969, the writer attended a supper meeting at the Colonial Kitchen Restaurant at Chrisman and turned in several recent budgets to Dr. Matzner. This had been the writer's assignment.

In April of 1969, the writer attended a meeting at Ridgefarm High School to hear the professional team present the results of its survey and make recommendations.

On January 8, 1971, the writer attended a meeting of the Chrisman, Scotland, and Ridgefarm boards at Ridgefarm to discuss reorganization. The writer served as chairman of the curriculum committee.

On January 15, 1971, the writer attended and presided over a progress meeting of the curriculum committee.

On February 15, 1971, the writer presented the findings of the curriculum committee to a meeting of the joint boards at Chrisman Elementary School.

On March 3, 1971, the writer accompanied Mr. Lee Goby from the state office and the superintendents of Scotland and Ridgefarm on a tour of all the school buildings in the concerned districts.

On March 24, 1971, the writer attended the last of the three way meetings at Ridgefarm. The writer gathered valuable information at this meeting which ended early. The writer talked to Scotland and Ridgefarm members after this meeting ended.

On March 25, 1971, the writer discussed the previous meeting with Cecil Smith, superintendent of Chrisman, and found that Scotland had requested two-way talks and these were going to begin.

On April 14, 1971, the writer attended a meeting at Scotland and noticed an aura of congeniality and cooperation between those officials gathered there.

The writer attended a meeting of the combined boards held at Chrisman Elementary School and obtained a copy of the data formulated by Mr. Smith and Mr. Dagley.

On October 1, 1971, the writer attended a meeting of the boards and administrators, the area regional supervisor and Mr. Bonaldi, the attorney for Chrisman and Scotland. The writer took notes on some of the legal aspects discussed.

On February 17, 1972, the writer attended a joint meeting of the boards held at Chrisman Elementary School and took 150 copies of the mimeographed informational sheets to pass out to his students.

On March 9, 1972, the writer attended the open house at Chrisman High School, helped show the voters around the building, and answered any questions they asked.

On March 21, 1972, the writer attended a public informational type meeting at the Chrisman High School gym and helped field questions asked by the people who attended.

On March 23, 1972, the writer attended a public informational type meeting at Scotland and was ready to answer questions but none were directed towards him.

On March 2, 1972, the writer met with Mr. Smith who provided him with the copy of the court transcript of the public hearing held on January 7, 1971.

On April 8, 1972, the writer conferred with Mr. Dagley to gather information on the feasibility survey of the Chrisman and Ridgefarm districts in 1969.

On April 19, 1972, the writer conferred with James Fortune as to why Scotland dropped out of the original three way talks.

On May 10, 1972, the writer conferred with Ted Johnson, unit superintendent at Ridgefarm, and gathered important data from him on the first consolidation attempt in 1968 and the correspondence which he had on file.

In July of 1972, the writer met with Dr. Smitley at Eastern and discussed a format.

During the week of September 18, 1972, the writer organized his notes and began to write an introduction.

On the week of September 25-29, the writer sorted his material and began working on Chapter II.

On February 1 and 2, 1973, the introduction was reorganized and Chapter II was started.

On March 6, a short meeting was held with Mr. Dagley at Shiloh to gather information for use in Chapter IV.

On March 12, the writer completed Chapter II.

On April 2, 3, 4, the first drafts of Chapters III and IV were completed.

During the period of April 12 to May 15, 1973 the writer met with Dr. Smitley on four different dates to make corrections and suggestions on the rough draft.

On July 12, 1973, the writer searched for materials containing criteria for school district consolidation.

On July 14, 1973, the writer went to Georgetown and conferred with Larry Bradfield and discussed the format of his paper on "The History of Georgetown's Reorganization and in the Surrounding Area."

On July 14, 1973, the writer called Dr. Matzner and discussed a possible format.

On July 16, 1973, the writer went to Shiloh and discussed some possibilities of his paper with Mr. Dagley. He also went to the office of the area regional supervisor to find enrollment figures and financial data for Chrisman-Scotland, Shiloh, Crestwood, and Paris School Districts. The writer obtained tax information on the same schools from the office of the county treasurer. The writer went to the Paris Beacon and examined a copy of the May 7 Beacon telling of the new criteria proposed for school district consolidation in Illinois. The writer then completed a revision of Chapters I and II.

CHAPTER III

THE HISTORY OF REORGANIZATION

In 1969 the Ridgefarm, Harrison, and Chrisman Districts hired Dr. Robert V. Shuff to conduct a feasibility survey of their area. The findings and suggestions of this survey are as follows:

Population:

1. The population and enrollment are unlikely to show any significant increase in the study area during the foreseeable future.

