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School Consolidation in Perry County, Illinois

Ronald L. O'Daniell

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School Consolidation In Perry County, Illinois

By

Ronald L. O'Daniell

A Field Experience

Submitted In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of

Specialist In Education

In the Graduate School, Eastern Illinois University
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1992

I Hereby Recommend This Field Experience Be Accepted as Fulfilling This Part of the Graduate Degree Cited Above

10-28-92

Date

10-28-92

Date
Abstract

This is a study of factors relating to school consolidation in Perry County, Illinois. The factors explored in this study are student achievement, student information, per pupil expenditure, and community attitude. An assessment of the perceptions of school board members and superintendents regarding consolidation was conducted through a survey sent to each board member and superintendent in Perry County.

A thorough review of recent literature on consolidation was conducted. Administrators involved in previous consolidation efforts were interviewed. Analysis of the research identifies five specific concerns pertaining to consolidation in Perry County. The concerns are as follows: (a) the maintenance of local control, (b) the financial condition of the school district, (c) the improvement of curriculum, (d) the variance of per pupil expenditure, and (e) the steady decline of enrollment.

The findings and conclusions drawn from this study resulted in recommendations of consolidation procedures for three schools in Perry County. The districts involved in this consolidation are Community Consolidated School District #211, Community Consolidated School District #204, and Tamaroa Elementary #5.
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Chapter 1
Introduction

Background

During the last fifty years, the number of school districts in the nation has declined by over 100,000. The average number of districts per state has declined, but the average number of students has increased over tenfold (Strang, 1987). At the same time, the number of school districts in Illinois has decreased from almost 12,000 to 953 (Illinois State Board of Education, 1991). These figures show that over ten percent of the school districts eliminated in the United States in the past fifty years have been in Illinois.

Several attempts to encourage consolidation have occurred in recent years. In the early 1970's, Governor Richard Ogilvie's "Commission on Schools" Task Force recommended consolidation of all school districts with less than 1000 students. This would have affected 744 of the state's 1140 school districts and would have saved the state a projected 6.4 million dollars (Illinois State Board of Education, 1985). This was merely a recommendation of the Task Force with no follow-up procedure.

In 1975, the Illinois State Board of Education adopted the following goal: "The State Board of Education shall actively promote the formation or consolidation of districts and regions of sufficient size to secure the
resources needed to provide a comprehensive quality program" (Illinois State Board of Education, 1985). Legislative measures were sought which would remove financial and procedural problems for reorganization. This process of promoting the establishment of larger school districts created a "bigger is better" syndrome in the education arena. Also, smaller schools were looked upon as less efficient and more backward than larger schools. This perception, along with the "bigger is better" syndrome, set the small rural districts against reorganization. Larger schools were perceived to be more efficient and able to supply a more diversified curriculum. However, larger schools were also perceived to be impersonal and filled with bureaucracy.

With the passage of SB 730 and HB 1070, 1985 became known as the "year of education" in Illinois. The State Board of Education was charged with establishing goals consistent with the primary purpose of schooling. Each school was required to create learning objectives based on goals established by the State Board of Education. School accountability was based on assessment of student progress upon reaching the established state and local objectives. The results of the student assessments as well as other facts about the school were to be reported to the public in an annual school report card.
The 1985 reform package contained 169 reform measures (Illinois State Board of Education, 1985). Of the 169 measures, three dealt with school district reorganization. Those three topics (#72, #73, and #75) follow:

Topic #72; Bill #: SB 730 and SJR 25; School District Organization Studies; Summary of Selected Portions:

This new Act addresses the issue of school district organization and structure. It provides that within sixty (60) days of the effective date of SB 730 (August 1, 1985) there shall be a committee for the reorganization of school districts in each of Educational Service Regions. In Cook County, three reorganization committees will be created. No later than June 30, 1986 each reorganization committee must submit to the State Board of Education a plan for the reorganization of appropriate school districts within the region. Each plan must insure that every school district will meet the following minimum criteria unless a justifiable exception is stated: unit district organization, an enrollment of 1,500 pupils; elementary districts, 1,000 pupils; and high school districts, 500 pupils.

If the reorganization plan is rejected by the State Board of Education, a revised plan must be submitted by the regional committee within sixty (60) days. Upon final approval of the plan by the State Board of Education, the proposed plan will be submitted to the voters at the April 1987 consolidated election. If approved by a majority of the voters in each of the affected school districts the plan will be implemented on July 1, 1988. If the plan is rejected by the voters, the State Board of Education and regional committee may amend the plan to overcome objections to it and resubmit the plan to the voters at the November 1987 election. The General Assembly urges local school districts to take action to review school size and district organization utilizing academic achievement as the major criterion of organizational effectiveness. The State Board of Education shall monitor, evaluate and include in its annual report required under section 2-3.11 of the School Code of Illinois a report of its progress.

Contact During Initial Planning State: John Alford, Department of Planning, Research and Evaluation, 100 North First Street, Springfield, IL 62777 217/782-4980.

Source and Amount of Funds: $800,000 in grants.
School District Activities:
1. Required Components: a) Create organizational committee to develop reorganization plan--timeline, within 60 days; b) Submit plan to the State Board of Education (State Committee)--timeline, by June 30, 1986; c) Publish notices of hearings on plans, hold hearings, make revisions and submit to the State Board of Education--timeline, within 10 days; d) If plan approved by a majority of voters, implement--timeline, by July 1, 1988; e) If plan rejected by voters, the State Board of Education and reorganization committees shall revise the plan; f) Resubmit to voters for vote--timeline, Nov. 1987; and g) If resubmitted plan rejected, dissolve reorganization committee.

2. Permissive Components.

Topic #73; Bill #: SB 1278; Reorganization Petitions; Summary of Selected Portions:

Reorganization petitions for community unit districts must set forth the highest existing maximum tax rates of the several districts within the territory of the proposed district.

