

1958 Reorganization of the Russell School District

(The following article is a report on the proposed reorganization of the Russell Community School District. It was provided by Bob Parker – this does not include voting procedure, boundaries, surveys, school census, enrollment, five year projection enrollment, Iowa Basic Skills reports, financial valuations, estimated finances-receipts- expenditures, etc.)

Date of actual reorganization of the Russell School District --- fall of 1958

Information Concerning the Russell Community School Reorganization

Some of the reasons for attempting this reorganization:

1. Reorganization is a procedure recommended by the State Department of Public Instruction.
2. The number of pupils in the proposed district exceed the number required by law for reorganization and should provide classes of efficient sizes.
3. To get the best education possible for your children at a cost lower than would be possible without reorganization.
4. A shortage of well qualified teachers to serve the large number of schools now in operation.
5. Trends are definitely toward reorganized districts in which every pupil lives in a high school district and every voter has a voice in running the school.
6. It is anticipated that school tax money of the future will come more and more from state sources and less and less from land and personal property tax. Districts which meet requirements as to size, program and economy will profit most from state aids.
7. The present building in Russell can be utilized to full capacity. Should more space be required rural buildings could be utilized or additional classrooms constructed.

8. If reorganization comes from or through legislation, we have no assurance that Russell will be maintained as a school center.

9. In a public opinion survey conducted in March 1957 an effort was made to determine if the people of this area wanted to combine their schools to form the Russell Community District through reorganization. Approximately 87% of the voters in the area were interviewed, of these contacted 85% indicated approval of this reorganization. Only 7% voiced opposition. The boundaries, as now established, eliminated over half of the objectors. An honest attempt was made to eliminate all objectors but the necessity of keeping the border roads open for transportation made it impossible.

10. Now we have an opportunity to become part of a reorganized district where nearly two-thirds of the voters will be rural people. The selection of the board, the policy of the school and the expenditure of funds will be under the control of rural people and not dictated by an urban population. Should rural districts be forced into reorganization in 1962 by legislation, there is no indication that we will have such a choice.

A meeting of representatives of 17 rural districts in Lucas County and part of the Wright township District of Wayne County was held in March. At this meeting a steering committee was elected. The members are as follows:

Vogal Smith, Co –Chairman
P. F. Sprague, Co- Chairman
Walter Pierce
Earl Wright
R. H. Parker
L. M. Wantland
Bruce Etter
Charles Deick
Ralph Dean
Dean Thompson
Verle Jeffries
A. E. Gookin

Jerald Fenton
Earl Sibert
Cecil Hawkins
Joy White
Carl Cottrell
Howard Smith
Earl Davis
Arthur Chase
Al Cochran
Clayton Blue
Dale Johnson
Vernon Smith

Leo Moore
Carl Sellers
Robert Edwards
Bud Kimler
Maurice Curran
Robert Kells
Lee Cottingham

R. W. Malone
Walter Relph
David Besco
Homer Chapman
Wayne Cumming
Dale Cottrell
Earl Nickel

The first six persons named serve as the central committee.

It was decided by those present that the first step should be to take an unofficial poll of each district to determine the wishes of all the persons who would be affected by reorganization. The results of this poll was found elsewhere in the report.

Many persons other than those named as committee members have assisted in the research and other work of the committee.

The reorganization efforts of other areas have been closely observed by members of the committee and professional advice has been obtained on many of the problems.

School Districts considered for the reorganization

School names of following districts relative to combining these districts into one community district through reorganization.

