



The feasibility of the regional school.

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THE FEASIBILITY OF THE REGIONAL SCHOOL

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THE FEASIBILITY OF THE REGIONAL SCHOOL

BY

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A problem submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the Master of
Science Degree

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Although American educators interested in the secondary school have believed for long that their most pressing difficulties were qualitative in nature, they are faced in these times with a problem that is basically quantitative.¹ There are many small secondary schools whose potentialities definitely appear to be restricted by their limited enrollments. On the other hand there are large schools of such size as to lead many to question their value. Schools from both these groups have a right to feel that many of their difficulties emanate from the size of their enrollment. How much efficiency is impaired by size is a question for each administrator to settle for himself.

Enrollment in Secondary Schools -- We have accepted the ideal of universal secondary education in the United States.² During each decade since 1890 the number of high school pupils in this country has doubled so that now approximately 65% of all girls and boys of high school age in the country are enrolled in secondary schools. Reasons why this figure is not closer to one hundred percent are various, but it is safe to assume that many of the thirty-five percent not attending secondary school have not been convinced of the importance of a high school education. In a recent survey conducted by the guidance department in Ware, Massachusetts, covering a five-year period, it was found that most of those who had not completed the high school course had not found what they wanted. These people did not feel that they had benefited from

(1) Seyfert, School Size and School Efficiency, Chapter I

(2) Longfitt, Cyr, Newson, The Small High School at York, p.v (1)

their contact, however extended, with secondary education.

General Aims of Secondary Education -- Since the origin of the Latin Grammar School, the administration of secondary schools has become vastly more complex and technical. Until the beginning of the present century the chief goal of the high school was to prepare pupils for more advanced education. The secondary school of today is offering a much broader program. Stimulated by an environment which is largely mechanical and an economic situation which has made the high school to a large degree a terminal school, those who direct the destinies of the education of the nation have done their best to keep up with the times. There has, of necessity, been a revision of aims and goals, the fulfillment of which has been varied, for the most part, in proportion to the quality of personnel and type of equipment available. In the last sixty years the following changes which have gradually taken place in our society have made their impressions on school planning and policy:

- (1) Urbanisation of the population
- (2) Material prosperity
- (3) Division of labor and occupational specialization
- (4) Democratization of political and civic powers.
- (5) Internationalism³

These changes in society have crystalized the aims of secondary education so that at the present time those in the field think of the goals of secondary education in the following terms:

- (1) Providing an educative environment peculiarly appropriate

(3) Smith, Secondary Education in the United States. p. 226

to adolescence.

- (2) Providing for the exploration of the self and the environment.
- (3) Providing for guidance on the basis of scientific diagnosis.
- (4) Effecting adequate, social integration.
- (5) Providing for individual differences.
- (6) Providing a suitable education for all normal individuals of secondary school age.
- (7) Providing for progress growth and development in self-dependence.
- (8) Encouraging the creative impulse.⁴

Relationship Between Size and Efficiency in the Secondary School --

If we accept the functions of the secondary school as they are listed above and if the size of the school has some bearing upon its efficiency in achieving success in carrying out these functions, there must be some way of determining, within reasonable limits, the ideal size of a school. The problems of the extremely small school, and about one-third of the high schools of the country have fewer than one hundred students, may be classified as follows: providing an effective teaching staff, building an adequate program, securing proper supervision and administration, developing a satisfactory physical plant, and carrying on a desirable

(4) Smith, Secondary Education in the United States. pp. 146

extra-curricular program.⁵ At the other extreme, in schools of 800 or more there are problems, different in character, but none the less apparent. However, we are not concerned with the large schools in this study. Sufficient is it to remember that the problems of the large school are, in general, those which usually attend the administration of large groups whose functions are carried on in sections. Military organizations have long recognized the merits of establishing membership limits in its working units.

Problems of the Small School -- Some of these problems of the small school which are listed in the previous paragraph need but casual mention. It is apparent that the maintaining of an effective staff is difficult mainly because the remuneration is such that the good teachers move along quickly while the poor teachers remain. There is, probably, considerable validity to the charge that there is a dearth of good supervision and administration in the small school. This is due not only to the small salaries usually available but also to the fact that the small school principal, in most cases, is burdened with a full schedule of classes and has neither time nor energy for anything but the bare essentials in administration. Extra-curricula activities are definitely limited in the small school both because of limits in the physical plant and lack of availability of proper supervision. It is generally accepted that, except for a small percentage of wide-awake, educationally conscious communities, the physical plant for the small school

(5) Seyfert, School Size and School Efficiency. p. 212

is far from adequate. All of the foregoing have some effect upon curriculum, which is the core of activity in any school. Scholarship, achievement and preparation for life are its reasons for being. Therefore, in any school it is important that those in charge evaluate the situation from time to time and from such evaluations make recommendations which will improve the offerings of the school.