Program:

1. Elementary programs are typical of self-contained classrooms with little help from specialists.
2. The two high schools offer extremely limited selection to youngsters. Combination of the two could make for a broader offering.

Buildings:

1. The Harrison Building has reached the twilight of its usefulness for school purposes.
2. The Ridgefarm Elementary Building needs help from the community in solving the recurring sewage problem.
3. The Chrisman Elementary School is a fine new facility.

4. Both High Schools have some problems but one could easily become a senior high and the other a junior high.

Finance:

1. The per pupil costs in Chrisman are slightly higher but the total tax rate is less.
2. A small amount of money would be added to state funds received if the area was a unit.
3. Total assessed value of the area is just over \$25,000,000.
4. Bonded indebtedness of the area amounts to \$381,000.

There are several alternatives open to the schools of the area and they will be explored in the following paragraphs:

Alternative 1. Continue operating as presently organized. This would require no action nor would it provide any change in opportunities for youngsters of the area.

Alternative 2. Form a single unit district to include the four districts of the survey area. This would require action on the part of the boards and the voters of the area. It would have some advantages for the students.

Alternative 3. The area lying in Vermilion County join with Georgetown in a district somewhat less extensive than the recently proposed South Vermilion District. That area in Edgar County join with either the Shiloh or the Paris Districts.

Since Alternative #1 needs no discussion and Alternative #3 has met with resistance in the Vermilion County proposal, primary attention will be given to Alternative #2.

If all four districts were to be combined into a single unit, the resulting district would be of minimal size and value. Enrollment in grades Kindergarten through Twelve will never reach or top 1,000 while the assessed value is just over \$25,000,000.

Such a district could operate with no new buildings and only minor alternation of current structures.

The district so formed could provide for a combined high school in one community (possibly Chrisman) and a junior high in the other (probably Ridgefarm). This would provide for expanded high school offerings and some exploratory experiences at the junior high level.

The elementary pupils attending the Harrison School could be apportioned to existing classes in other buildings without affecting the size of classes in any serious fashion.

This would still permit later flexibility in arrangements since no new buildings would be constructed that might interfere with the making of wise decisions.

In brief, the combination of the four districts into a single unit will not make an ideal school district, but it will be better than what now exists. It can be achieved without undue expenditure of money for buildings. It can provide an interim step to later district organization which might include Scotland, Shiloh, or others. It will keep the operation of the schools close to home.³

³Citizens Survey of Chrisman, Harrison, and Ridgefarm Districts, April 1969, p. 36.

This Attempt Fails

After the team presented its findings in April of 1969 each school board agreed to vote on the merger. The measure carried in all the boards except Ridgefarm High School. This was enough to prevent it because all had to agree for it to carry.

Ridgefarm and Scotland Take Action

In the spring of 1970, the Ridgefarm Grade School District, Ridgefarm High School District, and Harrison Grade School District reorganized to become the Ridgefarm Community Unit District. The new school board seemed to have a majority of members who favored further consolidation.

In the fall of 1969, the state visitation group gave Scotland High School a conditional recognition status. This resulted in much soul searching by the Scotland board as to what steps should be taken.

In the fall of 1970, Scotland hired Dr. Robert V. Shuff, Eastern Illinois University, to make a study of the Scotland districts and to make recommendations; as a result of this study, Mr. Dagley established a citizens advisory committee of 21 people. The majority of that group favored consolidation.

Three Way Talks Begin

On January 8, 1971, a meeting of the Scotland, Chrisman, and Ridgefarm districts was held at Ridgefarm High School. There were extensive discussions as to the feasibility of a merger and some of the problems that would be encountered. Committees were established to gather facts in the specified areas.

When the boards met again on February 15, 1971, to discuss the findings, the recommendations of the building committee generated the most discussion. These recommendations were as follows:

Scotland Building	K-6 & Special Ed. Center
Ridgefarm Grade School	K-6
Ridgefarm High School	7-8
Chrisman Grade School	K-6
Chrisman High School	9-12
Harrison Elementary	No Recommendation ⁴

Scotland felt that its building was in as good condition as any of the others. It was finally decided that the state be requested to send a consultant on school buildings to inspect all buildings in the three districts and make recommendation.

Mr. Lee Goby, of the state office, inspected all of the buildings in the three districts on March 3, 1971, and

⁴Building Committee Report, Building Committee for Chrisman, Scotland, and Ridgefarm Schools, 1971, p. 2.

promised to send a letter revealing his findings. On March 3, his letter arrived and was ambiguous in content.