Contact During Initial Planning Stage: John Alford, Department of Planning, Research and Evaluation, 100 North First Street, Springfield, IL 62777 217/782-4980.

Source and Amount of Funds: NA.

School District Activities:
1. Required Components: a) File petitions with regional superintendent; b) Request submission of proposals at regularly scheduled elections; c) Describe the territory; d) Set maximum tax rates; e) Designate a Committee of Ten (10); f) Regional superintendents hold hearings; and g) Submit petitions to the State Superintendent for approval or denial.

2. Permissive Components.

Topic #75; Bill #: SB 77; Deactivation of High Schools; Summary of Selected Portions:

School boards are permitted to deactivate any high school facility subject to referendum approval for up to five (5) years. If they have not otherwise acted or the high school is not reactivated, reorganization proceedings occur during the sixth year.

Contact During Initial Planning State: John Alford, Department of Planning, Research and Evaluation, 100 North First Street, Springfield, IL 62777 217/782-4980.

Source and Amount of Funds: NA.

School District Activities:
1. Required Components.
2. Permissive Elements:  a) A school district may deactivate any high school facility with voter approval at regularly scheduled election and approval of receiving district; b) It may send students to another district for two year periods, with renewal contracts of one or two year periods, but not in excess of five years; c) Sending districts pay tuition; d) Subject to voter approval, a district may reactivate a previously deactivated facility; e) If not reactivated after five years, voters to consider reorganization; and f) If rejected the facility is reactivated at beginning of sixth year (p. 10).

Since 1986 was a gubernatorial election year, it is the opinion of the researcher that politics played an important role in the decline of the consolidation movement. Educators came out against consolidation during the election and politicians felt it was politically unpopular to support consolidation. The governor allowed the committees to be formed and the studies to be completed, but nothing else was mandated. This effectively put school consolidation on hold at that time.

The 1991-92 loss of $176,000,000 in state aid (Illinois State Board of Education, 1991) and additional categorical reductions to Illinois school districts have brought the consideration of consolidation efforts back to the forefront. Many districts already on the State's "watch list" because of financial problems now find themselves in even worse condition because of these unexpected revenue reductions. Furthermore, Illinois has fallen from near the top (7th) to near the bottom (44th) in the nation in per pupil expenditure (Southern Illinoisan, August 27, 1989).
Besides having the highest unemployment rate in the state, Perry County (the location of this study) has a declining population and pupil enrollment, and unstable property tax values (Southern Illinoisan, May, 1992). The land in Perry County is, for the most part, gently rolling hills and large, flat, fertile, alluvial plains (See Appendix A). There are no large urban areas or major industries located in the region. Agriculture and mining are the main export industries. Corn, soybeans, wheat, and milo are the main farm crops. Limestone, clay, silica, and coal are the major mining products (Jackson-Perry County Reorganization Report, 1985).

The prospects of financial recovery in Perry County are bleak. Many of the mines have already closed and those still producing are constantly laying off workers. Lower farmland and mine values indicate that property tax values will continue to decline in Perry County.

Statement of Problem

This study helps to determine the feasibility of a neighboring district consolidating with the researcher's district. Student achievement, student information, per pupil expenditure, and community attitude are the factors considered in this study. The study weighs the relative influence of each of these factors on consolidation efforts. Ravitch (1984) states that the lack of a set of shared values may weaken the bond between the school and
the community. This study also helps to determine if consolidation can be accomplished without destroying the identity between the community and the school which serves its children.

The following is a listing of the public schools in Perry County: (a) DuQuoin Unit #300 (b) Pinckneyville Elementary #204 (the researcher is Superintendent of this district) (c) Pinckneyville Elementary #50 (d) Pinckneyville High School #101 (e) Tamaroa Elementary #5, and (f) Tamaroa Elementary #211 (Appendix B). The superintendents and school board members of the above named schools of Perry County were surveyed for this study.

Assumptions

It is assumed that school board members and superintendents are representative of the views of the communities they serve. It is also assumed that all involved in this study are sincere in pursuing the best educational interests of the students in Perry County. Another assumption is that the current attendance centers are deemed crucial to community identification. A final assumption is that the State prefers district restructuring that creates larger districts.

Limitations

The only school districts used in this study are the public schools in Perry County. Other districts may be referred to in a collective or very specific nature. The
survey instruments were limited to the superintendents and board members of public schools in Perry County.

Operational Definitions

1. **Assessed Value** is the value placed on property for tax purposes and used as a basis for division of the tax burden. This amount is subject to the state issued equalization factor and the deduction of the homestead exemptions.

2. **Average Daily Attendance** is the aggregate number of pupil days in attendance divided by the number of days in the regular school session. A pupil who attends school for five or more clock hours while school is in session constitutes one pupil day of attendance. The best three months average daily attendance of the prior year is used in calculating General State Aid for the current year.

3. **Annexation** is the process by which a school district which has been dissolved is attached to one or more neighboring districts.

4. **Consolidation** is the merger of two or more school districts resulting in an entirely new district.

5. **Corporate Personal Property Replacement Tax** is a state tax on the net income of corporations, partnerships, and other businesses that replaces the local tax on the assessed value of corporate personal property.

6. **Dissolution** is the process by which a school district closes and goes out of business.
7. **Dual School System** is a situation in which a separate elementary district (K-8) and a high school district (9-12) serve the same geographic area.

8. **Equalized Assessed Valuation (EAV)** is the assessed value of real property multiplied by the state equalization factor; this gives the value of the property from which the tax rate is calculated after deducting homestead exemptions, if applicable. For farm acreage, farm buildings, and coal rights, the final assessed value is the equalized value.

9. **Levy** is the amount of money a school district certifies to be raised from the property tax.

10. **Operating Expense Per Pupil** is the gross operating cost of a school district (except summer school, adult education, bond principal retired, and capital expenditures) divided by the average daily attendance for the regular school term.