Possible Alternatives for the Small School -- For the purposes of this paper let us consider the small school as one with fewer than two hundred pupils. "As measured by the average size of recitation classes, senior high schools with fewer than forty-five students per grade may be considered small and definitely handicapped by their size."⁶ Such a school would have an enrollment of about two hundred pupils. On the average, in schools of this size in Massachusetts, education for all is not available. The typical school of this class offers a college preparatory course, a commercial course and a general course. No facilities are available for other vocational courses. However, the modern concept of education embraces the philosophy that every normal adolescent should have access to education according to his gifts and abilities. "No one can question that serious inequalities in educational opportunities do exist."⁷ How, then, may the small town which supports a small high school fulfill the needs of all its youth in secondary education? The addition of a complete vocational program to the high school curriculum would be too costly. The building of a trade school would be out of

(6) Seyfert, School Size and School Efficiency. p. 212

(7) Boswing, Principles of Secondary Education. p. 331

the question because of the number of pupils affected could not possibly justify the expenditure. Let us, then, consider the possibility of having two or several towns faced with the same problem of offering complete education to its youth pooling their resources in consolidation, thereby lessening the expense to each community while adequately meeting the needs of the region.

The Regional High School -- The idea of consolidation is not new. It has been practiced many times during the past twenty-five years not only between communities but also within communities when those who pay the taxes have been convinced of the expediency of such practice. The closing of district schools to create a large central school has taken place in many towns in Massachusetts. The town of Ware had eight elementary school buildings twenty years ago but now it has but one. Ashland built a large central school in 1928 which replaced several small schools most of which were in the outlying districts. These are but a few examples of consolidation within a community which had a dual purpose: (1) to close schools which were too small for efficient operation, (2) to save money in the maintaining of a school plant. Such a movement was readily accepted by the voters in these communities because it was apparent that the change would be beneficial. However, these same communities, and in Massachusetts they are numerous, maintain high schools in which the offerings are limited and the expense for those limited offerings, exorbitant. If consolidation works for the grade schools within a community whose extremities may be ten, twelve or fifteen miles apart why may it not be equally advantageous to have two or more towns

consolidate their high schools when the distances between the extreme boundaries of the proposed region is not prohibitive.

CHAPTER II

STATEMENT OF PROBLEM AND OUTLINE OF PROCEDURE

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STATEMENT OF PROBLEM AND OUTLINE OF PROCEDURE

The towns of Ware, Belchertown, Hardwick and Warren in Massachusetts are faced either with the problem of overcrowding in the secondary schools, or the need for new buildings, or a combination of both these situations. This condition which is rapidly reaching an emergency stage has not come upon these communities suddenly and without warning. In all four towns there has been an awareness of an approaching day when the building situation would have to be considered seriously and some solution adopted.

Situation in Ware -- The high school in Ware was erected in 1894, and an addition was made to it in 1925 but this was burned to the ground five years later and was rebuilt in 1933. The enrollment of the high school plant includes the six upper grades plus one first grade room and one second grade room. The gymnasium is too small both from the point of view of playing surface and seating capacity; there is no assembly hall; every classroom is in use every period of the day and there are no facilities for the teaching of vocational arts other than home economics.

Situation in Belchertown -- Belchertown High School is an addition to the Belchertown Town Hall and conditions are so overcrowded that during some periods the same room must be used for both study and recitation. The Belchertown officials are anxious to solve their problem in an acceptable manner.

Situation in Warren -- Warren High School is a comparatively new building. However, its space is shared by pupils in the grades. Three principals administer within its walls and the gymnasium has to be used

for assembly purposes. There are no shops.

Situation in Hardwick -- From the point of view of space Hardwick is perhaps the best situated of the four towns. The high school building is large enough, the building has been kept in good repair but in this case the assembly hall has been converted into a gymnasium which is too small but gives the pupils a chance to play basketball. The grade school building in Hardwick, however, is a relic of another century and the town might well transfer its pupils to the present high school building and consider another solution to its secondary problem. In Hardwick, too, the vocational aspects of education are treated inadequately.

Distances Involved -- Here, then, we have four towns -- Ware, Hardwick, Belchertown and Warren. The three smaller towns, Hardwick, Belchertown and Warren border upon the largest town, Ware. It is ten miles from the center of Belchertown to the center of Ware; Hardwick is four miles from Ware and Warren, seven.

Enrollment Figures -- On October 1, 1949, there were 256 pupils in Ware High School, 85 in Hardwick High School, 165 in Warren High School while Belchertown had an enrollment of 120. Taken together these numbers would total 626 with the distinct possibility, because of the upward trend throughout the country, that there would be a decided increase during the next four years.

A Comparable Situation in Connecticut -- Six towns in the northwest corner of Connecticut were faced with this same problem little more than ten years ago. The leaders in all of these towns, Canaan, Cornwall, Kent, North Canaan, Salisbury and Sharon were aware of the inadequacy

of the educational offerings of the region on the secondary level. The towns, following the necessary steps provided under the state laws of Connecticut, voted to erect a single high school plant which would serve all six of the towns, and which would be situated in the best possible location considering both the quality of the sites available and the distances of those sites from the homes of prospective pupils. The Housatonic Valley Regional High School has been in successful operation for ten years.

Statement of the Problem -- This problem is an attempt to solve the secondary school problem of the section of Massachusetts which we shall call the Quabbin Valley, since that is the name most often used in connection with the region, in much the same manner in which the people of Housatonic Valley solved theirs. The two regions are somewhat similar in topographical features; distances involved are about the same and the reasons for considering a permanent solution distinctly similar.