Three Way Talks End

On March 24, 1971, at a joint meeting held at Scotland High School, the letter was read and discussed. A copy of the letter is in Appendix A. This was followed by discussion which resulted in agreement that the high school should be located at Chrisman. The meeting ended abruptly when Ridgefarm dropped out of the talks because of wanting the junior high school which Scotland also wanted.

Scotland and Chrisman Begin Talks

On April 14, 1971, a meeting between Scotland and Chrisman was held at Scotland. This meeting was very productive. It was decided that the high school center would be at Chrisman High School, the K-5 students would be at the Chrisman Elementary School, and the 6-7-8 grades or junior high would be housed in the Scotland building. Another outcome of the meeting was for the administrators to draw up a fact sheet for the schools (Appendix B) and to hire legal counsel.

On October 1, 1971, a joint meeting of the boards and administrators was held at Chrisman Elementary School. The area regional supervisor and his assistant also attended

this meeting and offered suggestions. Mr. Bonaldi, the legal counsel, outlined some of the legal procedures which would be encountered.

The Legal Wheels Are Turned

On November 1, 1971, a joint meeting was held at Scotland High School. Mr. Bonaldi gave a progress report and passed out petitions to 10 designated board members with instructions for each to obtain 25 signatures. They were to have two weeks to accomplish this and submit the signed petitions to a law office for certification.

On December 8, 1971, these petitions were presented to Mr. Carl Jones, Edgar County Superintendent of Schools.⁵ On January 7, 1972, Mr. Jones held a hearing at the Court House in Paris.⁶ At this meeting depositions were taken from the superintendent, board members, interested citizens, etc. A newspaper summary of this meeting is in Appendix C. Questions of people in attendance were answered.

On January 10, 1972, Mr. Jones approved the merger and sent it to Dr. Bakalis for approval.⁷ On February 15, 1972, word was received that Dr. Bakalis had approved the merger and Carl Jones set March 25, 1972 as the election date.

⁵Illinois, School Code, Art. 11, Sec. 6.

⁶Ibid. ⁷Ibid. ⁸Ibid.

Information is Provided for Voters

On February 17, 1972, mimeographed information sheets were provided for each student to take home and the same information was published in area newspapers. A copy of this information is in Appendix D.

On March 9, 1972, open house was held at all the school buildings so that the public could see the conditions for themselves.

On March 21, 1972, a public informational meeting was held in the Chrisman High School gym. All board members; administrators; Mr. Jones, Edgar County Regional Supervisor; Mr. Leeth, Assistant Regional Supervisor; and Mr. McDonald of the State Office were there. People asked questions and the aforementioned answered them.

On March 23 the same type of meeting was held at Scotland.

Success at Last

The procedures used by the Scotland and Chrisman boards to inform the public were successful because the election on the consolidation carried in both districts. On March 25, 1972 the vote count showed 770 for the merger and 265 opposed.

CHAPTER IV

ANALYSIS OF ATTEMPTS AT CONSOLIDATION

Ridgefarm High School Board Vetoes Reorganization

The first attempt at reorganization which was between Ridgefarm dual districts, Harrison, and Chrisman reached a climax in April of 1969 when the professional team met with the boards and administrators to report the findings of the study. All districts concerned were interested in the merger until that evening.

As soon as it was indicated that the high school should be located in Chrisman, some of the Ridgefarm High School Board asked some negative questions. The boards adjourned that evening with the idea of voting at each of the next board meetings. All boards had to favor the merger or the measure would be defeated.

The merger was approved by all boards except the Ridgefarm High School Board. It is quite obvious that the measure failed because of the study recommending that the high school be located in Chrisman.

In small rural communities, such as any of the schools mentioned in this paper, the high school is the hub of the community life. More activity is centered there than any other place in town. To give up the high school is considered a loss of the community's identity by many of the citizens.

Three Way Talks End Abruptly

The second attempt at consolidation was between Ridgefarm Community Unit District, Scotland High School District, Scotland Grade School District, and Chrisman Community Unit District. This attempt materialized because of the new unit district at Ridgefarm and the new board members of that unit who were evidently more in favor of a merger. The fact that Scotland had received a conditional recognition status also played an important part in its interest. Chrisman needed more students in its high school to avoid a forced consolidation.

Events progressed very well with this reorganization movement until March 24, 1971, when a meeting was held at Scotland to go over a letter received from Mr. Goby of the State Office, who had inspected all of the buildings in the concerned districts. At this meeting it was fairly well agreed that the high school would be located at Chrisman. The

serious disagreement occurred when Scotland and Ridgefarm both wanted the junior high school.

