

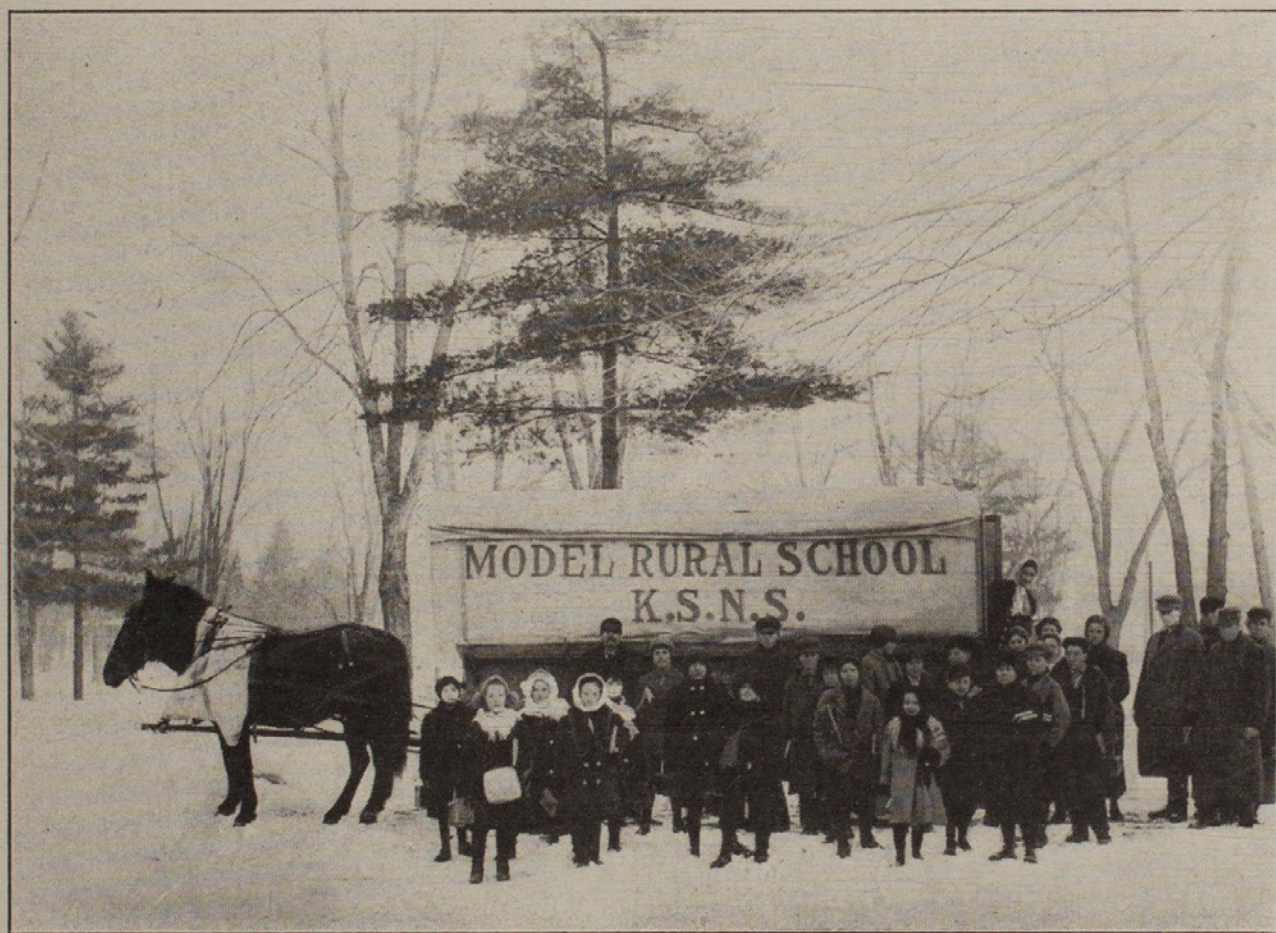
RURAL SCHOOL  
CONSOLIDATION  
IN MISSOURI



# Rural School Consolidation

## in Missouri

Prepared by  
**HAROLD W. FOGHT**  
Adviser in Rural Education



THE FIRST SCHOOL TRANSPORTATION WAGON IN MISSOURI

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## INTRODUCTION

This manual is intended as a working guide for teachers, school officers, and patrons who are seeking to reorganize their schools into consolidated districts as graded schools and rural high schools, under the provisions of recent legislative enactment. The purpose has been to make a clear statement of the intimate relation of strong, well-organized rural schools to the welfare of rural life in general; to point out the particular advantages of consolidation, without in any way covering over the disadvantages that the system may have; and to explain in detail the law and the steps that must be taken in order to gain the benefit of the new system, and the state aid for building purposes and school maintenance offered under it.