Procedure to be Followed -- To present this problem and its implications clearly the writer plans to expose the situation in the Connecticut region as it was before consolidation and the situation in the Quabbin Valley as it is now. Then there will be presented an account of what has been achieved by consolidation in the Housatonic Valley and, what on the basis of comparison, might be expected if a similar project were brought to consummation in the Quabbin region.

CHAPTER III

PERTINENT FACTS, DATA AND STATISTICS

REGARDING HOUSATONIC REGION

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PERTINENT FACTS, DATA AND STATISTICS

REGARDING HOUSATONIC REGION

Although regional or consolidated schools have been built in other parts of the country, New England with its traditions and worship of names and boundaries has been slow in adopting the idea. The first regional high school in the six northeastern states was built in the Housatonic region of Connecticut in 1939.

Brief History of Movement Toward a Regional High School in the Housatonic Region -- "Consideration of a regional high school in northwestern Connecticut began as early as 1923, but the advent of the depression postponed its development. In the 1937 session of the General Assembly, however, a special act creating Regional High School District Number One of Litchfield County was passed by both houses and was signed by Governor Cross on June 11. During the months of August, September and October, six special town meetings gave their approval to the new project and the Regional High School Board came into existence in October.

Shortly after a site of some seventy-five acres had been selected in Falls Village¹.
construction began in October 1938. The cornerstone was laid on April 12th and the building was formally opened on September 25, 1939. The total cost of the building was \$375,000.00."²

(1) Canaan

(2) Excerpt from Program of Ceremonies Attendant upon the Tenth Anniversary of the Housatonic Valley Regional High School

Total Costs for Secondary Education to Communities in the Housatonic Region Before and After the Building of the Regional School -- The first full year of operation of the Housatonic Valley Regional High School was in 1939-1940. Therefore, if we take the data for the last two years before opening and for the first two years of the new school, and compare them, we should receive some impression as to what has been accomplished. These questions should be answered. Was the Regional School been more expensive to the communities concerned? If so, is there compensation in other values?

Table I

Total Costs for Secondary Education to Communities in the Housatonic Region Before and After the Building of the Regional School.

Town	1937-1938	1938-1939	1939-1940	1940-1941
Canaan	2,459.87	3,319.25	3,905.25	2,991.31
Cornwall	5,302.84	5,586.57	7,287.81	6,378.70
Kent	6,102.04	7,907.97	7,588.47	7,280.22
N. Canaan	13,411.43	13,840.09	19,046.18	22,413.72
Salisbury	15,518.86	15,768.21	19,278.61	22,183.79
Sharon	<u>7,740.40</u>	<u>9,314.37</u>	<u>14,310.96</u>	<u>15,156.45</u>
Total	50,535.44	55,736.46	71,417.28	76,404.39

From Table I it is apparent that total expense increased consider-

ably in some of the communities as soon as the new school was opened. This could be traced to a number of reasons. There is the additional burden of expense to which a town commits itself in the creation of a new school plant. The salary schedule was raised gradually starting with the first year so that the ~~maximum~~ for teachers is now \$4500.00 instead of \$2,000.00. However, even with these considerations, the increase of about \$16,000.00 during the first year of consolidation is alarming at first glance. This amounted to about 28% and, during the second year the increase jumped to 35%. So great a change would certainly not be a source of encouragement to other towns contemplating regional organizations if there were not other factors to be considered. The fact that there was an increase of over \$5,000.00 between the years 1937-1938 and 1938-1939 throws some light on the situation because, apparently, school costs were increasing anyway. There are other possible explanations which may be explored.

Number of Pupils in the Six Towns Attending Secondary School Before and After the Building of the Regional School -- There is the possibility that more pupils attended secondary school in the area after the building of the new school, thereby adding to the total expense. Let us investigate this phase of the problem since one of the hopes of the proponents for regional schools is that fewer pupils will drop out before graduation.

From Table II it appears that the secondary school enrollment in the region grew steadily from 1939 to 1941. However, in spite of the general increase the number of pupils from Cornwall remained about the

Table II

Number of Pupils in the Six Towns Attending Secondary School Before and After the Building of the Regional School.

Town	1937-1938	1938-1939	1939-1940	1940-1941
Canaan	20	23	26	19
Corrwall	33	34	31	34
Kent	37	38	35	41
N. Canaan	102	105	108	127
Salisbury	111	102	120	127
Sharon	<u>66</u>	<u>70</u>	<u>74</u>	<u>92</u>
Total	369	372	394	440

same while fewer high school pupils reported from Canaan. The only reason for this that occurs to the writer is that since the two towns are very small the variation from year to year is not an important consideration. There may be some significance in the fact that there was a decided increase in numbers as soon as the school opened since there was very little difference in numbers between the two years just preceding the opening of the regional school. The first two years in the new school showed an increase from 372 to 429 which amounts to about 15%. The writer recalls, too, that the peak years of secondary enrollment were 1935 through 1939. The depression was gasping its last breath and employment became more readily available in 1940 and 1941. Schools through-

out the country began to lose more of their students who were eligible for employment certificates. And, yet, at this time the region which sponsors the Housatonic Valley Regional High School sent more students to secondary school than was formerly true. It seems warrantable to assume that the appeal of the school and its curriculum had something to do with the increase in enrollment.