11. **Operating Tax Rate** is a school district's total tax rate less the tax rates for bond and interest, rent, vocational education construction, summer school, capital improvements, and community college tuition purposes.

12. **Regional Superintendent** is the chief school officer for the county or counties that comprise an educational service region. The Regional Superintendent supervises the school districts and cooperatives within that region.
13. **Reorganization** is the changing of the structure of existing school districts. This usually involves the merger of two or more districts into or within a larger school district.

14. **School_Report_Card** is a required annual report on the performance of each school and each school's students.

15. **State_Aid_Formulas** are the formulas legislated by the General Assembly for apportioning General State Aid and certain categorical aids.

16. **Tax_Rate** is the amount of tax due stated in terms of a percentage of the tax base. Example: 2.76 percent of equalized assessed valuation is a representation of a tax rate of $2.76 per one hundred dollars of equalized assessed valuation of property.

17. **Unit_District** is a school district that encompasses all grade levels (K-12).

18. **Weighted_Average_Daily_Attendance_ (WADA)** is the General State Aid provided to districts based on average daily attendance (ADA). ADA is adjusted to correct perceived varying pupil education needs. The General State Aid law "weights" or "adjusts" Pre-K-6 students at 1.00, 7th and 8th grade students at 1.05, and grade 9-12 students at 1.25.

**Uniqueness of the Study**

Consolidation is a real possibility in the researcher's school district. The goal of this study is to
gather information about consolidation that will aid the researcher's school district should reorganization occur. The scope of the study was purposely restricted so that the factors that might affect consolidation in the researcher's district would not be affected by outside forces.
Chapter II
Rationale, Related Literature and Research

Rationale

Reorganization is not easy. Psychological barriers, financial concerns, and curriculum needs must be considered before reorganization is instituted. Fullan and Miles (1992) assert that "Resistance is inevitable, because people resist change" (p. 745). Resistance is often expressed in the form of fear of loss of local control, the school being taken from the neighborhood, loss of parental influence, higher taxes, and loss of community identity.

Review of Literature and Research

Barr (1959) notes that consolidation has been most successful in states where it was mandated, most notably Indiana. In 1958, the American Association of School Administrators suggested that the following factors should be researched when considering reorganization; (a) the quality of the teaching staffs (b) the condition of the buildings and equipment (c) educational opportunities that meet the needs of all students (d) the ability of the administration (e) use of equipment, personnel, and financial resources, and (f) parental involvement.

The uncertain financial conditions facing school districts demand efficiency. Conventional wisdom suggests that school districts will attain greater efficiency by consolidating underutilized facilities. Cost savings can
be realized by eliminating redundant personnel and maintaining fewer buildings. However, when two schools consolidate, the highest teacher salary schedule is used, transportation costs usually increase, and the new tax rate may be higher than one or both of the old tax rates. Berger (1983) shows that educational leaders cannot always anticipate the costs associated with consolidations.

Guthrie (1979) states that in the instance of rural schools it is exceedingly unclear that efficiency favors larger districts. In a study of school district operating costs in British Columbia, Coleman and LaRocque (1984) conclude that there is no relationship between school size and per pupil operating expense. Reorganizing small districts into larger ones would simply spread the high costs over a larger population, thus concealing them.

However, Torres (1983) and Brodinsky (1981) find that school reorganization could increase the financial efficiency as well as the curricular effectiveness of schools. Curricular as well as extra-curricular offerings could be expanded. More teachers could be employed with the additional income from an expanded tax base.

Torres (1983) goes on to state that parents of school age children make up only 25% of the population of any given community. With 75% of the people not receiving services directly from the schools, the passage of local referendums seems remote. Sher (1988) states that "What
resources schools have are less important than what schools actually do with whatever resources they may possess" (p.17). The administration controls the expenditures and evaluates the programs and personnel. It can be concluded that strong administrative leadership is vital for schools to be successful.

Kidd (1986) shows that the school is often the community center for athletic, social, and cultural events. Such events create a feeling of the school belonging to the community. The U.S. Department of Education states in America 2000 (1991) "Schools will never be much better than the commitment of their communities" (p. 12). It is easy to see that most communities revolve around their school. People take the closing of their school very emotionally and see it as a blow from which the community may not recover. In a personal interview with school attorney Merry Rhoades of Carbondale, Illinois, she stated that she had witnessed the abandonment of consolidation efforts because "it could not be agreed upon what to do with the basketball trophies" (M. Rhoades, personal communication, September 7, 1992). She also reported that she seldom observed as much emotion in her law practice as she witnessed in school consolidation proceedings. She stated that "communities become so attached to their schools that common sense becomes lost in the fray" (M. Rhoades, personal communication, September 7, 1992).
Kay (1982) summarizes the importance of school and community when he says:

In the late twentieth century we have reached the far extreme in the separation of education from all other cultural and social institutions. One effect of the extent of that separation has been the illusion that education and formal schooling are equivalent. With professional educators and lay persons alike paying so much attention to the problems of the schools, there is a tendency to forget that people learn before they go to school, after they leave school, and outside school (p. 9).

State incentives (See Appendix C) to consolidate have had an impact on the number of consolidations since the 1985 reform package (Illinois State Board of Education, 1989). The researcher was informed in an interview with Jim Koss, Superintendent of Casey-Westfield, that the state incentives were an important factor in the consolidation of the two districts. All state incentives were paid as promised and on time (J. Koss, personal communication, November 8, 1991). This was not the case in a recent Jackson County consolidation. Dr. Michael Mugge, Superintendent of Murphysboro Unit 186, informed the researcher that he had been notified that the promised incentive money of the Murphysboro/Trico/Mississippi Valley consolidation was on hold indefinitely (M. J. Mugge, personal communication, November 12, 1991).