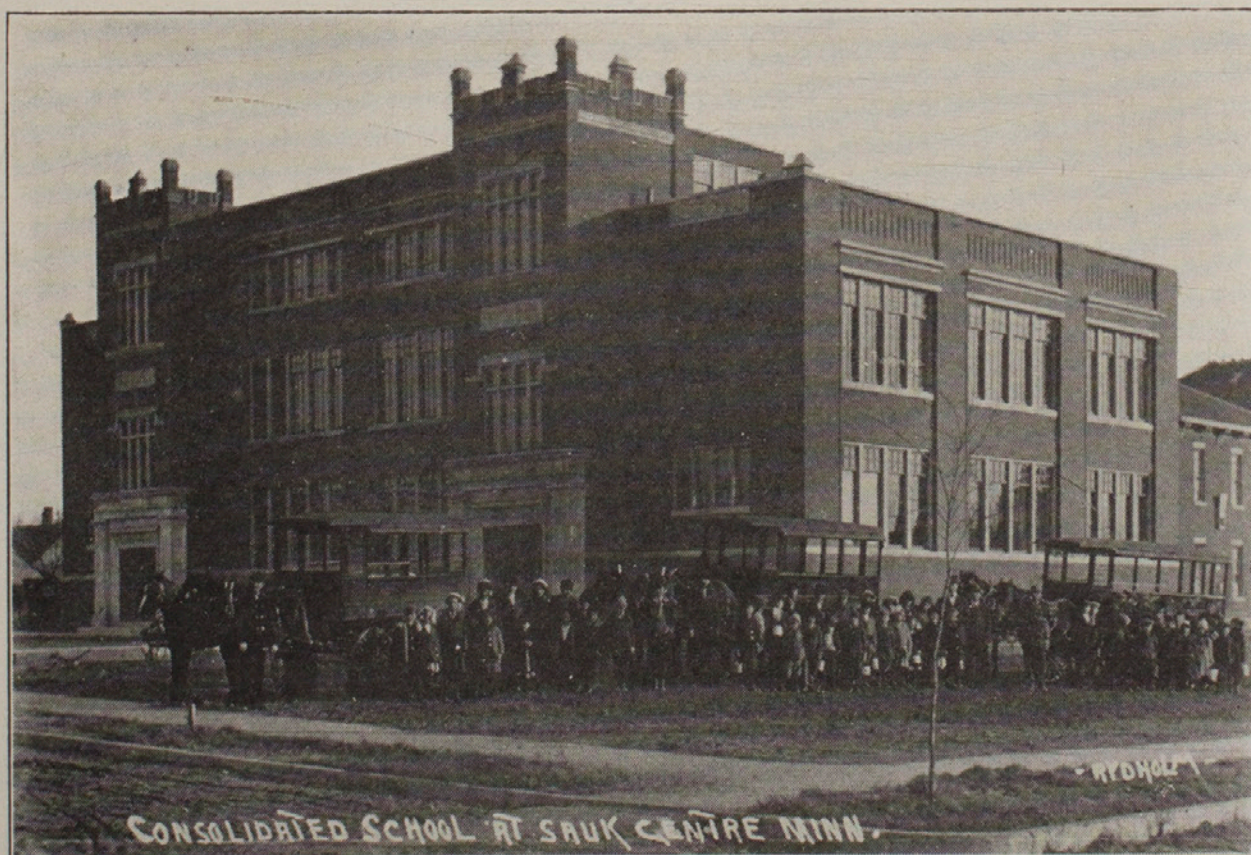
It is quite clear to the average man that the present unit of school organization is quite too small for best results. From a business point of view, indeed, it is so wasteful that sound principles of economy demand a reorganization.

While our civilization was in the pioneer stage the one-room school answered our purpose well enough, but today things are different. The gradual transition in rural life towards real scientific farming, together with the many perplexing problems brought into being by shift in rural population occasioned by the industrial call of the city and the attraction of cheap western lands, have placed new, grave responsibilities upon the school. No retarded weakling school can furnish the educated leadership just now needed in the open country. The old school, in very fact, is responsible for much of the present "ineffective farming, lack of ideals, and drift to town."

Consolidation of schools is no experiment. It is proving successful in every section of the country. No school that has tried consolidation has ever gone back to the old way. In Missouri the old leakage and waste have run quite long enough. It harbingers new and better things to see our school officials and patrons study, agitate, and plan as they are doing throughout the state at the present time. Word comes almost daily from some new proposed consolidation district. Scores of these will be voted on during the coming spring. BUT NOW THAT CONSOLIDATION IS COMING TO OUR STATE, WILL IT APPEAR IN ITS BEST FORM? This must be our greatest concern for the immediate future. Let

friends of the movement be on the alert to prevent every form of CHEAP consolidation, where the sole excuse seems to be a reduction of taxes. However, where QUALITY and SMALL EXPENSE can be coupled through the elimination of WASTE the problem appears in quite a different light. The Missouri farmer is beginning to spend more money for school purposes, and he desires to spend it to the best advantage. The great reason for consolidation of schools in Missouri must be to give our farming population a complete system of schools doing both elementary and high school work, and doing this work so well that children shall no longer be obliged to go to town to prepare for their life work.