Per Pupil Costs in the Housatonic Valley Region -- The term "per pupil costs" is one which has different meanings to different people. To the educator it means just the cost of the current educative process excluding such items as repairs, loans, capital outlay and a host of other expenses incurred by the community. However, the taxpayer is wont to divide the membership into the total expenditure. This latter method is more easily understood by the average person and, for that reason, will be used in this paper. Table III gives the per pupil costs for the region for various years.

Table III immediately focuses attention upon the fact that school costs ascended rapidly during the first year of operation in the new school. However, expenses had started to rise in the two preceding years so that it cost thirteen dollars more, on an average, to educate a pupil on the secondary school level in that region in 1938-1939 than in the preceding year. A new school naturally means greater expense during the first year, but it is interesting to note that the second year of operation showed a marked tendency to return to a lower level of expenditure per pupil. Some of the expenses that would make the first year unusually

NOTE: Figures found in Tables I and II were taken from the books of the Statistical Department in the Department of Education of Connecticut.

Table III

Per Pupil Cost in the Housatonic Valley Region.

Town	1937-1938	1938-1939	1939-1940	1940-1941
Canaan	122.99	144.40	150.20	157.44
Cornwall	161.69	154.62	235.09	187.61
Kent	164.92	192.87	216.81	177.56
N. Canaan	131.48	132.23	176.35	176.49
Salisbury	139.81	150.25	160.65	174.67
Sharon	117.30	133.06	193.39	164.75
Average	136.95	149.83	181.26	173.64

high would be such items as new textbooks, pencil sharpeners, board erasers and other necessities which in the succeeding years would be replaced at different times. We cannot escape the fact that a curve depicting per pupil cost would go up steadily from 1937 through 1940 but would show a distinct downward trend in 1941. If what might be considered a normal increase of \$13.00 between 1937-1938 and 1938-1939 were continued for the next two years the figure for 1940-1941 would be about \$175.00. We find it to be \$173.64 in the regional school.

Financial Aspects of Housatonic Situation before Consolidation --

Four of the six towns of Connecticut who built the first regional high school in New England were all faced with the need for new high school buildings. The total expense of these buildings would be a matter of

pure conjecture but it seems reasonable to suppose that the sum would be far in excess of the \$375,000.00 which went into the building of the regional high school. If they had decided to remain isolated units and had built small high schools, there is a distinct possibility that there would be no great improvement in course offerings. Overcoming the pride of boundary which is traditional in New England and with the spirit of the pioneer they took a step which has definitely increased the service of secondary schools in the region. The wisdom of the decision is apparent now, ten years later, to every thinking person in the six towns.

Educational Facilities on the Secondary Level in the Six Towns

before Consolidation -- There were four high schools in the region previous to the building of the regional high school. These were located in Kent, North Canaan, Salisbury and Sharon. These schools were good as such schools go, but because of limitations in size, personnel and funds, they were quite inadequate to furnish the kind of training demanded by the world of today. The traditional subjects were taught and although vocational courses were considered from time to time, and even though this matter occasionally reached the planning stage, the plans never reached fulfillment.

Kent High School 1938-1939 -- The pupils who attended Kent High School were limited to three rooms in an elementary school building. Only three years of secondary school work were offered and those wishing to complete the fourth year were transported to another high school. The elementary courses in commercial work were taught but the course of study was mainly college preparatory.

Sharon High School 1938-1939 -- The entire school population in Sharon was housed in one building. The building was erected in 1923 and is in good condition today. Enrollment increased during the "thirties" to a point where the town had to consider the possibility of building a new high school.

Salisbury High School 1938-1939 -- Salisbury of Lakeville, as it is sometimes known, is the wealthiest of the six towns. A new school was built in 1930 which was intended to accommodate all pupils from the sixth grade to the twelfth. A part of the new building was set aside for the teaching of homemaking, the first attempt to include vocational instruction in the program. However, it was necessary to use the space for other purposes and gradually with the increase in enrollment and the deterioration of other school buildings of the town the citizens of the community of Salisbury became aware of their secondary school problem.

North Canaan High School 1938-1939 -- The North Canaan High School Building was erected in 1879. It was a wooden structure. Conditions were so crowded that during the last few years of its existence auxiliary units were placed in the school-yard. The main building was regarded as a fire trap and the heating system was inadequate. After it was abandoned as a high school building it served the elementary schools of the community only until a new school was built. There was an awareness of the emergency on the part of the community for a decade before the regional school was built. A sum of money was set aside each year for the building of a new high school so that when consolidation was affected North Canaan was easily able to shoulder its financial responsibilities.

Cornwall and Canaan -- Neither of these communities is large enough to support a secondary school. It has always been necessary for the secondary pupils of these two towns to be transported to other communities to continue their education beyond the eighth grade.

Regional School a Natural Consideration -- All six of the towns which support the Housatonic Valley Regional High School were faced with building and curriculum problems on the secondary school level. These problems became acute during the late "thirties" and with strong leadership, which was not without opposition, they banded together to build one secondary school which would serve the entire region. The test of more than a decade lends tangible evidence to the feasibility of regional schools.