Local control was the primary issue in the Blue Ridge consolidation. Ken Reed, a principal in one of the districts during the consolidation process, stated that there were problems and hard feelings from the very
beginning. The communities involved did not receive the promised representation on the new board of education. Additionally, there was a complete administrative turnover, and at the same time, a teachers' strike occurred. Reed stated that education was at a standstill in the district (Ken Reed, personal communication, November 15, 1991).

Glaub and Billings report in the *Illinois School Board Journal* (1991) that the state of Illinois is in such deep financial difficulty that if there were a "financial watch list" for states, Illinois would most certainly be on it. They conclude that "the state's precarious financial condition, combined with public attitudes toward government spending, will most likely widen the gulf between society's educational needs and what political leaders can do to fill those needs" (p. 3).

Tye (1992) contends "there are still inequities within the educational system" (p. 10). Such inequities are evident in the Illinois educational system. An attempt to address this problem is being made through the proposed changes in the Education Amendment to the Illinois Constitution.
Chapter III
Design of the Study

General Design

This study is organized into the four areas of student achievement, student information, per pupil expenditure, and community attitudes. Since consolidation is a very complex issue, a multi-measure study approach is used. This approach consists of utilizing school report cards, a survey, interviews, and state reports. This allows the researcher to report the relative influence of the four factors (student achievement, student information, per pupil expenditure, and community attitudes) upon school consolidation.

Research Questions

The researcher devised the following questions to aid in determining the pros and cons should consolidation occur in his district.

1. Will consolidation reduce per pupil expenditures? Information to answer this question is obtained from the 1991-92 school report card.

2. Do any of the districts have ACT scores below the state average? ACT scores are obtained from the school report cards.

3. Will consolidation provide expanded extra-curricular offerings? This information is calculated from the board members' survey.
4. Do any of the districts fall below the state average graduation rate? This information is obtained from the school report card.

5. Do any of the districts' attendance rates fall below the state average? This information is obtained from the school report card.

6. Are any of the districts experiencing declining enrollment? Enrollment information was obtained from the Regional Superintendent's office.

7. Will the community accept consolidation? This information is calculated from the board members' survey.

8. Do any of the districts have IGAP scores below the state average? IGAP scores are obtained from the school report cards.

9. What will be the perceived social impact on the community should consolidation occur? This information is calculated from the board members' survey.

10. How will the community be affected economically should consolidation occur? This information is calculated from the board members' survey.

The tables in the following chapter are organized to allow for comparative analysis of the data in this study. This allows the researcher to determine how his district compares with the other Perry County school districts.
Sample and Population

Due to the relatively small number of school districts in Perry County (6), all board members and superintendents were surveyed (Appendix D). Interviews were conducted with administrators that had previously been involved with consolidations. Those interviewed were Superintendent Michael Mugge, Principal Ken Reed, and Superintendent Jim Koss.

Data Collection and Analysis

School report cards and state reports of all Perry County public schools were obtained from the Jackson-Perry County Regional Superintendent of Schools. A survey was sent to the school board members and superintendents of the Perry County public schools. Tables are used to organize the data collected for this study. The tables compare: (a) curriculum factors in the areas of reading and math in grade 3 scores, grade 6 scores, grade 8 scores, grade 11 scores; (b) ACT scores; (c) graduation rate; (d) attendance rate; (e) perceived social impact based on community attitudes; (f) enrollment trends; and (g) per pupil expenditure.
Chapter IV

Results

Overview

The results of this study are presented in five tables. These tables provide answers to the questions proposed in Chapter III. The first table is entitled Student Achievement. This table compares the IGAP scores for grades 3, 6, 8, and 11 and the ACT scores of the high schools. The state mean is shown for comparison purposes. The second table is entitled Student Information. This table shows the graduation rate, attendance rate, and current enrollment of the Perry County schools. The state mean for graduation and attendance is provided for comparison purposes. The third table is a supplemental Student Information table entitled Enrollment. This table provides the enrollments of each district for each year since 1981. The next table is entitled Per Pupil Expenditure. This table provides the per pupil expenditure of each district. The final table is entitled Survey Summary. This table summarizes the surveys that were sent to the board members and superintendents.

Tables

Table 1 presents the IGAP scores (R. = Reading and M. = Math) for grades 3, 6, 8, and 11 and the ACT scores for Perry County Schools.
Table 1

**Student Achievement**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School</th>
<th>Grade 3 R. M.</th>
<th>Grade 6 R. M.</th>
<th>Grade 8 R. M.</th>
<th>Grade 11 R. M.</th>
<th>ACT Score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>DuQuoin #300</td>
<td>262 243</td>
<td>253 245</td>
<td>265 242</td>
<td>271 255</td>
<td>22.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P'ville #204</td>
<td>241 217</td>
<td>290 278</td>
<td>303 284</td>
<td>- -</td>
<td>--</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P'ville #50</td>
<td>269 290</td>
<td>251 229</td>
<td>287 288</td>
<td>- -</td>
<td>--</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P'ville #101</td>
<td>- -</td>
<td>- -</td>
<td>- -</td>
<td>223 224</td>
<td>22.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tamaroa #5</td>
<td>240 203</td>
<td>221 191</td>
<td>251 219</td>
<td>- -</td>
<td>--</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tamaroa #211</td>
<td>no pupils</td>
<td>292 291</td>
<td>254 275</td>
<td>- -</td>
<td>--</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State Mean</td>
<td>249 255</td>
<td>253 253</td>
<td>254 255</td>
<td>252 250</td>
<td>23.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1 provides information to answer research question 2 (Do any of the districts have ACT scores below the state average?) and question 8 (Do any of the districts have IGAP scores below the state average?). The IGAP and ACT scores are presented for each school. The State Mean score at each level is presented for comparison purposes. Questions 2 and 8 are answered by comparing each district's score in each category with the state mean in that category.
In reference to Question 2, Table 1 presents ACT scores only for DuQuoin and Pinckneyville. The other districts have no ACT scores because they are elementary districts. DuQuoin's ACT score of 22.3 and Pinckneyville's score of 22.1 are slightly below the State Mean score of 23.1. Specifically, the answer to question two is that all the districts (2) that had ACT scores, had scores below the State Average. However, the scores of the 2 districts are quite similar and slightly below the State Average.