Benton Township (2)

1. Ragtown #3 (Bethal #3)
2. Brush College & Myers #4 (Center #4)

Lincoln Township (2)

1. Highland #3
2. Franklin #5

Cedar Township (6)

1. Pershing #1(Germany in earlier years)

2. Brown #2 (Center #2)
3. LaGrange #3
4. White #4
5. Dickerville #5 (Cedar Grove #5)
6. Victory #6

Washington Township (8)

1. John Russell #1 (Pleasant Mound #1)
2. Greenville #2
3. Pleasant Grove #3
4. Liberty #4
5. Russell Ind School #5
6. Center #6
7. Hawkeye #7
8. Mound #8

Wright Township in Wayne County

1. Rabbit Hill #2
2. Dry Flats #3

Buildings

High school class rooms as they now exist can provide most of the necessary space. Two of these rooms are now being enlarged by one-third. Space not now in use at one end of the study hall can be portioned off to provide an additional class room with very little expense. By using the bus garage and shop together, space for a vocational agriculture shop can be provided. It would be necessary to install double doors between the two so they could be used as one room.

Existing elementary classrooms in the present building are not sufficient to take care of the enlarged enrollment. It will be necessary to have one class room for each elementary grade. In order to provide the necessary classrooms four or five extra rooms will be needed,

It would be possible to move rural buildings to Russell and utilize them for the additional space for elementary classes. This would probably be a temporary proposition, but could be done without additional capital outlay. There are 13 rural buildings in the area, four of the best could be moved in and set on solid masonry foundations, doors and windows fitted and the best of the desks and equipment from each rural school installed. They would have to be heated in the same way they were in their rural location and toilet facilities of the main building utilized.

Local carpenters say this could probably be done for 4 or 5 thousand dollars. The remaining rural buildings could be sold for approximately \$500.00 each raising a total of \$4500.00. If the proceeds from the sale of these buildings could be used to defray the expense it would make additional capital outlay unnecessary.

The law requires that new construction to be financed by a bond issue must be submitted to the public so that they may vote for it or reject it at the polls. Should the people of this district desire to replace the frame rural buildings at a later date and replace them with modern rooms of masonry construction they could do so by voting a bond issue.

Five additional class rooms of modern masonry construction, four of them to contain 100 square feet of floor space and a kindergarten containing 1200 square feet would probably cost approximately \$12.00 per square foot. The total cost would probably be about \$62,400.00. This addition of rest room and equipment

for these rooms should run the cost to approximately \$70,000.00. A bond issue or \$70,000.00 at 4% interest to be retired in twenty years would require an additional tax levy for the school house fund of 2 ¼ mills which would be gradually reduced as the principal was reduced and the interest became less.

The estimated levy for the Community district utilizing the rural buildings as elementary class rooms was approximately 27.37 mills. The addition of a building fund levy of 2 ¼ mills would raise that estimate to 29.62 mills.

The painting and repairs contemplated by the Russell School board, and now underway, should place the present building in good condition so that much of the tax levied for maintenance could be used for the replacement of obsolete equipment. All old equipment should be replaced over the next few years. To attempt to do this all in one year would result in an unnatural tax levy and would be unnecessary.

It would be possible to continue the operation of some rural schools within the boundaries of this reorganization. The committee does not feel that this would be wise from either the financial or educational standpoints. To do so would deny equal educational opportunities to all the elementary students. On a basis of one teacher per grade, nine elementary teachers could teach all the students, kindergarten through eighth grade in the once central school. Should any rural schools be continued, one extra teacher would be needed for each rural school, thus increasing the expenditure for teachers salaries and maintenance.

It is the duty of this committee to suggest ways and means to provide the necessary classroom space. It is not our duty to attempt to bind the new district to any course of action. The final solution of all problems must lie with the new board and the voters and taxpayers of the new district.

Transportation

There will be approximately 240 high school and elementary students to be transported. The budget provides for six 48 passenger buses. The average number of students to be transported per bus will be 40. Careful consideration has been given to keeping the boundary roads open for buses of other districts.