The First District Normal School wishes to be of as great assistance as possible to Missouri people in this campaign for better schools. To this end the present manual is sent out. It is requested that it be studied carefully and impartially. If speakers from this school shall be desired to assist in crystallizing popular sentiment for consolidation and the building of rural high schools, all such requests will be honored so far as our speakers are available.



CONSOLIDATED SCHOOL AT SAUK CENTRE, MINNESOTA

This is one of the many great schools which are rapidly transforming country life conditions in the "North Star" state.

## A GENERAL VIEW OF THE SUBJECT

**What Consolidation Contemplates.**—It is a plan to reconstruct our rural schools on a new foundation which will re-establish the ancient principle of “equal rights to all”. It contemplates abolishing all the old district lines, reorganizing a number of small districts under one new board of six men who shall have charge of all school affairs within the district. This reorganization may be for the purpose of abandoning all the small schools within the district and the maintenance instead of one central school; or, if the voters so desire, it may mean the continuation of all the small schools as before—although now under one board for all—and the establishment of a rural high school somewhere within the district for the advanced pupils only.

There can be no question, however, that of the two kinds of schools permitted under the new law, the consolidated school, pure and simple, will prove under ordinary conditions both the least expensive and most satisfactory. This has been proved by its history throughout the United States as a whole. It will forever put an end to the box-car schoolhouse, dilapidated and unsightly, with its faulty lighting and ventilation, and general lack in sanitary appliances. A large well-built and sanitary structure will take the place of the several small houses, set in large grounds—five or more acres are recommended—which shall supply the workers with school garden and the necessary experimental plots. For these are to be farmers’ schools, not schools for the training of city children.

**Great Waste Under the Old System.**—The writer has made a careful study of several hundred school districts in North Missouri with a special reference to ATTENDANCE and INTEREST. Bad roads, cold, unattractive and unsanitary buildings, poorly sustained interest by reason of indifferent teaching, etc. have actually resulted in a waste of forty per cent. of school energy. That is to say, of all the children of school age actually enrolled, only sixty per cent. when averaged up, get the benefits offered by the school. This does not even consider the fact that under the old system both boys and girls quit school long before they are ready to. And, bear this in mind, ninety-five per cent. of these children, so early to leave school, never get away to higher schools.

Suppose that a Missouri farmer should haul his milk to the creamery, and day after day spill fifty per cent. of it without



it shows that the schools have been so unattractive and have appealed so little to the children that they have been "spilling out" all along the eight year course that they should have been in school, and with these results that it has actually cost the county \$1,496 for every boy or girl who has stuck to the schools long enough to get through!

The following table is taken from School District No. 23, Larimer County, Colorado, and shows that in eight years the district did not graduate a single pupil from the schools, and it spent \$4,313 at its failure. This is "spilling our educational milk" with a vengeance! And we do little better in many Missouri districts under the small school system.

#### THE RECORD FOR EIGHT YEARS.

	CENSUS	ENROLLMENT	AVERAGE DAILY ATTENDANCE	EIGHTH GRADE GRADUATES
1905	43	24	16	0
1906	46	27	17	0
1907	51	37	15	0
1908	54	29	19	0
1909	54	47	23	0
1910	40	42	23	0
1911	33	36	27	0
1912	31	32	25	0
	—	—	—	—
<b>Average</b>	43	34	20	0

This District spent \$4,313. and did not graduate a pupil from the eighth grade in eight years.

The following table emphasizes this same point in a most graphic manner. It was compiled by N. C. Macdonald, State Inspector for Consolidated and Rural Schools in North Dakota. It shows the per cent. of pupils completing the eighth grade and the high school for the entire state of North Dakota. Mr. Macdonald gives this as a vital reason for giving country children their own strong schools:

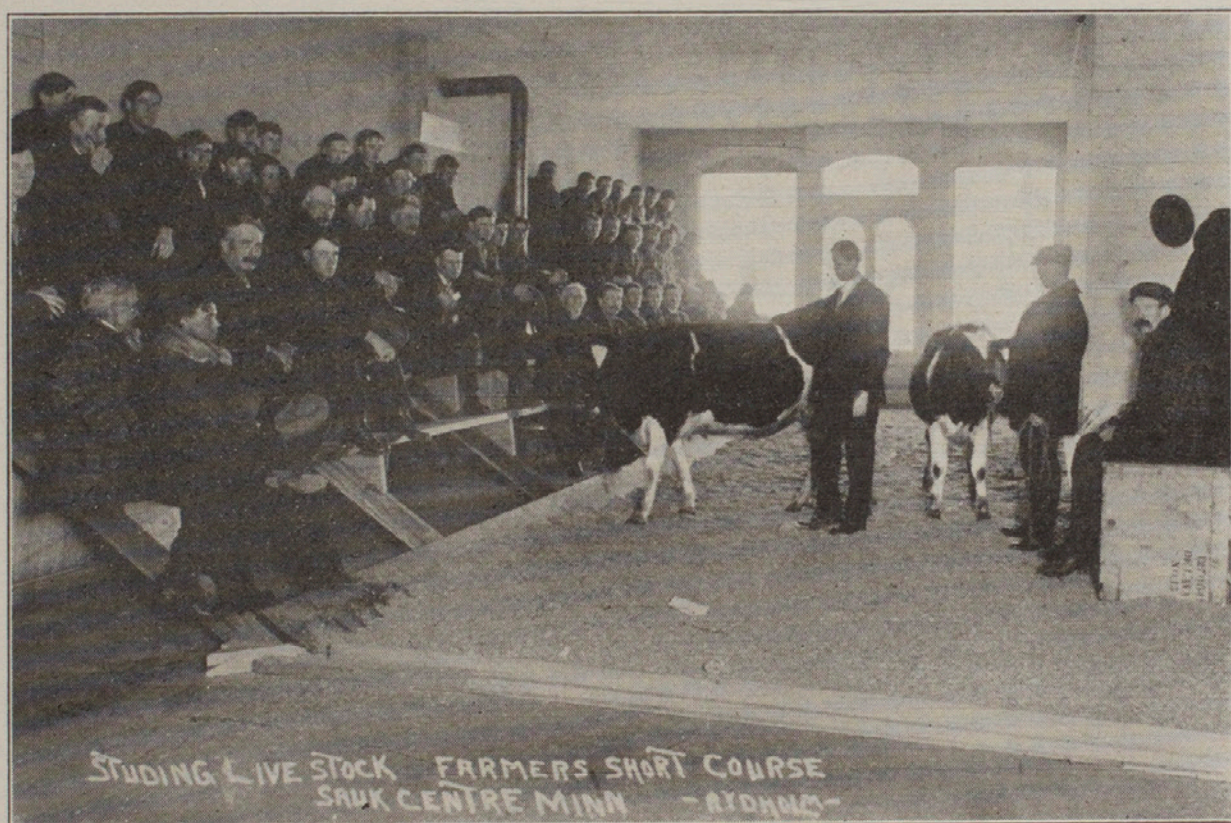
(a) For Eighth Grade—

	Per cent.
1. <u>Country</u> Boys (homes on farms—1913 . . . . .	7
2. <u>Country</u> Girls . . . . .	12
3. <u>City</u> Boys (1912) . . . . .	50
4. <u>City</u> Girls . . . . .	80

(b) For High School—(1912)

<u>Country</u> Boys . . . . .	$\frac{1}{2}$
<u>Country</u> Girls . . . . .	$1\frac{1}{4}$
3. <u>City</u> Boys . . . . .	$12\frac{1}{2}$
4. <u>City</u> Girls . . . . .	25

**History of Consolidation.**—This manual does not permit of any lengthy discussion of the history of consolidation. A few facts must therefore suffice: Consolidation was introduced in New England more than forty years ago, because of the gradual exodus to the cities and the West. Children have been conveyed to school at public expense in this section of states since 1869. Other states westward have wisely followed New England's example, thereby solving a very serious problem. The system is now operative to a greater or less extent in forty-three or more states. Some states in our Middle West have almost put an end to the small school. Thus Ohio has hundreds of consolidated