Chrisman officials indicated that the location of the junior high school was of no concern to them. The meeting was adjourned abruptly on a motion by a Ridgefarm board member after some arguing between Scotland and Ridgefarm officials.

It is quite evident that the second attempt collapsed because Ridgefarm officials felt that their voters would not favor a merger that resulted in losing a high school and a junior high. Scotland officials also felt that it was absolutely essential to retain a junior high school in their community.

Chrisman-Scotland Talks Lead to Merger

The fact that Chrisman did not care where the junior high school was located paved the way for two-way talks. When the three-way talks failed, Mr. Dagley, the Scotland superintendent contacted Mr. Smith, the Chrisman superintendent, requesting a joint meeting of the Scotland and Chrisman School Boards.

On April 14, 1971, a meeting was held to begin a series of discussions which resulted in the reorganization of Scotland and Chrisman to become Unit District #6. It was evident at this meeting and all others that the participants were wanting to accomplish something. There were no

insurmountable disagreements to block this merger. It was a foregone conclusion that the high school would be at Chrisman. Chrisman had a five year old elementary building which made it the ideal place to send K-5 students. Scotland had a high school building which lent itself to a junior high program.

The fact that this merger could help the boys and girls of both communities and the spirit of cooperation and dedication of the two superintendents and the board members made this a successful endeavor.

Advantages of Chrisman Scotland Merger

- (1) All buildings except the elementary were old but structurally sound requiring no new building program.
- (2) The junior high school would have its own gym and extensive play area for physical education and athletic programs.
- (3) The junior high could offer vocational courses such as shop, home economics and typing.
- (4) The high school could offer two foreign languages and wood shop and have a full time science teacher.
- (5) The high school could have a full time principal.

- (6) Approximately \$65,000 could be saved in teacher salaries by having a reduction of 11½ teachers.
- (7) The total assessed valuation for the new district was \$25,470,454 or \$42,000 per student. This surpassed the required amount of \$23,646 as recommended by a state-wide education committee to Governor Walker recently.⁹

Disadvantages of the Merger

- (1) Some of the Scotland students were being bussed a great distance over roads which become difficult under adverse weather conditions.
- (2) The consolidation was too small by recent standards set up by a statewide education committee which recommended that unit districts be 1500 in enrollment with 500 in the high school and 1,000 in K-8.¹⁰

⁹Governor's Commission on Schools, Final Report of the Committee on School Organization, Opportunities for Excellence (Springfield, Illinois, 1973), pp. 28-30.

¹⁰Ibid., p. 98.

CHAPTER V

PRESENT ALTERNATIVES FOR FURTHER CONSOLIDATION

An Intermediate Merger with Ridgefarm

One possibility would be to consolidate the new Scotland-Chrisman district with the Ridgefarm unit district. Chrisman-Scotland officials have had two surveys with Ridgefarm officials and have about all the information available that would be necessary. This would enlarge the high school to about 325 and bring the K-8 enrollment up to 925. No new buildings would have to be built because the buildings in the unit have been found to be structurally sound though having some age.

Ridgefarm has an assessed valuation of \$10,933,610 with a tax rate of 2.947. A consolidation with Ridgefarm would make a reduction of staff possible and at least one building could be phased out. Additional courses could be added to the curriculum, a good K-12 guidance program could be provided, the special education program could be improved, summer school could be provided, libraries could be improved, and the physical education program could be broadened.

Ridgefarm officials have contacted the Chrisman-Scotland superintendent and school board asking to resume the meetings on reorganization. This would indicate that they are more anxious to reorganize than they were at the time the three way talks broke off before.

The only unfavorable thing about merging with Ridgefarm is that its higher tax rate would cause an increase in taxes for Scotland-Chrisman in the event of a new consolidation.

An Intermediate Merger with Shiloh

Another possible consolidation is with the Shiloh district which serves the Brocton, Redman, Hume, and Metcalfe communities. The Shiloh school is located in Hume, which is 12 miles west of Chrisman on Route 36. The Shiloh district has a single new building housing all of its K-12 students on an acreage which would permit expansion because it is located in the country. The Shiloh district has a tax base of 1.96 which is expected to go up to 2.08 next year. Shiloh has an assessed valuation of \$32,852,064 with \$61,000 per student.

There would not have to be any building program in the near future because the Shiloh building is three years old and Chrisman elementary is only five or six years old,

while the Chrisman High School building and the junior high building at Scotland are structurally sound and should last a number of years.