In reference to question 8, Table 1 presents the appropriate IGAP scores for grades 3, 6, 8, and 11. The elementary grades (3, 6, and 8), and the high school grade (11), are compared with the State Mean. All DuQuoin grade levels are at or above the State Mean in reading. However, all DuQuoin elementary grades are below the State Mean in math, with the high school grade 11 slightly above the math State Mean. District #204 is below the State Mean in grade 3 in both reading and math. But grades 6 and 8 are well above the State Mean in both reading and math. District #50 is below the State Mean in grade 6 in both reading and math. But grades 3 and 8 are well above the State Mean in both reading and math. District #101 is well below the State Mean in both reading and math in grade 11. Tamaroa District #5 is below the State Mean in all grades tested in both reading and math. Tamaroa District #211 had no pupils
in grade 3 to test. The pupils in grades 6 and 8 were at or above the State Mean in reading and math.

Specifically, the answer to question 8 is that all the districts except District #211 had some IGAP scores below the State Mean. Additionally, District #101 and District #5 had all IGAP scores below the State Mean.

Table 2 presents the graduation rate, attendance rate, and current enrollment of the districts. (The School Report Card does not provide graduation rate information for elementary schools.)

Table 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School</th>
<th>Grad. Rate</th>
<th>Attend. Rate</th>
<th>Enrollment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>DuQuoin #300</td>
<td>84.2%</td>
<td>94.5%</td>
<td>1,606</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P'ville #204</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>96.7%</td>
<td>153</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P'ville #50</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>95.2%</td>
<td>688</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P'ville #101</td>
<td>87.6%</td>
<td>93.5%</td>
<td>539</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tamaroa #5</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>96.6%</td>
<td>135</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tamaroa #211</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>94.2%</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State Average</td>
<td>78.0%</td>
<td>93.5%</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 2 provides information to answer question 4 (Do any of the districts fall below the state average graduation rate?) and question 5 (Do any of the districts' attendance rates fall below the state average?). The state average graduation and attendance rate is provided for comparison purposes. Questions 4 and 5 can be answered by comparing each district's graduation and attendance rate with the state average. The current enrollment of each district presented in this table will be used in conjunction with table 4 to compute the overall per pupil expenditure per district.

In reference to question 4, Table 2 presents the graduate rates for DuQuoin and Pinckneyville only. Graduation information is not provided for elementary districts. DuQuoin's graduation rate of 84.2% and Pinckneyville's graduation rate of 87.6% are well above the State Average of 78.0%. The answer to question 4 is that none of the districts fall below the state average graduation rate.

In reference to question 5, all districts except one exceed the State Average attendance rate. District #101's attendance rate of 93.5% ties the State Average attendance rate. Therefore, the answer to question 5 is that none of the districts fall below the State Average attendance rate.

Table 3 shows the enrollment for each school district from 1981-82 to 1991-92.
Table 3 provides information to answer question 6 (Are any of the districts experiencing declining enrollment?). Yearly enrollments are provided for each district from 1981-82 to 1991-92 to enable determination of enrollment trends in Perry County.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School Dist.</th>
<th>Tam.</th>
<th>P'ville</th>
<th>P'ville</th>
<th>P'ville</th>
<th>Tam.</th>
<th>DuQ.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>#5</td>
<td>#50</td>
<td>#101</td>
<td>#204</td>
<td>#211</td>
<td>#300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Year</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1981-82</td>
<td>169</td>
<td>781</td>
<td>676</td>
<td>177</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>1,797</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1982-83</td>
<td>160</td>
<td>798</td>
<td>638</td>
<td>172</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>1,803</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1983-84</td>
<td>159</td>
<td>741</td>
<td>632</td>
<td>174</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>1,816</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1984-85</td>
<td>158</td>
<td>761</td>
<td>599</td>
<td>154</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>1,773</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1985-86</td>
<td>154</td>
<td>735</td>
<td>586</td>
<td>171</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>1,766</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1986-87</td>
<td>147</td>
<td>682</td>
<td>603</td>
<td>176</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>1,788</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1987-88</td>
<td>142</td>
<td>690</td>
<td>581</td>
<td>157</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>1,730</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1988-89</td>
<td>149</td>
<td>694</td>
<td>555</td>
<td>163</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>1,655</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1989-90</td>
<td>157</td>
<td>707</td>
<td>549</td>
<td>171</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>1,632</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1990-91</td>
<td>143</td>
<td>722</td>
<td>513</td>
<td>161</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>1,641</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1991-92</td>
<td>135</td>
<td>688</td>
<td>539</td>
<td>153</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>1,606</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In reference to question 6, enrollment information is provided for each district since 1981-82. District #5's enrollment has decreased from 169 in 1981-82 to 135 in 1991-92. This is a 20.1% decline of 34 students. District #50's enrollment has decreased from 781 in 1981-82 to 688 in 1991-92. This is an 11.9% decline of 93 students. District #101's enrollment has decreased from 676 in 1981-82 to 539 in 1991-92. This is a 20.2% decline of 137 students. District #204's enrollment has decreased from 177 in 1981-82 to 153 in 1991-92. This is a 13.5% decline of 24 students. District #211's enrollment has decreased from 63 in 1981-82 to 16 in 1991-92. This is a 74.6% decline of 47 students. District #300's enrollment has decreased from 1,797 in 1981-82 to 1,606 in 1991-92. This is a 10.6% decline of 191 students.

Specifically, the answer to question 6 is that all districts are experiencing declining enrollment, and have been for several years.