By providing bus transportation for all high school and elementary youngsters throughout the rural areas of this district the bus routes would be considerably shorter. Over most of the area 16 to 22 miles should provide a capacity load thus reducing the average time each youngster must spend on the bus. In using six forty-eight passenger buses over shorter runs the cost per pupil should be decreased. It seems reasonable to expect the cost per pupil to average from \$68.00 to \$70.00 including depreciation on the buses. Bus routes are variable, mileage and costs are dependent on road conditions, weather, care and condition of the buses, drivers' ability and the movement of families from one residence to another. As additional miles of rural roads are surfaced each year transportation becomes less of a problem, sometimes eliminating the necessity for backtracking over the same road. This can result in shorter routes and reduced costs.

Russell Community School District Curriculum

Elementary Curriculum

Kindergarten

The Kindergarten should be a laboratory in which the child engages with pleasure in all types of self-expression. He learns by actual participation in lessons of cooperation, tolerance, self-control, citizenship and group living. He can experiment freely with varied materials. Here are the beginnings of science, language expression, arts, number concepts and their relationships. Reading readiness will be an ? important part of the program.

The development of the child begins even before he enters school and centers about four growth factors: Physical growth, social growth, emotional growth and intellectual growth. The teacher continues to give the parent assistance in developing these growth factors.

Because a child of five or six tires easily, it is recommended that kindergarten be of one-half day duration.

Specifically, you will find the following curriculum in kindergarten:

1. Reading readiness

5. Music

2. Manuscript writing
3. Physical education and games
4. Numbers and counting
6. Art
7. Science and Health

Primary -- First Grade

The reading readiness program should be reviewed before actual reading begins. The communication skills will be developed through language and literature. Science, health and social studies are correlated subjects at this level. Number concepts are introduced and pupils should be given an opportunity to share in music and art.

Second Grade:

Here numbers become arithmetic. Social studies take on the teaching of citizenship through bringing in the home and community living. Social science moves into natural and physical science and emphasis is placed on health. All communication skills are stressed through the language arts, literature, and music; including writing, speaking, listening and reading.

Specifically you will find the following curriculum in primary:

1. Reading
2. Phonics
3. Spelling
4. Numbers
5. Social Studies
6. Language
7. Writing
8. Science and Health
9. Art
10. Music
11. Physical Education

Intermediate Grades:

As the child moves into intermediate grades, consisting of third, fourth, fifth and sixth grades, the child needs to gain independence, be able to make application to any situation, develop leadership and be willing to accept guidance and counseling. The following learning areas should be developed in the intermediate grades and carried on through high school.

- A. Communication Skills
 - 1. Reading – Phonics
 - 2. Language – oral, written and creative
 - 3. Literature
 - 4. Speech
 - 5. Spelling and Penmanship
- B. Arithmetic (background of size and relationship)
- C. Social Studies (democratic principles)
 - 1. History
 - 2. Geography
 - 3. Citizenship
- D. Science and Health
 - 1. Physical and Dental Health
 - 2. Safety Education
- E. Physical Education
 - 1. Games
 - 2. Dancing, etc
- F. Music
 - 1. Vocal
 - 2. Instrumental
 - 3. Appreciation
- G. Art
 - 1. Drawing and painting
 - 2. Design
 - 3. Lettering
 - 4. Handicraft
 - 5. Modeling and sculpturing
- H. Guidance
 - 1. A testing and evaluation program
 - 2. Cumulative records
 - 3. Teacher-pupil planning
 - 4. Referral service for specialized needs

Junior High – Seventh and Eighth Grades:

Seventh and eighth grade students are just leaving one type of school environment and getting ready for a different one. The problems presented by this transition process, together with the maturation and special developmental problems presented to youngsters of junior high school age, dictate the need for a specialized curriculum for Junior High School.

A. Communication Skills

1. Reading – literature
2. Speech
3. Spelling – penmanship
4. Language – oral, written and creative
5. Dramatics

B. Mathematics

C. Social Studies

1. Geography
2. Iowa History
3. U. S. History
4. Current Events
5. Civics

D. Science and Health

1. Safety Education
2. Physical and Denial Health

E. Physical Education

F. Music

1. Vocal
2. Instrumental
3. Appreciation

G. Art

1. Drawing and painting
2. Design
3. Lettering

4. Handicraft
5. Modeling and sculpturing

H. Guidance

1. Development of attitudes towards himself and his fellow man.
2. Development of a wholesome and effective personality.
3. Success in his vocational activities.
4. The success of his home life and family life.
5. The value of his contribution to his community and to society.
6. Aptitude tests
7. Complete testing program.