A Permanent Type Merger with Shiloh and Ridgefarm

A third alternative is a three way consolidation between Unit #6 Scotland-Chrisman, Shiloh and Ridgefarm. There would not have to be any new building program in this merger, and the students are all from similar backgrounds.

A Permanent Type Merger with Shiloh and Newman

A fourth alternative would be a merger of Shiloh, Chrisman Community Unit #6 and Newman. Newman is a community of around 1,000 people located off Route 36 about 18 miles west of Chrisman. Newman has a K-8 building which houses 251 students and a high school with an enrollment of 140. The high school building appears to be in a poor condition, with many parts of it obsolete. Newman has an assessed valuation of \$19,750,000 or \$52,666 per student.

A Permanent Type Merger with
Crestwood and Paris Districts

A fifth alternative would be a merger of Chrisman-Scotland, Crestwood and Paris. This would bring a high school enrollment up to around 1200 and a K-8 enrollment of

around 2600. Crestwood has an assessed valuation of \$37,840,048 and Paris has an assessed valuation of \$29,278,136. Crestwood has \$49,800 of assessed valuation per student and Paris has less than \$12,000 per student.

CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusions

The consolidation of Chrisman and Scotland, though it was a step in the right direction, is simply not enough. At the present time the state office is advocating unit districts to have a total enrollment of 1500 with the high school having 500 and K-8 having 1,000 students.

In the past several years, schools have been more or less left alone to make their own decisions. With more and more state and federal funds being funnelled into schools, the state and federal government officials are dictating more terms. They want the schools providing quality education as economically as possible.

One important decision that these small districts can make, however, is the direction they are going in reorganization. For example, if the smaller districts

¹¹Ibid.

wait until the state tells exactly what reorganization steps they must take, they are going to lose an important choice. If, however the schools reorganize on their own, they can control part of their destiny. The secret is to reorganize into districts of sufficient size to provide a broad educational program to students who are housed in buildings which have necessary facilities.

Recommendation: Reject Paris Reorganization

The writer recommends that Unit #6 not consolidate with Paris #95 because it is fronted by Crestwood #4 and only a three way consolidation would be legal.

There are a number of differences between the Paris community and the Chrisman-Scotland community. Paris has a population of around 10,000 and has a number of light manufacturing industries. Most of the people who live in Paris earn their living within Paris in these factories. The socio-economic levels of Paris are more diversified. Chrisman has a population of over 1300 with most of the people earning their living by farming or in farm related businesses. A number of people commute to nearby communities to work in industries.

It is true that the high school enrollment with a merger with Paris would be over 1200, but Paris already has

crowded conditions in their schools, with most of its buildings being fairly old. This might indicate a building program, which would be costly. Paris already has a low assessed valuation with only \$12,000 behind each student. Such a consolidation would also require transportation of students over great distances.

Recommendation: Consolidate with Shiloh with idea of later attracting Ridgefarm or Newman.

The writer recommends that Unit #6 begin talks at once with Shiloh to discuss the formation of a north Edgar County District. The fact that Unit #6 has such a recently built elementary building and Shiloh has a new building, which could be used as a high school, would make any vast building program unnecessary for many years. The Shiloh school houses 384 students in K-8 and another 188 in the high school. This merger would produce a high school of around 400 students. In addition to the optimum facilities Shiloh's tax rate is quite low. The writer recommends that this merger be concluded and be followed by consideration of further consolidation with Ridgefarm or Newman at a time when citizens of these communities become more interested in consolidation.

Newman would be closer to Shiloh than would Ridgefarm, but Newman, thus far, has not shown much interest in reorganization. The writer has always felt that ABL

would be a natural merger with Newman because ABL High School has much excess space in its twenty year old high school and has low enrollments in grades K-12. Newman on the other hand, has a very old building but has the students which the ABL High building could house.

Ridgefarm might be more willing to consider consolidation at the present time. On Saturday, March 16, 1973, a fire at the Ridgefarm Elementary School building caused \$150,000 in damages. This will force Ridgefarm officials to consider the alternatives of reorganization or to put \$150,000 of insurance money back in that extremely old building. If they decide to consolidate, it is likely that they will want to join with the Scotland-Chrisman District. This assumption is based upon a previous decisive rejection of a proposal for Ridgefarm to join with districts to the north in a South Vermilion County District.

At the present time, Chrisman-Scotland officials are not interested in initiating further discussions with the Ridgefarm officials. If such discussions are to be held, it is apparent that they will have to be initiated by the Ridgefarm Board. In the meantime, the writer recommends that serious consideration be given to a consolidation of the Chrisman-Scotland and Shiloh Districts. Hopefully Ridgefarm would want to join this consolidated district in the future.