Table 4 shows the per pupil expenditure of each district which provides information to answer question one (Will consolidation reduce per pupil expenditure?).
Table 4

*Per Pupil Expenditure*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School</th>
<th>Expenditure</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>DuQuoin #300</td>
<td>$3,628</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P'ville #204</td>
<td>$3,141</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P'ville #50</td>
<td>$2,901</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P'ville #101</td>
<td>$4,268</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tamaroa #5</td>
<td>$2,869</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tamaroa #211</td>
<td>$6,882</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The per pupil expenditure provided by this table multiplied times the enrollment provided in table 2 provides the total expenditures for a given district.

In reference to question 1, the per pupil expenditure of each district is presented. District #300 has a total pupil expenditure of $5,826,568 ($3,628 X 1,606 = $5,826,568). District #204 has a total pupil expenditure of $480,573 ($3,141 X 153 = $480,573). District #50 has a total pupil expenditure of $1,307,888 ($2,901 X 688 = $1,307,888). District #101 has a total pupil expenditure of $2,300,452 ($4,268 X 539 = $2,300,452). District #5 has a total pupil expenditure of $387,315 ($2,869 X 135 = $387,315). District #211 has a total pupil expenditure of $110,112 ($6,882 X 16 = $110,112).
Specifically, the answer to question 1 is that consolidation may reduce per pupil expenditure in some cases. This is demonstrated in Chapter V.

Table 5 summarizes the surveys that were sent to the board members and superintendents of Perry County. Forty-eight surveys were mailed out with a 70.8% return of thirty-four surveys (Appendix E).

Table 5
Survey Summary - School Board Members and Superintendents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>Undecided</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Do you favor consolidation for your school district?</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Do you feel local control is essential for your school district?</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Would you be willing to serve on the new board of education if consolidation occurred?</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Would you favor consolidation if your district was experiencing financial difficulties?</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
5. Would you favor consolidation if your present attendance center was closed?  
   Yes  No  Undecided  
   20  14  0

6. Would you favor consolidation if your present attendance center stayed open but local control was shifted to a unit district board of education?  
   Yes  No  Undecided  
   15  19  0

7. Would you favor consolidation if all present communities were represented on the new board of education?  
   Yes  No  Undecided  
   20  13  1

8. Do you feel current district employees should retain their job seniority status, should consolidation occur?  
   Yes  No  Undecided  
   25  7  2

9. Would you favor consolidation if greater curricular opportunities could be provided?  
   Yes  No  Undecided  
   21  10  3

10. Would you favor consolidation if the State would build new facilities for the newly formed district?  
    Yes  No  Undecided  
    18  16  0
11. What is your estimation of current student participation in extra-curricular activities?
(a) 0-25%  (b) 26-50%  (c) 51-75%  (d) 76-100%
1 19 13 1

12. In your estimation, would this percentage increase or decrease due to consolidation?
(a) increase  (b) decrease  Undecided
8 24 2

13. If your school was closed due to consolidation, how would your community be affected;
(a) Economically?
   (1) Very little  (2) Moderately  (3) Severely
   4 18 12
(b) In community identity?
   (1) Very little  (2) Moderately  (3) Severely
   2 9 23
(c) In community attitudes toward the new school district?
   (1) Very little  (2) Moderately  (3) Severely
   1 14 19

Table 5 provides information to answer question 3 (Will consolidation provide expanded extra-curricular offerings?), question 7 (Will the community accept consolidation?), question 9 (What will be the perceived social impact on the community should consolidation
occur?), and question 10 (How will consolidation affect the economy of the community?). The returned surveys were totaled and tabulated in Table 5. These tabulations provide answers to the above mentioned questions.

In reference to question 3, 23.5% of the respondents indicated that participation in extra-curricular would increase, while 70.5% felt that participation would decrease. Five% were undecided.

In reference to question 7, 5% of the respondents indicated that the community would be affected very little. However, 26.4% stated that the community would be affected moderately, while 67.6% expressed that consolidation would have a severe impact on the community.

In reference to question 9, 55.8% of the respondents indicated that consolidation would have a severe social impact on the community, while 41.1% perceived a moderate impact. Very little impact was indicated by 2.9%.

In reference to question 10, 52.9% of the respondents indicated a moderate impact on the local economy. At the same time, 35.2% expressed that consolidation would have a severe impact on the local economy while 11.7% were undecided what would happen.
Chapter V
Summary, Findings, and Recommendations

Summary

This project is a study of school consolidation in Perry County. Data collected for this research come from five major sources. Those sources are: (a) local district records, (b) state records, (c) a review of related literature, (d) interviews, and (e) a survey. The local district data are taken from the school report cards. The state records were obtained from the Regional Superintendent's office. Surveys were sent to all Perry County school board members and superintendents. Interviews were conducted with administrators previously involved in consolidation efforts.

Findings

According to the 1991 school report card, all districts but one were very close to or above the state mean on IGAP scores (see Table 1). Tamaroa #5 was below the state mean at all grade levels in both math and reading. Both high school districts were just below the ACT state average.

The average attendance rate in 1991 in Illinois schools was 93.5% (see Table 2). One district was at that percent and all others were above. Both high schools were well above the state average 78% graduation rate.
The per pupil expenditure varied widely from a high of $6,882 to a low of $2,869 (see Table 4). However, five of the six districts were below the state average of $4,808. The district with the lowest enrollment (18) had the highest per pupil expenditure. The enrollment of all districts has steadily declined for several years (see Table 3). Total county enrollment was 3,663 students in 1981-82. The 1991-92 total was 3,137, a decline of 526 students. This represents a 14.35% decline since 1981-82.

Only 29.4% of those responding to the survey favor consolidation (see Table 5). However, the survey reveals that a much larger percent (67.6%) would support consolidation if their district was facing financial difficulties. Almost 62% of the respondents favor consolidation if greater curricular opportunities are provided. Only 52.9% favor consolidation if the State provides new facilities for a new district.