Educational Offerings in the Housatonic Valley Regional High School -- "The Housatonic Valley Regional High School issues six types of diplomas. For all students four units of English, American History, Civics, General Science and General Mathematics are required for graduation; for girls, in addition, Home Economics I, and for all boys, Industrial Arts I. Pupils who meet these requirements only, and obtain the necessary credits, will receive the diploma in General Studies. The other five types of diplomas, with their additional requirements are as follows:

<u>Diploma</u>	<u>Additional Requirements</u>
Classical	Algebra 2, Plane Geometry, Latin 2, Physics and Chemistry
Commercial	Bookkeeping, Advanced Stenography and Business Practice, Advanced Business Principals.

Home Economics

Home Economics 3 and 4

Industrial Arts

Industrial Arts 3 and 4

Vocational Agriculture

Vocational Agriculture 3 and 4

Physical Education is required of all students unless excused by a physician's certificate.

Any sophomore, junior or senior may add typewriting I or Driver Education to his course if his schedule permits these additions.¹

Housatonic Valley Regional High School Plant -- The site of the Housatonic Valley Regional High School embraces some seventy-five level acres. When one first looks down upon the school from the road he is immediately impressed with the beauty of the building and its surroundings. The building is of grey stone and is in the form of a hollow square with classrooms and shops on all four sides. The background of hills, the level green fields, the building itself is a view long remembered by anyone with interest in new schools. There are eighteen classrooms in the building including shops and laboratories. In addition there is an adequate cafeteria, and on the grounds not far from the main building is a large barn which is used by the vocational agriculture group. There is also a house on the grounds in which the seniors in the Home Economics course take turns living in pairs. The auditorium which will fill most of the inner courtyard has not yet been erected although the stage is in place and plans for building in the near future are ready.

(1) Program of Studies - Housatonic Valley Regional High School,
1949

Extra Curricula Activities in the Housatonic Valley Regional High School -- There are the usual clubs and musical organizations but, because of the transportation problem, there is little late afternoon or evening activity in the school. Basketball is played by both girls and boys and the school is represented in baseball and track. In general the extra curricular program is about as extensive as one would expect in a school of its size.

Summary -- In the Housatonic Region during the later years of the thirties a secondary school building situation which had been bad, finally became intolerable. It was apparent to everyone interested that some solution had to be adopted. A decision had to be made as to whether it would be more feasible to erect four small high schools, or to unite the resources of the valley in the building of a regional high school. After full consideration of the matter, it was decided to build the regional school, and the six towns -- Canaan, Cornwall, Kent, North Canaan, Salisbury and Sharon -- became sponsors of the plan.

The school was completed and ready for occupancy in the fall of 1939. The students were greeted with a program which offered to all a chance to satisfy their interests, while insisting upon a core of subjects for every student including English, social studies, mathematics and science. It was possible now, for the first time in the valley, for a high school pupil to receive instructions in industrial arts, home economics and agriculture.

The towns of the Housatonic Valley found in 1938 and 1939 that they could no longer evade the necessity of building new facilities for sec-

ondary education. They had to decide between building several small schools or one large regional high school. They voted in favor of the regional school. Per pupil costs rose sharply at first but in the second year the curve of expenditure started downward. Enrollment increased probably because of an enriched program. New courses in industrial arts, physical education, home economics and agriculture were a part of the new offerings. This was the first school of its type in New England and, although the subject of regional high schools is discussed throughout the six states, plans for others have not yet been completely accepted.

CHAPTER IV

PERTINENT FACTS, DATA AND STATISTICS

REGARDING QUABBIN REGION

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PERTINENT FACTS, DATA AND STATISTICS

REGARDING QUABBIN REGION

A situation parallel to that discussed in Chapter III exists in Massachusetts. A group of four towns in Hampshire and Worcester Counties, namely, Ware, Hardwick, Warren and Belchertown have arrived at much the same position in relation to building needs as faced the Connecticut towns, twelve or thirteen years ago. High school buildings are either too old or too small, courses of study are inadequate and all four towns must in the near future make some positive gesture towards a solution of their problems. They form a more compact group than is true in the Housatonic situation because in that case the most extreme boundaries are twenty-three miles apart. The school is, of course, in a central location but a pupil in Kent at the furthestest boundary from the school travels sixteen miles. The greatest distance between boundaries in the Massachusetts situation would be seventeen miles and if the school were in a central area no pupil would travel more than ten miles. The per pupil cost in the Housatonic area for 1948-1949 was \$237.00 while it was \$234.00 in the Massachusetts area. Therefore, it cost little more per pupil in the Housatonic region than in the proposed region even though the difference in facilities and offerings was great.

This problem is actually a comparison between certain phenomena concerned with secondary education in two separate localities. We have considered one from the aspects of total costs, enrollment and per pupil cost. The following pages will include a discussion of the other region.

Brief History of Movement Toward a Regional High School in the

Quabbin Region -- Although discussion as to the possibility of a regional school in the Quabbin region has been going on for years not much actual progress has been made. Another group of communities in the Western part of Worcester County, centering around Brookfield which is but twelve miles from Ware have approached the problem on a more realistic basis. Indeed, they have progressed to a point at which two of the towns being considered in this report, Hardwick and Warren, are not quite certain as to which group to lend their support. The first meeting in the Quabbin region was held in Ware in April, 1949 and representatives from eleven communities were present. During this first meeting the idea hardly went beyond the discussion stage but before the end of 1949 the town meetings of Ware and Belchertown had sanctioned the formation of regional high school boards; Warren had decided to be represented at the meetings of the Ware group but Hardwick failed to take any positive step in that direction. At present, then, there is only the certainty in the four communities that something must be done. What that something will be, remains for the future to determine.