A consolidation of Chrisman-Scotland, Shiloh, and Ridgefarm would result in the formation of a district composed of people with similar interests and concerns. Such a consolidation would result in a school district with over 1600 students, over 500 of which would be enrolled in the high school. This should enable school officials to provide a much broader educational program to high school students from the four communities. Elementary school students could continue to attend schools near their homes. Since it would also not be necessary to construct additional buildings, officials of the new district would not need to take any action which would prevent them from considering further reorganization alternatives in the future.

APPENDIX A

Mr. Goby's Letter

STATE OF ILLINOIS
OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDENT OF PUBLIC INSTRUCTION
SPRINGFIELD 62700

March 9, 1971

Mr. Ted E. Johnson
Superintendent
Community Unit School District #9
Ridgefarm, Illinois 61870

Re: March 3rd report

Dear Mr. Johnson:

It was good to meet with you on the above mentioned date and to visit the Chrisman & Scotland Buildings. I believe I can appreciate your educational and housing problems. Although I am not assigned in the education department here, I full well realize your need to establish a qualified education program for all boys and girls in the above mentioned districts. It certainly appears that with the limited enrollment in these districts, it is next to impossible to provide what I like to call the "Goodies" in your curriculum.

It would be my humble opinion that geographically, these school districts could be welded together and a good qualified education program established. The facilities can be made workable and suitable for the present enrollment.

It is our opinion that each boy and girl in each school district is entitled to equal housing and therefore equal education opportunities. I too feel that the education program should be determined and accepted by the community. When this task is completed, it is obvious that attention should be directed toward equal quality housing for every pupil.

About housing, we suggest that because everyone does his best work when he is comfortably housed, each student should be given the privilege to attend school in a classroom that is comfortably heated, adequately ventilated, suitably lighted, attractively decorated, and clean local school boards as custodians of public property are urged to provide facilities that are suitable for the work being

Mr. Ted E. Johnson

2

March 9, 1971

done in them. Auditors and the buildings industry usually depreciate buildings 2% per year. Thus, when a building has received its 50th anniversary, it has paid its debt to the community it serves. These same sources depreciate mechanical equipment at the rate of 4% per year, therefore, the majority of the structures have about outlived the two sets of mechanical equipment. My observation tells me the original mechanical equipment is still in use, therefore, it is obvious that the classroom atmosphere is not as adequate as the boys and girls are entitled to.

Another way to think about your facilities would be to consider that the building industry recommends "when the cost of upgrading and repairing existing structures is equal to 50% or more of what a new building would cost, it is considered the best use of public funds would be to replace the old structure."

It would be our recommendation to the above mentioned school districts for them to give serious consideration toward consolidating while they can do so in keeping with their own choices rather than having to accept a possible directive from state level without making allowances for local and community likes and dislikes.

Should you have any reservations about the content of this report, please advise so that we can make another attempt.

With best personal regards,

Sincerely,

Lee W. Goby
Director
Department of School Buildings

APPENDIX B

Fact Sheet Concerning Scotland and Chrisman Districts

Prepared by Mr. Smith and Mr. Dagley

	<u>SCOTTLAND</u>	<u>CHRISMAN</u>	<u>COMBINED</u>
Area of District	60.75 sq. mi.	69.25 sq. mi.	130.00
Total Assessed Valuation	8,212,387	16,383,487	24,595,874
Personal Property	1,136,865	2,141,520	3,278,385
Enrollment K-12	165	274	639
Teachers	9½ + ½	20 Elem.	30
	6½ High School	9 High School	15½
Administrators	1	3	4
Secretaries	1	2	3
Custodians	1½	4	5½
Bus Drivers	5	4	9
Cooks	2½	4	6½
Tax Rates Total 1970-71	2.193	2.211	
1970-71 Taxes Received			
Educational Fund	117,583.79	216,438.40	334,022.19
Building Fund	22,777.72	59,640.58	82,418.30
Trans. Fund	12,204.43	14,910.23	27,114.66
Junior College	-----	8,000.00	8,000.00
Bond and Interest	-----	24,741.35	24,741.35
Total	152,565.94	383,730.56	476,296.50
All other incomes			
Federal and State			
and Local (State Aid, Vocational,			
Driver Ed., Ath, Admissions, Hot Lunch, etc.)			
State Transp. Income	6,171.67	5,607.47	11,779.14
Grand Total of Income Both Districts	-----	-----	670,530.90

Expenditures of Districts 1970-71

	<u>SCOTTLAND</u>	<u>CHRISMAN</u>	<u>COMBINED</u>
Educational Fund	164,947.72	379,130.82	544,078.55
Building Fund	22,357.25	65,809.75	88,167.00
Trans. Fund	13,610.97	21,776.81	35,387.78
Bond & Interest	-----	24,741.35	24,741.35
	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>
	200,915.94	491,458.74	692,374.35
		Grand Total Exp.	692,374.68

APPENDIX C

Newspaper Summary of Hearing

A hearing was held by Mr. Jones on January 7, 1972 at the court house in Paris. The following item is a copy of the official result of the hearing.