Local control of school districts is a primary concern of 91.1% of those responding to the survey. The survey further indicates that 70% feel that student participation in activities will decrease should consolidation occur. Most respondents feel that consolidation will moderately to severely affect the economy of their community. Almost 68% feel that their community's identity will be severely affected, and over 55% state that the community attitude toward a new district would be affected severely.
Recommendations

DuQuoin Unit #300 has an enrollment of 1,641 students and a per pupil expenditure of $3,628. Consolidation of the Pinckneyville and Tamaroa elementary schools with Pinckneyville High School would create a unit district with an enrollment of 1,557 students. The per pupil expenditure of this unit district would be $3,419. The researcher arrived at this figure by multiplying each district's per pupil expenditure by its enrollment and dividing the sum of all the districts' expenditures by the total enrollment of all the districts ($5,323,850 divided by 1,557 = $3,419). This unit district would be comparable with the DuQuoin Unit in both enrollment and per pupil expenditure. This would lower the per pupil expenditure in Districts #101 and #211 and raise the per pupil expenditure in Districts #5, #50, and #204.

Another option is the consolidation of Districts #5, #211, and #204. This would create a district with an enrollment of 322 students and a per pupil expenditure of $3,229. A new facility would be necessary because none of the existing buildings can house the combined enrollment. The cost of a new facility would be very unpopular because of the high unemployment and depressed economy of the area.

A third option is the consolidation of all four Perry County elementary districts. Although District #50 is the largest elementary district in Perry County, it does not
have the facilities to accommodate the enrollment of a
district that size. Therefore, consolidation of the four
elementary districts is not feasible.

The survey of school board members and superintendents
revealed that local control is the major concern of the
respondents. Therefore, any workable consolidation option
must address this issue. Conventional wisdom dictates that
a district the current size of District #211 (e.g. 10
students in 1992-93), with a history of declining
enrollment and a per pupil expenditure of almost $7,000 per
student, should consider reorganization.

Table 1 indicates that in the area of student
achievement, District #211 is more compatible with District
#204. The IGAP scores are much closer in the instance of
District #211 and District #204 when compared to District
#5.

Table 3 demonstrates that all districts have declining
enrollment. District #211's enrollment has declined from
63 students in 1981-82 to 16 students in 1991-92. This is
an enrollment decline of 74.6%. District #5's enrollment
has declined from 169 students in 1981-82 to 135 students
in 1991-92. This is an enrollment decline of 20.1%.
District #204's enrollment has declined from 177 students
in 1981-82 to 153 students in 1991-92. This is an
enrollment decline of 13.5%. This demonstrates that
District #204 has maintained a more stable enrollment over this time period.

Table 4 shows District #211 with a per pupil expenditure of $6,882, District #204 with a per pupil expenditure of $3,141, and District #5 with a per pupil expenditure of $2,869. This would indicate that District #211 could cut per pupil expenditure by more than 50% by consolidating with either district.

The researcher believes that the best option is for District #211 to be divided between District #5 and District #204. A comparison of the present Perry County school district map (see Appendix B) and the redrawn map of the proposed districts (see Appendix G) illustrates the geographical make-up of the two new districts. This would also allow both districts to be entitled to the State Reorganization Incentives (see Appendix C).

The researcher would naturally prefer that District #211 consolidate with his district. However, based on the common boundaries and the information derived from the tables, the option of dividing District #211 between District #5 and District #204 would maintain more possibilities for local control and better serve all the students of Perry County. This type of reorganization would also qualify both districts for state reorganization incentives.
References


Southern Illinoisan Newspaper. May 1, 1992


Jackson-Perry County Reorganization Report, unpublished.


Appendix A

Perry County
Appendix B

Perry County School Districts
PERRY COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICTS

UNIT 300

EL. 50
HS. 101

EL. 204
HS. 101

EL. 5
HS. 101

EL. 211
HS. 101
Appendix C

Reorganization Incentives
STATE INCENTIVE PAYMENTS TO REORGANIZED DISTRICTS

A. TEACHER SALARY DIFFERENCE PAYMENT (Sec. 18-82 of the School Code)

To a reorganized district, the State will make a supplementary payment for three years equal to the difference between:

The sum of the salaries earned by each certified member of the reorganized district while employed in one of the previous existing district, and

The sum of the salaries those certified members would have been paid if placed on the salary schedule of the previous district with the highest salary schedule.

B. GENERAL STATE AID DIFFERENCE PAYMENT (Sec. 18-8 (A) (5) (M) of the School Code)

If a reorganized district qualifies for less general state aid than the previous districts separately would have qualified for, then the state will pay that difference for three years to the reorganized district. If it qualifies for more general state aid, it would receive that additional aid.

State aid is calculated for the first year of existence for a reorganized district.

For that same year, state aid is also calculated on the basis of the previous districts for which property is totally included within the new district.

If the computation on the basis of the previous districts is greater, then a supplementary payment equal to the difference shall be made for the first three years to the reorganized districts.

C. DEFICIT DIFFERENCE PAYMENTS (Section 18-3.3)

Eligible to receive this payment are newly reorganized districts formed by merging property totally within two or more previous districts.
Deficits are calculated by totalling the audited fund balances in the Education Fund; the Working Cash Fund; the Operations and Maintenance Fund; and the Transportation Fund for each previous district.

A school district with a combined fund balance that is positive will be considered to have a deficit of zero.

The calculation is based on the year ending June 30 prior to the decision to form the reorganized district, but adjusted not to consider early tax distribution.

D. $4,000 PAYMENT FOR EACH FULL-TIME CERTIFIED EMPLOYEE (Sec. 18-85 of the School Code)

For each of the first three years, a sum of $4,000 shall be paid for each certified employee who is employed by the reorganized district on a full-time basis for the regular term of any school year.
I. Major Elements of the Petition Filed with the Regional Superintendent

A. Signed by at least 200 voters residing in at least 3/4 of the districts.

B. Must contain signatures of 50 voters or 10 percent of the voters.

C. Must request submission of the proposition at a regularly scheduled election.

D. Must set forth the maximum tax rates for the following funds: 1) education, 2) operations and maintenance, 3) transportation, and 4) fire prevention and safety.