Total Cost of Secondary Education to the Towns of the Quabbin

Region -- The following figures have been obtained in conference with the Superintendents of Schools in Belchertown, Hardwick, Ware and Warren. The two years preceding the building of the Housatonic Valley Regional High School were 1937-1938 and 1938-1939. For the sake of comparison it would seem logical to take the last two years for which figures are available in the Quabbin region, 1947-1948 and 1948-1949. In an earlier section of this paper a comparison was made between the two years in-

mediately preceding the erection of the Housatonic School and the first two years of operation. Since the future is a hypothetical proposition, figures of the first two years of the proposed school will be derived from the figures of the Housatonic Region on a percentage basis.

Table IV

Total Cost of Secondary Education to the Towns of the Quabbin Region

Town	1947-1948	1948-1949	1949-1950*	1950-1951**
Belchertown	31,925.38	36,387.75	46,576.32	49,836.66
Hardwick	26,518.43	28,676.39	36,704.78	39,274.11
Vare	52,000.75	53,285.38	68,205.29	72,979.66
Warren	<u>30,370.01</u>	<u>32,441.44</u>	<u>41,525.04</u>	<u>44,431.79</u>
Total	140,814.47	150,790.96	193,011.43	206,522.22

*Estimated on basis of increase in Housatonic Region. First Year 28%

**Estimated on basis of increase in Housatonic Region. Second Year 35%

Table IV indicates that the cost of secondary education in the proposed Quabbin Valley Regional High School would probably be considerably greater than the total cost to the four towns at the present time when we base our predictions on what has happened in the Housatonic area. In this case we find that although there was a slight upward trend during the two previous years it might be the variation to be ex-

pected from one year to another. It is about 7%. But the first year of the new school would increase costs, if it coincided with the Housatonic experience, 28% and the second year would show an increase of 35%. However, consideration of just the expenditure does not give a complete picture. Increase in enrollment took place in the Connecticut situation and must be considered a possibility in the Massachusetts region.

Enrollment in the Secondary Schools of the Quabbin Valley Region --

Here again one can only put forward the theory that the two years following the building of a regional high school in the section about Ware would result in changes in the enrollment which might follow the pattern found in the Cansan area. There, enrollment began to increase noticeably immediately after consolidation.

Table V

Enrollment in the Secondary Schools of the Quabbin Valley Region

Town	1947-1948	1948-1949	1949-1950*	1950-1951**
Balchertown	135	120	127	138
Hardwick	82	80	85	92
Ware	254	256	271	294
Warren	<u>181</u>	<u>174</u>	<u>184</u>	<u>200</u>
Total	652	630	667	724

*Estimated on basis of increase in Housatonic Region. First Year 6%

**Estimated on basis of increase in Housatonic Region. Second Year 15%

The percentages indicated in Table V are approximate and the final figure of 724 highly speculative. But it seems reasonable to suppose that there would be an important increase in membership. This increase as it might concern the Quabbin Valley region were a regional school built is predicted on the basis of what resulted in the Connecticut region. In the Housatonic area enrollment increased 6% between the years 1938-1939 and 1939-1940, and 15% between the years 1938-1939 and 1940-1941. Anyone with experience in secondary education would immediately recognize the significance of so large an increase. If a school this size received an increase of sixty pupils some one year more than were enrolled during the preceding year more class rooms would probably have to be brought into use; it might be necessary to engage more teachers and certainly additional books and supplies would have to be procured. In other words, such a school could absorb an increase of ten or fifteen pupils without much added expense. However, total cost and cost per pupil figures are definitely affected by so large a change as 15%.

Per Pupil Cost in the Quabbin Valley Region -- Continuing the discussion of possibilities we now come to the important question of per pupil cost. This category is the one in which most taxpayers in any community are interested.

At this point it seems important to indicate that there is an explanation for the fact that secondary education apparently costs considerably more in the Quabbin area than in the Housatonic region. We are comparing groups of years which are separated by a decade during

which school costs have increased enormously. It may be of interest to note here that the per pupil cost in the Housatonic Valley Regional High School was \$237.00 for the year 1948-1949. This figure compares favorably with the per pupil cost \$234.59 for the same year in the Quabbin area when we consider the more adequate offerings of the Connecticut School. In addition, the maximum salary in the regional school is \$4500.00, while the highest salary paid to a teacher in the Quabbin Schools is \$3500.00.

The decade 1940-1950 has been one of constantly increasing expenses for education. The per pupil cost in the Quabbin area in 1938-1939 was about \$110.00 while that in the Housatonic area was \$149.83. Ten years later in the year 1948-1949 the per pupil cost in both regions were about the same. This can only mean that, although school costs increased universally, the rate of increase in the regional school was measurably less than that in the four high schools of the Quabbin region.