STATE OF ILLINOIS)
COUNTY OF EDGAR) SS

IN THE MATTER OF A PETITION CALLING FOR A SPECIAL ELECTION TO VOTE FOR OR AGAINST THE PROPOSITION TO ESTABLISH A COMMUNITY UNIT SCHOOL DISTRICT FOR THE BENEFIT OF THE INHABITANTS OF THE FOLLOWING DESCRIBED CONTIGUOUS TERRITORY: CHRISMAN COMMUNITY UNIT SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 5, SCOTTLAND COMMUNITY HIGH SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 162, ALL IN EDGAR COUNTY, ILLINOIS

HEARING WAS HELD BY THE REGIONAL SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS IN THE COUNTY COURT ROOM OF THE COURT HOUSE IN PARIS, ILLINOIS ON JANUARY 7, 1972 AT 2:00 O'CLOCK P.M. (CST).

SCHOOL OFFICIALS PRESENT:

There were a few board members present from each of the three districts involved. Mr. Smith, Superintendent of Unit 5 and Mr. Dagley, Superintendent of Districts 23 and 162 were present. Mr. James McDonald and Mr. Doyne Winterowd from the OSPI office were present. Mr. Alfred Bonaldi, lawyer for the three districts was also present. Mr. Alfred Bonaldi, lawyer for the three districts was also present. Mr. Jones, Regional Superintendent for Edgar County and Mr. Arthur W. Leeth, Assistant Superintendent conducted the meeting. Many residents of the three districts were present.

ORDER

Of the Regional Superintendent of Schools of Edgar County.

Now this cause having come on for hearing under the provisions of Article 11-6 of the school code and by virtue of a petition filed with Carl Jones, Regional Superintendent of Schools of Edgar County, Illinois on December 8, 1971; and

The said Regional Superintendent of Schools having further caused a notice of the presentation of such petition to be published for three consecutive weeks in the Paris Daily Beacon-News and The Chrisman Leader, newspaper which have a general circulation within the area of the territory involved in the proposed consolidation, true copies of the publication notices duly certified by the publishers of the papers are hereto attached and by reference made a part of this order; and the return day having been fixed in accordance with said notice on January 7, 1972; and it appearing that said petition is in all respect in compliance with the law as to form and content and signatures thereon; and having submitted a map showing the districts involved, a report of the financial and educational conditions of the districts involved; and the probable effects of the proposed consolidation; and the Regional Superintendent of schools having had evidence as to the school needs and conditions and as to the ability of the districts involved to meet the standards of recognition as prescribed by the Superintendent of Public Instruction; and having taken into consideration whether it is for best interests of the schools of the area and the educational welfare of the pupils that such consolidation be granted; and the following named person appeared in support of the petition, to-wit:

Robert Dagley, Superintendent of Districts #23 and #162
Robert Wyatt, board member of Chrisman District #5
John Lorenzen, a resident in Scotland Districts.

The following named persons spoke and answered questions:

Cecil Smith, Superintendent of Chrisman, District #5
Earl Davis, a resident in the Scotland Districts

Many good questions were asked by patrons of the three districts that attended the meeting.

Mr. James MacDonald from the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction was the last to speak. He made a good summarization of all that had been said during the meeting. At the close of the meeting Mr. Jones, Regional Superintendent of Schools of Edgar County, stated that in the next few days he would announce his decision concerning the plea for a special election. The meeting was adjourned.

After a few days of studying the material presented at the January 7, 1972 hearing I, Carl Jones, Regional Superintendent of Schools of Edgar County do HEREBY ORDER AND DECREE that the petition be Granted FOR HOLDING A SPECIAL ELECTION for the purpose of voting for or against the proposition to establish a Community Unit School District for the benefit of the inhabitants of the following described contiguous territory:

Chrisman Community School District No. 5
Scotland Community Consolidated Grade District No. 23
Scotland Community High School

This ORDER is being sent to the clerks of the three school boards involved in the petition and to the Superintendent of Public Instruction.

Dated this the 10th day of January, 1972.