JUDGING STOCK, FARMERS' SHORT COURSE, SAUK CENTRE, MINNESOTA

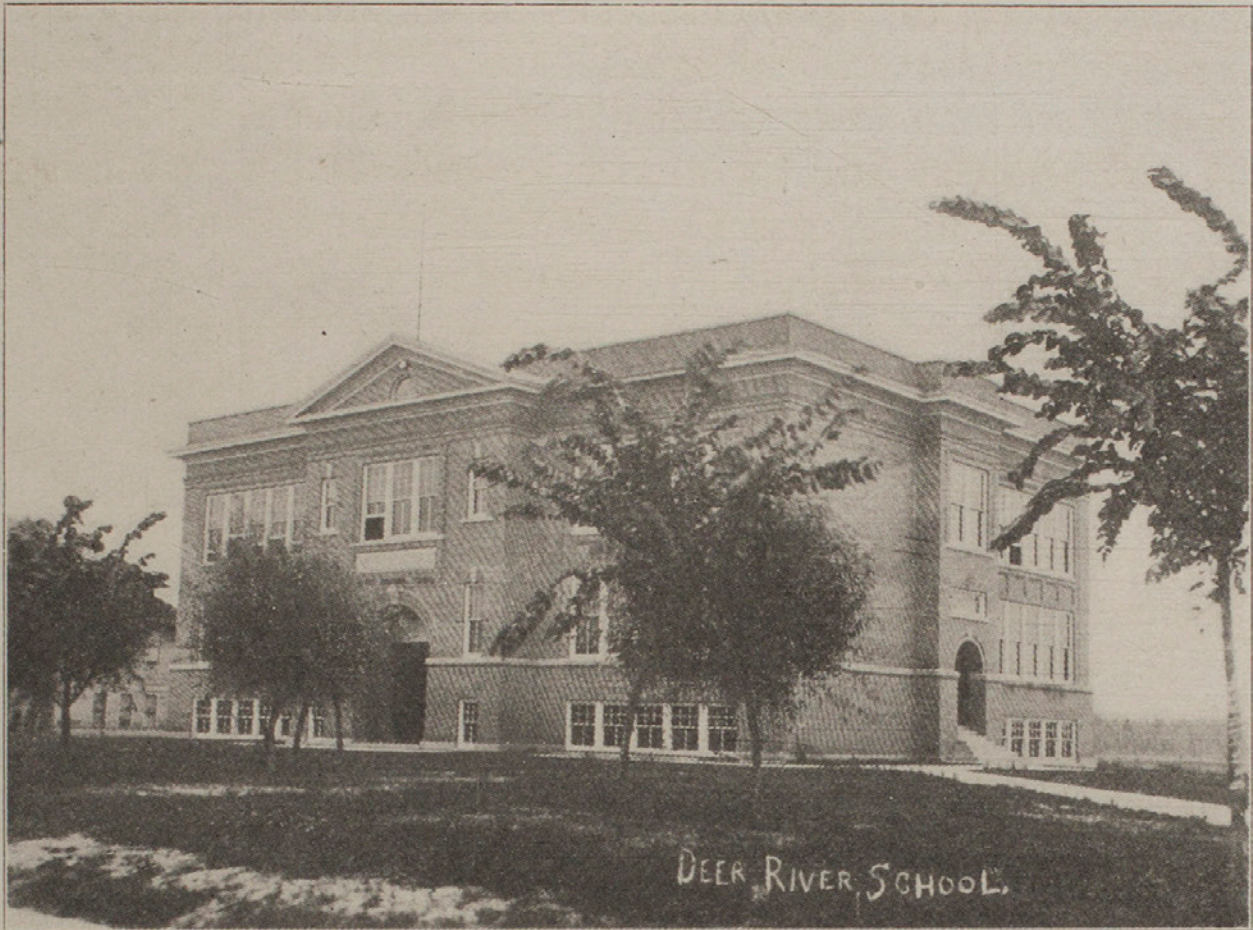
The Minnesota Consolidated and Associated Schools meet the needs not alone of the children of school age, but also the needs of their older brothers and sisters, fathers and mothers schools. Indiana heads the list with more than six hundred, Michigan, Illinois, Iowa, Nebraska and Minnesota are all making good headway. Kansas has nearly two hundred. North Dakota has one hundred and ninety. Oklahoma, although a new state, has had a substantial growth in consolidated schools. Westward, Utah, Idaho, Washington and other states have many excellent consolidated schools. Nor is the South any less active. Almost every southern state has consolidated schools and transportation of children. Clear down in Florida we find them. In Louisiana whole parishes (our counties) have every school consolidated.

This is all the history necessary. Consolidation has proved a panacea for the whole country—North, South, East and West. And Missouri is rapidly falling into line!

**Relation to the Rural Life Movement.**—Our industrial life is experiencing fundamental changes. The phenomenal growth of cities has been coincident everywhere with growth in manufacturing industries. These latter have produced modern labor saving machinery for the farm, and have consequently reduced the demand for farm hands. Local industries have died and rural craftsmen have flocked to the city. Worst of all, untold numbers of farm youth, without whom the rural communities will languish, are drawn thither by the glamour of city life and its opportunities for advancement. The drift of country population, which had its beginning in economic causes subsequently was continued with increasing momentum for purely social reasons. The crude, though virile school of pioneer days, with its man-teacher and many pupils has passed away. In its place is the small, weak, poorly taught and poorly paid school of the average community. Careful investigation shows that the old-time lyceum and spelling bee, the neighborhood singing school and debating society have had their day and no modern substitute is offered. Country life has gradually become shorn of its human satisfactions, where such were at one time known. People are moving to town because the rural school does not offer the spiritual uplift demanded by the human soul. Social life there, too, does not fill the craving for recreations and diversions of normal human beings.

Country life as a whole must be reconstructed or redirected. It is now altogether too much dependent on city life. Many factors must have a share in this change for the better; but none, certainly, can play as great a role in the movement as the new farm school. Life in rural districts is agricultural. The new school must offer an agricultural education—i. e. must give expression (1) to good scientific farming, rendering ample returns for the labor expended; and (2) to a rural social life satisfactory to those living it. Such tasks are beyond the old school. The strong consolidated school alone can solve them.