Financial Aspects of Quabbin Situation Now -- The situation in the Quabbin valley at the present time is almost identical with that in the Housatonic Valley as it was twelve years ago. The building problem in Ware is so acute that a committee for consideration of a new high school building was approved by a town meeting four years ago and a sum of money was appropriated for the drawing of plans. It was estimated at that time that the cost would be \$750,000.00. Belchertown, after years of discussion, has recently decided to build a new grade school building to alleviate conditions in the high school and officials of the town

have stated publicly that in addition to the new building will be erected for high school purposes if the regional project does not materialize. Warren, as has been stated previously, is deciding between building another addition to its central school and committing itself to a regional plan. Hardwick is aware of the necessity of building in the near future. Taken altogether it is safe to estimate that commitments for well over a million dollars for secondary school buildings will be assumed by the four towns during the next decade if consolidation is not effected.

Probable Cost of a Regional High School Plant in the Quabbin Region -- Various estimates have been offered as to what it would cost to build a modern regional high school plant which would serve the four towns, Belchertown, Hardwick, Ware and Warren. The consensus of opinions including those of both local and state officials places the amount at about \$1,500,000.00. Let us take this as a figure. The governing body of the state has, in the last few years, enacted laws which make the building of regional schools profitable to the small communities. An accepted project can expect financial assistance up to 55% of the cost. The proposed consolidation of the four towns named above would benefit, under the formula, to the extent of 52.86%. This would mean that the towns would have to pay 47.14% of the total cost of \$707,100.00.

Present Facilities in Secondary Education in the Quabbin Region --

Ware -- As has been indicated earlier in this paper, the Ware High School building accommodates all the pupils in the six upper grades of

the public schools of the town. In addition, there are two elementary grades in the building. Gradually during the last ten years the space allotted to the four high school grades has been reduced from sixteen classrooms to twelve and the assembly hall has been permanently divided into classrooms so that the gymnasium must be used for all purposes of assembly. There is no stage in the gymnasium and most of the benches have to be carried in and out of the hall before and after assemblies. The school hasn't a shop of any kind but does offer vocational Household Arts. Lighting in the older section of the plant is such that visitors in the building at night are amazed at the poor visibility. It is agreed that some of these deficiencies could be corrected with what might be considered a moderate expenditure but plans for school buildings are in such a state of uncertainty that both those who support the schools and their elected representatives are reluctant to undertake renovations.

Belchertown -- The Belchertown High School is located in a building which was originally intended to be devoted to secondary education and for the officers of the community. The assembly hall is also used as the Town Hall. A conservative estimate recently placed its capacity for school purposes at one hundred and sixty pupils. There are now two hundred and sixty nine pupils attending class in the building, the majority of whom are in grades below the ninth. A vocational Household Arts course is offered but there are no facilities for the manual arts. Thought about the future impresses upon one the fact that the school building problem in Belchertown will become more acute with the passing

of the years.

Warren -- The pupils of Warren High School occupy an addition to a grade school building. The school has access to a hall which is used both as a gymnasium and for assembly purposes. The course of study offers the usual academic and commercial courses but there is no provision, nor are there facilities, for any vocational training. The school has not a cafeteria. Some of the leaders in the town are thinking in terms of another addition to the building while others are interested in consolidation either with Brookfield or Ware.

Hardwick -- Hardwick High School is not, at the present time, a crowded building. There are enough classrooms because it has never been deemed necessary to use part of the space for grade school purposes. Its assembly hall is also used as a gymnasium. The program of studies is about the same as that found in the other three schools under study. The writer doubts that the people of Hardwick could be interested in any talk about a regional school if it were not for the fact that the large grade school building has just about reached the end of its usefulness as a school building. However, there is enough interest in equalized education that if so large a project as a new building were undertaken, consideration would be given to making the present high school over into a grade school. The next step would be a new local high school which would answer the secondary needs of the community, or consolidation with others in the building of a regional school.

Possible Educational Offerings in Proposed Quabbin Valley Regional High School -- If this school were built in the next few years it would

have a potential enrollment of about 700 pupils. Presumably there would be the usual academic courses in the college preparatory division, a complete commercial course and a vocational course in Home Economics. Agriculture is an important industry in Belchertown and parts of Hardwick and, therefore, the new school would include in its offerings a course in vocational agriculture. Ware, Warren and Gilbertville, which is a part of Hardwick, are industrial communities and therefore the new curriculum should include Industrial Arts. We have, then, a need for just about the same courses of study as now exists in the Housatonic Valley Regional High School. The Quabbin school would be much larger. As a matter of fact, it would be within the 600-800 class which is generally considered the ideal size for a high school.

Summary -- These facts are inescapable. The four towns must, in the near future, all spend considerable money for new buildings. The Ware project alone, according to the latest estimate will cost about \$750,000.00. Its share in a regional school would be far less, and if this is true for Ware, it is also true for the other towns. That there will be expense for building in the near future for all four communities seems a certainty. The sole criteria as to what project the money will support should be the question of how the communities may get the most for their investment in education.

Expenses for education in the Quabbin area have been increasing throughout the past decade at an unusual rate so that even though per pupil cost, \$110.00 in 1939, was considerably less than that of the Connecticut area for the same year, \$149.00, the figures for last year were practically the same. At the same time the enrollment figures have

changed inversely. There were over 900 high school pupils in the Quabbin area in 1939 but ten years later this number had been reduced to 630. The Housatonic secondary population increased during this time from 372 to 450. There have been no significant changes in population in either region during that time.