The Junior High student is passing physiologically from immaturity to maturity. The problems he must face undergo rapid and significant changes. At this age, more than any other, he needs sympathetic and competent help from adults who have his confidence and friendship. The importance of the decisions and adjustment in the child's life, normally made in the decade beginning in the Junior High School, cannot be overestimated.

High School

Thinking in terms of a high school curriculum the committee was mindful of the great social, economic, and political changes which have occurred in this nation during the last twenty-five years.

The ascending birth rate; increased mechanization on the farm and in the factory; sudden awareness of our world neighbors and our role in the interrelationship of peoples; demands for personal services from government and private sources to match our rising standard of living; the shift in our population to areas of employment and increased opportunity; a reduced work week with a corresponding increase in leisure time; a spiraling increase in juvenile delinquency; are a few of the many factors which have antiquated our present educational system.

PG 16 -- The day is past when we can pursue a path of stereotyped education – an education beneficial to the gifted few. In this modern age, with its unrelenting demands upon all the faculties of the individual, we must be concerned with the whole child. All the faucets of the gifted and talented nature must be explored and exploited for his greater growth and development.

During high school, students should plan and prepare for effective citizenship so they can adjust to the problems and opportunities of adult living. Today's schools must not only continue to prepare students for advanced education but they must equip each student to live in an interdependent economy, to deal with an increasing body of knowledge in all fields, and to meet complex problems of a social and civic nature.

The curricula offerings listed in this study are those designed to meet both common needs and social needs of youth. You will note that a student may satisfy his needs, interests and abilities in one of four areas – vocational, commercial, academic, or general.

Curriculum to be offered in the Russell Community School – 1958-1959

Freshman Year

- *English I
- *Algebra or General Mathematics
- *General Science
- *Agriculture I or Industrial Arts I
- *Home Economics I
- *Physical Education

Sophomore Year

- *English
- *World History
- Driver's Training (one semester)
- General Business Training
- Geometry
- Home Economics II
- Agriculture II or Industrial Arts II
- *Physical Education

Junior Year

- *English III

*American History
Typewriting I
Shorthand I
Advanced Algebra
Chemistry
Agriculture III
Driver's Training (one semester)
*Physical Education

Senior Year

*American Government
Bookkeeping
Physics
Economics
Sociology
Typing II
Agriculture IV
Shorthand
Solid Geometry and Trigonometry
*Physical Education

• Required Courses

Instrumental and Vocal Music are electives

The internal organization suggested for the new district has been the K-8-4 plan.

Conclusion (of the report)

The vast majority of persons residing within this area have indicated their desire to attempt to effect a school reorganization such as this. It is at the insistence of the people who will be affected that the committee and others have proceeded

with this plan. Hundreds of hours of work have gone into the surveys, gathering of statistical information, estimates of costs and all the other work necessary for such an undertaking.

The committee must insist that the figures submitted here are simple estimates based upon statistical information gathered from the offices of county auditors, treasurers, assessors, superintendents and from school secretaries. Professional advice has been sought occasionally and individuals have contributed advice and information. Regardless of all this, anything pointing into the future must be an estimate.

We could not have you think that this reorganization will solve all school problems. We believe that all school districts, regardless of size, wealth or location have always had problems and always will. It seems reasonable to expect that this reorganization will offer better educational opportunities to all our children and it should be a considerable improvement over the present situation.

We respectfully urge all interested persons to carefully study this report and all other sources of information regarding school reorganization. When this issue comes before the voters, go to the polls and vote your convictions.