**The Consolidated School a Community Center.**—The new kind of school becomes the natural center of all community enterprise. Wherever consolidated schools spring up there community undertakings of every kind seem to flourish. The very



CONSOLIDATED SCHOOL AT DEER RIVER, MINNESOTA

Such great rural schools are fast remaking agricultural life in the state. If consolidation is worth doing at all it is worth doing well.

things for which country folk formerly came to town can now be obtained at home. This school, to begin with, is better for farm purposes than any offered in town. And from it come the impulses necessary to organize the community on a more permanent social and economic basis. Let the school have a large assembly hall to be used for extension lecture courses, neighborhood social gatherings, farmers' institutes, boys' and girls' clubs, mothers' meetings, etc. The very wagons bringing the children to school at public expense are used in some states to convey the parents to many of these meetings. This is perfectly right. For let us bear in mind: THE TASK OF THE NEW SCHOOL IS NOT LIMITED TO THE CHILDREN IN THE SCHOOL: IT REACHES INTO THE FARM HOME AND SEEKS TO BE HELPFUL THERE—ITS TASK IS TO MAKE ALL COUNTRY LIFE MORE SCIENTIFIC AND MORE CONTENTED.

**The Ideal Farmers' School.**—A fatal mistake in much consolidation is its appeal to the CHEAP and SHODDY. If this great work is worth doing at all it is worth doing well. Some advocates of consolidation recommend the bringing together at a central place two or more of the best schoolhouses from the abandoned districts, placing them side by side and using them as

so many rooms in a graded school. This system has proved an expensive makeshift wherever tried, and is to be condemned.

Where a community contemplates consolidation its advocates should strive with might and main towards the highest ideals in school perfection. Some such institutions as the Cache La Poudre School, depicted elsewhere in these pages, might well serve as a model. Here are some things to be considered by all:

(1). **The Grounds Chosen**, aside from being centrally located and easily accessible, should be slightly, well drained, and large—so large, indeed, as to afford room for good-sized experiment plots, school gardens, playgrounds, lawn and ample space for buildings. Five acres and upward should be the standard. Indeed, all Missouri consolidated schools seeking aid for building, etc. under the BUFORD-COLLEY CONSOLIDATION LAW should provide “a site of not less than five acres for the central high school building of said district.”

(2). **The School Structure** should be built as a permanent farm school plant, have a large assembly room, well equipped class rooms, and agricultural laboratories, be sanitary, attractive and in every way as good as the best town school plant. No steps should be taken towards building until after consulting with educational experts, and then plans and specifications should be prepared by a competent architect.

The grounds should have a good shed for teams and wagons.

(3). **A Principal's Cottage** should be erected on every consolidated school ground. To this end of the best of the discarded schoolhouses may be moved in and remodelled. The district will get a monthly rental upon this property. Many states have found this an excellent investment. One state has as many as sixty-five such cottages and more are springing up rapidly. It must also be borne in mind that the teacher who lives his life in the midst of the community from year to year, becomes a positive factor in community building, something that can scarcely be said of our present short-term teacher.

## SOME DIFFICULTIES IN THE WAY OF CONSOLIDATION

**Overcoming Old Traditions.**—The thing which we ordinarily call “tradition” has played a strange part in human history. Great races and nations have permitted themselves to be crowded out of the path of progress and have become stationary and even reactionary, because to take this or that forward step would mean to depart from the custom of the forefathers. Many a great reform has stranded on this rock of tradition. Man is by nature reluctant to give up the old things which were of service to him and to his father before him. It is a little hard, therefore, for some people to understand that the time-honored schoolhouse at the cross-roads must yield to the onward march of change. Just as surely is this coming to pass as that the scythe and cradle have been supplanted by the mower and self-binder. Thoughtful men will see that in the matter of consolidation sentiment must give way before cold economic necessity.



TRANSPORTATION OF PUPILS AT THE PORTER SCHOOL

The Porter School, Adair County, Mo., is a one-teacher school in which many remarkable educational problems are being worked out. Among other things, the children are being conveyed to school. This has meant much for increased regularity of attendance and has reduced tardiness to the zero point.

**Effect on Land Value.**—An objection frequently raised against consolidation is the effect the removal of the one-room school may have upon farm values in the immediate vicinity where it stood. Will the removal not decrease the value of these farms? The answer is an emphatic No! In hundreds of instances where the new system has been adopted this is proved. The writer has before him plenty of evidence to verify the statement. Professor A. B. Graham of the Ohio State University, for instance, shows illustrations in his bulletins of farm homes in certain consolidation districts CHOSEN ESPECIALLY BECAUSE OF THESE SCHOOLS' FACILITIES. What could be more attractive in an advertisement when one has a farm for sale, than to state something like this: "For Sale—farm in enterprising community offering graded and high school instruction. No need to pay tuition in town. Transportation wagon passes within 1-8 mile of house," etc. The fact is, land everywhere in the new district will get a wholesome boost upward. For many outsiders will be eager to "buy into" the district to take advantage of the fine school.