Carl Jones
Regional Superintendent of Schools
Edgar County

Seal

APPENDIX D

Information Sheets Distributed
To the Voters

I. March 23, 1972 (Thursday) - 7 p.m. - Public Informational meeting in the Scotland School Gym - All Board members of Chrisman and Scotland plan to be present.

March 25, 1972 (Saturday) - 12 noon - 7 p.m. Public vote on the consolidation of Chrisman and Scotland school districts into one community unit school district. Polling Places will be located in the Chrisman Grade School and in the Scotland Grade School. Absentee voting may be done in the office of Carl Jones, Supt., Courthouse, Paris, Illinois.

II. The present Boards of Education of Chrisman and Scotland have agreed to the following:

(1) The present Chrisman Grade School will house all of the students of Chrisman and Scotland in grades Kindergarten through five. (K-5). At present the enrollment would be 256.

(2) The present Scotland School Building will house all of students of Chrisman and Scotland in Junior High School for students for grades six through eight. (6-8). At present the enrollment would be 159.

(3) The present Chrisman High School building will house all of the high school students. (9-12). At present the enrollment would be 189.

(4) Shop and Homemaking may be added courses to enrich the Junior High School with the present facilities in Scotland.

(5) Four of the present Chrisman school board members will be candidates for the new Community School board to be elected.

(6) Three of the present Scotland school board members will be candidates for the new Community Unit School Board to be elected.

(7) No new building program is needed.

III. Chrisman's remaining bonded indebtedness on the new grade school is \$275,000. The principal and interest are being paid off at the rate of about \$24,000 a year. This would mean a tax levy of about ten cents (0.10) over the new district. Current bond tax levy is \$0.15 at Chrisman.

IV. Financial Information
Assessed Valuation

		Tax Rate
Chrisman	\$16,951,720	\$2.211
Scotland	8,315,214	2.193
	\$25,266,934	

The maximum rate to be voted on for the new Community Unit is \$2.00 for educational purposes (now \$1.60 in Chrisman and \$1.84 in Scotland schools).

The maximum rate to be voted on for the new Community Unit is \$0.50 for building (now 0.375 in Chrisman and 0.50 in Scotland schools). The boards thought that the above maximum rate would provide needed funds for the new Community Unit district for several years.

V. Possible Financial Saving's by Consolidation

Present number of teachers 45½
Possible reduction of teachers 11½
Possible needs of new Community Unit 34 teachers

Chrisman's present minimum salary for a bachelor's degree is \$7200. If the number of teachers is, reduced by 11½, this would mean a reduction of \$82,800. However, there would be an approximate decrease of \$18,000 in State aid because of the increase in assessed valuation. This would mean a net reduction of \$64,800 in teachers salaries, which represents a reduction in tax rate of approximately twenty-five cents (0.25) on the combined assessed value of \$25,266,934. This is approximately a ten per-cent (10%) decrease in tax rate for schools.

VI. Combined Student Enrollment for 1971-72.

	<u>Chrisman</u>	<u>Scotland</u>	<u>Total</u>
Kindergarten	28	13	41
1st Grade	31	8	39
2nd Grade	31	11	42
3rd Grade	29	17	46
4th Grade	33	13	46
5th Grade	31	11	42
6th Grade	39	16	55
7th Grade	43	14	57
8th Grade	35	12	47
9th Grade	34	12	46
10th Grade	40	14	54
11th Grade	31	13	44
12th Grade	35	10	45
K-12	440	164	604

256 (K-5); 159 (6-8); 189 (9-12).

The Boards of Education of Scotland and Chrisman believe that Consolidation is of mutual benefit to all students and taxpayers and they support this vote.

Webb Conner
President, Scotland District 23

Con Wheeler
President, Scotland District 162

Robert E. Wyatt
President, Chrisman District 5

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Periodicals

The Danville Commercial News, May 28, 1972.

The Chrisman Leader, January 13, 1972.

The Chrisman Leader, February 17, 1972.

The Chrisman Leader, March 23, 1972.

The Chrisman Leader, March 30, 1972.

The Paris Beacon News, January 8, 1972.

The Paris Beacon News, May 7, 1972.

Unpublished Documents

A Further Look at Reorganization, Robert Dagley, July 27, 1971.

Building Committee Report, Building Committee for Chrisman,
Scotland, and Ridgefarm Schools, 1971.

Citizens Survey of Chrisman, Harrison, and Ridgefarm Districts,
Dr. Robert V. Shuff, April 1969.

Opportunities for Excellence, Governor's Commission on Schools,
1973.

The School Code of Illinois, 1969.