The inadequacy of the curricula throughout the Quabbin region is bewailed by school authorities. The creation of opportunity in all categories of education would, on the basis of this investigation, keep pupils in school longer, teach them more about those things in which they are interested, thereby fitting them for a happier and more useful life.

Since the change from small high schools to a regional school in the Housatonic region has been attended by obviously beneficial results it would seem to be the proper disposition of the secondary building problem in the Quabbin area. There would be greater educational opportunity. After a leveling-off process costs would not be significantly higher and more young people would probably remain in school throughout the twelve years.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

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It seems reasonable to expect that the regional high school will be a reality in Massachusetts in the near future. Several groups of towns throughout the Commonwealth are working toward consolidation. It would be a grave mistake if any of the towns in these groups, faced with a need for new buildings, were to decide to strike out alone and build another small high school. Not only would this act commit a town for years to come, but, by so doing it might lose its opportunity to join with its neighbors.

Advantages of a Regional High School -- As a result of this investigation it is apparent to the writer that many advantages accrue to communities who participate in the regional idea. Some of these are discussed below.

Size and Cost of School -- A regional high school can offer more than a group of small high schools operating independently. Although there are exceptions, the larger the school is in enrollment, the less, apparently, is the cost on a per pupil basis. Kent High School, the smallest in the Connecticut group before consolidation had a per pupil cost of \$192.87 which was far more than that of the two largest schools, Salisbury and North Canaan. The smallest school in the Quabbin group, Hardwick, had the largest per pupil cost in 1948-1949 while the largest schools, Ware and Warren, were far more efficient from a financial point of view. It is important that the per pupil cost in the Quabbin Valley for 1948-1949 was \$234.59 while the per pupil cost in the Housatonic Valley Regional High School was only about \$3.00 more.

Equalization of Education -- a regional high school tends toward

the American ideal of equalization of opportunity. There was approximately the same cost per pupil in both regions in 1948-1949 and, yet, the Massachusetts Schools offered little more than the traditional subjects while the pupils of the regional school could elect from a wide range of courses which satisfy the varied interests of adolescents in the learning process.

Holding Power -- The increase of about 15% in secondary school enrollment for the Housatonic area within two years of the opening of the school would seem to be substantial evidence that there was more interest in staying in school for four years than had been true in the small high schools. Although no figures are available for the independent schools before their demise, approximately 68% of those who enter the regional school stay to graduate. This compares with about 55%, who, on the average, remain to graduate in the four high schools in Massachusetts which are under consideration.

Personnel -- It is a generally accepted premise among school authorities that better salaries lead to better teaching. Throughout the State of Massachusetts during the past decade when pleas for higher salaries were being made, the argument put forward time and again was that, in the long run, more able men and women would enter the profession. On the same basis the better teachers would be attracted to the community offering the higher salaries. The maximum teaching salary of the Housatonic School compares favorably with the salaries in the larger cities of Massachusetts. It would be strange if many of the teachers who would normally leave a country school for the larger salaries in

cities haven't remained in the regional school.

Size of Classes -- One disadvantage of a small high school is that certain subjects such as Latin IV and Trigonometry attract so few pupils that keeping them in the course of study is inordinantly expensive. A regional high school, because of its size, might cancel this difficulty.

Generalizations Regarding Secondary Education in the Housatonic Region -- Whatever may have been the difficulties at the outset, the people of the valley have solved their secondary school problem for decades to come. The regional school offers a course of study as complete as that of any secondary school in New England. The educational opportunity in this locality is as great as that in the largest of cities. The cost has not been unbearable. Enrollment has increased. The school has been a source of pride, and has given a feeling of accomplishment to all who had a part in its building and maintenance.

Generalizations Regarding Secondary Education in the Quabbin Region -- Investigation brings one to the conclusion that secondary education in the Quabbin area has not changed greatly in the last thirty years. At that time all four high schools involved had three courses: the college preparatory, the commercial curriculum and the general course. This, in spite of the fact that comparatively few from the region have been college bound and therefore should get all that they possibly could of a practical education in the four years of high school. These towns are now faced with a need for new buildings. This is a time for decision. Will these towns rebuild on the old foundation or will they, with the progressiveness which fairness to the youth

in the region demands, unite to offer the best secondary education according to the latest ideas on the subject.

Regarding the Probable Cost of Building a Regional High School in the Quabbin Area -- It was pointed out in Chapter IV that all four towns have plans for building in the near future. The Ware plan calls for an expenditure of at least \$750,000.00. It would be hard to believe that the other three towns taken together would spend less. This would amount to a total of \$1,500,000 which is the estimate for what a regional high school in the area would cost. Towns building their own high schools can expect reimbursement from the State of about 30%. Towns going into a regional set-up would receive a far higher percentage of the total cost and, under the formula, the four towns discussed in this paper would receive 52.86%. It would seem then that the regional high school would be a far more attractive proposition both from the financial as well as the educational point of view.

Conclusion -- Volumes have been written in the past two decades about the "New" in education. Core curricula; courses in guidance; courses in buying, behavior, safety and the rest all undoubtedly contribute to the student's preparation for living with others. However, equalization of opportunity is the theme about which this paper is written, and there is a rapidly growing number of teachers and administrators who feel that, for the small town, the regional high school offers the best, if not the only, solution. This investigation would appear to indicate that the regional high school is particularly appropriate to the Quabbin region of Massachusetts.

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