**Bad Roads and the Conveyance of Children.**—The objection most frequently raised is the impracticability of transportation in certain sections due to bad roads. No one will deny that heavy roads make transportation difficult in sections for short periods during fall and spring; but the difficulty has nowhere been insuperable. In many states transportation is over just such roads. Missouri is not the only state to have sticky clay or dirt roads! Up at Buffalo Center, Iowa, for example, the roads get very bad at times, BUT THIS DOES NOT STOP THE WAGONS. Or, again, study the Model School transportation scene. This wagon conveys Missouri country children to school over ordinary dirt roads, which at times get very bad. This has occasionally obliged the driver to use four horses; BUT IN EIGHT YEARS' time this transportation wagon has not missed over half a DOZEN DAYS ON ACCOUNT OF THE CONDITION OF THE ROADS OR COLD WEATHER, AND ITS ROUTE IS FIVE MILES LONG! Such facts should convince the most conservative. Farmers do somehow get their milk to the creamery over the worst roads; delivery of rural mail is regularly made, rain or shine, wet or dry; then why not transport the children to school also? Some argue: "let us get the good roads first; then it will be easier to consolidate." Wait for good roads and you may have to wait forever! Stir up a wholesome community spirit; consolidate the schools; thereafter, necessity will oblige all to turn



TEACHER'S COTTAGE AT THE PORTER SCHOOL

This is probably the first Teacher's Cottage in this state. Here the teacher, Mrs. Marie Turner Harvey, lives 12 months out of the year in the midst of her people. In this way only can the teacher hope to become a real community leader. All consolidated schools, at least, should have such cottages for their principals.

out and make the roads the best possible under the circumstances. But, for that matter, our state is getting wide-awake to the value of good roads AND IT IS BUILDING THEM. Adair County, alone, has spent \$50,000 during the past year on road improvement and some counties have done even better.

But here, in closing, is a rustic argument offered by a farmer at a consolidation meeting: "Just supposing that a transportation wagon should fail occasionally, in the very worst of weather, to make the regular trip, is this any worse than what we are experiencing now?" Think of the little children plodding schoolward in cold and wet and mire—when they go at all! Then count up the number of days they are kept home altogether because of bad roads and severe weather!

The compact statement which follows below tells the story of transportation in the Cache La Poudre School a few miles out from Fort Collins, Colorado. This school has taken the place of half a dozen small schools and is attended by 263 pupils. 100 of these who live reasonably close to the school are expected to shift for themselves, the rest are carried to school in standard transportation wagons. During the present winter this particular

region has been visited by the heaviest snow-fall in the history of the oldest settler, and yet the drivers told the writer that the difficulties encountered were not of any serious consequence.

**TRANSPORTATION.**  
**CACHE LA POUUDRE SCHOOL.**

ROUTE	DISTANCE FOR FIRST CHILD TO RIDE	MONTHLY PAY OF DRIVER	NUMBER CHILDREN IN WAGON
1	4 miles	\$49.00	24
2	2 miles	40.00	23
3	5 miles	50.00	25
4	4 miles	40.00	24
5	2 $\frac{3}{4}$ miles	37.50	22
6	5 miles	55.00	25
7	3 miles	44.00	20
7 wagons.		Average \$45.00	Total 163

Transportation costs 9 cents a day per pupil.

There is no tardiness with transportation.

Attendance is at the maximum.

The Driver signs a contract that specifies his duties.

He gives a \$300 bond for faithful performance of duty.

He maintains order in the wagon and on the road.

In this school 163 pupils are transported.

100 live close enough to walk. All share the benefits.

This school has the advantage of the town school, and the best possible environment.

The Country is the place to educate country children.

The consolidated school puts a high school in reach of all Children in district and it educates for country life.

**The Cost.**—The financial side is considered last since it is generally the greatest cause for hesitation. Some country people have been afraid of largely increased taxes. We are frank to believe, however, that when the problem is stated fairly—without any beating about the bush—and all the advantages are explained and proved, that the average school patron will not let a slight increase in school taxes stand between him and a modern school system.

It is quite easy to prove that consolidation MAY be carried on at just as small an outlay as under the old system, and in some instances can be made even LESS EXPRESSIVE. But such consolidation is often ineffective. The illustration which follows is taken from Oklahoma. Here an excellent consolidated school is being operated at less cost than were the original small schools:

**YALE CONSOLIDATED SCHOOL.**

“This school was established in 1906. The town of Yale has more than doubled in population during that time, and eight teachers are employed where but three were employed in the beginning, so it is impracticable to give the comparative actual cost. But the record shows that the per capita cost before consolidation was \$2.30 per month, and at the present time

is \$1.70. The district owns three wagons costing \$120 each, and the drivers receive \$35 a month each. Of this feature the Principal, Mr. F. H. Reed, writes, 'It is as satisfactory as any department in the school.' He also adds: 'The new system is entirely satisfactory. There is none to prefer the old system. All are proud of our school' The Yale School gives two years high school work, and is accredited by the A. & M. College."