E. Must designate a Committee of Ten.

II. Regional Superintendent Responsibilities

A. Hold a public hearing.

III. State Superintendent's Powers and Duties

A. Approve or deny petition within 30 days after decision of the Regional Superintendent.

IV. Court Review Permitted Following State Superintendent Decisions

V. The proposition to create a community unit school district shall pass if a majority of the voters in each affected district vote in favor of the proposition.

VI. If the proposition fails but is approved by a majority of the voters in at least two community unit school districts, then a second election can be held in these districts, if they are compact and contiguous.

VII. If proposal passes, the election of the board of the new district is to be held at the next regularly scheduled election.
SUMMARY OF SCHOOL DISTRICT REORGANIZATION OPTIONS

1. Annexations, Detachments, Divisions and Dissolutions

Annexation involves adding territory to a district or completely merging an entire school district into another district. Detachment defines the process whereby territory is removed from a district and then annexed to another district. Division is where one school district is broken up into more than one district and dissolution involves eliminating one school district and annexing it to another district.

Articles 7 and 7A of the School Code involve changing the boundaries of a school district through these processes. Article 7-1 of the School Code governs annexation for schools that lie entirely within one educational service region. Article 7-2 deals with districts that lie within more than one education service region/counties. Article 7A involves the dissolution of a unit district which has a high school population of not more than 250 students, the subsequent creation of an elementary district and the annexation of the high school district to a contiguous high school district.

2. Consolidations

Consolidation involves two or more existing school districts merging to create a new school district.

Articles 11A and 11B of the School Code regulate the consolidation process. Article 11A allows for the formation of a unit school district from the combining of two or more community unit districts, elementary and secondary schools, or a combination of all three. Article 11B allows for the creation of a school district by combining two or more elementary school districts or two or more secondary school districts.

3. Deactivation

Deactivation involves the deactivating of a high school and sending its students to one or more other high school districts. This must be approved by both the sending districts and the receiving districts.

Section 10-22.22b of the School Code governs this particular type of school district reorganization.

4. Cooperative High School Attendance Centers

A cooperative high school attendance center can be set up by
two or more contiguous high school districts with an enrollment of less than 600 students. These high school districts would jointly operate and would be governed by an advisory board of members from the cooperating school boards.

Section 10-22.22c of the School Code governs this option.

5. School District Conversion

This is a new section which allows for two or more contiguous unit districts or one or more contiguous unit and high school districts to form one new high school district and a number of new elementary districts based on the boundaries of the dissolved unit district. No school district involved in this may have more than 600 students enrolled in grades 9 through 12 unless they receive a size waiver from the State Superintendent of Education.

Article I1D of the School Code governs this relatively new type of reorganization which went into effect September 7, 1990.
Appendix D

Survey Letter
Dear

As a Specialist Degree candidate in the Department of Educational Administration at Eastern Illinois University in Charleston, I am conducting a study to examine factors relating to school consolidation within Perry County. The problem of school funding is causing consolidation to be reconsidered by many school districts throughout the state. Participation in this study involves taking a few minutes to fill out the enclosed survey.

Participation in this study is entirely voluntary on your part. All of your responses will be confidential and anonymous. You will not be asked to give your name or in any way identify yourself or your school district.

This survey is being sent to current and former school board members in Perry County. If you have questions, please feel free to contact me at 357-2419 through the day or 735-2964 in the evenings.

Please complete and return the enclosed survey in the pre-addressed, stamped envelope as soon as possible. Thank you for participating in this survey.

The Chairman of the Department of Educational Administration at Eastern Illinois University is Dr. Larry Janes. My Field Study Supervisor is Dr. David Bartz. Both may be reached at 217-581-2919, Eastern Illinois University, Charleston, Illinois.

Again, thank you.
Appendix E

Survey Instrument
Please circle your response to these questions.

1. Do you favor consolidation for your school district? yes no
2. Do you feel local control is essential for your school district? yes no
3. Would you be willing to serve on the new board of education, if consolidation occurred? yes no
4. Would you favor consolidation if your district was experiencing financial difficulties? yes no
5. Would you favor consolidation if your present attendance center was closed? yes no
6. Would you favor consolidation if your present attendance center stayed open but local control shifted to a unit district board of education? yes no
7. Would you favor consolidation if all present communities were represented on the new board of education? yes no
8. Do you feel current district employees should retain their job seniority status, should consolidation occur? yes no
9. Would you favor consolidation if greater curricular opportunities could be provided? yes no
10. Would you favor consolidation if the State would build new facilities for the newly formed district? yes no
11. What is your estimation of current student participation in extra-curricular activities?
   (a) 0 - 25%   (b) 26 - 50%   (c) 51 - 75%   (d) 76-100%
12. In your estimation, would this percentage increase or decrease due to consolidation?
   (a) increase   (b) decrease
13. If your school was closed due to consolidation, how would your community be affected?

A) Economically?
   (1) Very little  (2) Moderately  (3) Severely

B) In community identity?
   (1) Very little  (2) Moderately  (3) Severely

C) In community attitudes toward the new school district?
   (1) Very little  (2) Moderately  (3) Severely

14. Please add additional comments below:

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________
Appendix F

Follow-up Letter
Dear Board Member:

A few days ago, you received a School Consolidation Survey with a request to complete and return the survey.

If you have completed and returned the survey, I want to thank you for your cooperation. If you have not found the time to complete the survey, I hope you can do so soon.

Please return the survey in the self-addressed, stamped envelope as soon as you can.

I really appreciate you taking the time to complete this survey. Again, I thank you for your cooperation.

Sincerely,

Ron O'Daniel
Appendix G

Reorganized District's Map