Where the community is ambitious to get the best kind of a consolidated school the GROSS cost is generally a little more than under the old system; but when we consider the added effectiveness of the new school in the matter of increase and regularity of attendance, general economy, and ultimate educational worth, the NET individual cost is far less than under the passing regime.

Mr. Macdonald who has helped to consolidate nearly two hundred schools in North Dakota the last few years, speaks with authority on this point of cost. He says:

This is undoubtedly the greatest and most persistent objection to consolidation, much so as some may dislike to admit it. The fact is that consolidation does cost more in the aggregate than the one-room school, and it ought to cost more, for it is a vastly better system. However, when the true cost, that is, the cost per pupil per day attended is considered, the consolidated school costs less than the rural school. At the close of the school year 1911-1912, this item for the city school was 24 cents, for the graded school 28 cents, for the consolidated school 32 cents, and for the rural school 35 cents. But the average aggregate cost of the consolidated school is greater than that of the rural school, and there is the chief objection. The self-binder, too, costs more money than does the cradle scythe it replaced, as does the steam thresher when compared with the flail. But no one uses that as an objection against the use of either one, for they give greater returns for the money invested in them. And so the consolidated school gives much greater returns in the greater number of better trained boys and girls that it enrolls than would ever be possible in the old school it supplanted. The consolidated school costs about the same as the village or small town school which calls for a tax rate of six mills less than that paid by cities supporting state high schools. The rural resident is not over-burdened with taxes when compared with the city taxpayer. He can still raise two million dollars, and be below his city neighbor. In any event the money spent on tobacco by the farmers in this state would build and equip a consolidated school in every district in this state. When the better attendance, high school privileges and state aid are considered it is a much cheaper school than any one-room school can ever be. It is not necessary to build a costly building and equip it in a costly fashion. Two of the old one-room buildings placed together and with two well qualified teachers would make a most excellent beginning, and would be vastly better than to have both the schools running separately as one-room schools. This has been done with much success in several places. Then, too, the transportation can be reduced to a minimum by having family transportation with or without cost to the district. This is also being done and in such cases no additional tax is needed. But all districts can afford a higher grade of consolidation than this, and should have it at an early date.

# THE HISTORY OF CONSOLIDATION IN MISSOURI

**The Beginnings Made.**—Consolidation has until recently made slow headway in Missouri. Other states round about us have succeeded where we have had indifferent success. Missourians are naturally conservative and find it difficult to depart from the long-established small school unit with its hallowed traditions. But now that the beginnings have been made, the process of reorganization promises a rapid, and, we trust, substantial growth. The last few months especially have recorded a large number of successful consolidations under the excellent new Buford-Colley Consolidation Law.

Up to the present time 34 districts have been consolidated under this law, and at least a half dozen are in the process of consolidation in Northeast Missouri as this report goes to press. And in all probability other sections of the state are equally active.

The following items are gleaned from proof sheets of State Superintendent Evans' 1913 school report:



ON THE SCHOOL FARM, CONSOLIDATED SCHOOL, DEER RIVER, MINNESOTA

Section 7 of the Buford-Colley Consolidation Act in Missouri calls for a site of at least five acres in order to make the school eligible for state aid. This is a great thing for the future of Missouri schools. It is to be hoped that all the new schools may qualify under this section of the law

The consolidation naturally falls under two heads: consolidation with some small village and consolidation in the open country. Under the former head might be enumerated Wyaconda, Ellington, Mindenmines, Fair Grove, Willard, Ellsinore, Linn, Auxvasse, Ewing, Tuscombia, Otterville, and Worthington.

#### WYACONDA—CLARK COUNTY:

This district transports its pupils and does all its work in the central building. It comprises Wyaconda village and 3 adjoining country districts. Wyaconda has a \$12,000 school building and receives \$800 state aid. There are 56 high school pupils in the school this year.

#### ELLINGTON—REYNOLDS COUNTY:

This small village has consolidated with several country districts and has just completed a \$14,000 central building, towards which the state paid \$2,000. This is the first high school organized in Reynolds County. One unique thing about this organization is that one of the large rural schools has been retained intact, while the pupils from the others are being conveyed in transportation wagons to the central school.

#### MINDENMINES—BARTON COUNTY:

This new consolidated district includes the small village of Mindenmines in the southwestern part of the county. Here, an unusually fine central building has been erected at a cost of \$20,000 of which \$2,000 is paid by the state. In this district transportation is not used and all the rural schools are retained as before consolidation. In all probability, the old schools will be abolished in a short while and the children transported to the central school, for in this way the work can be done better and more economically.

There have been, to date, a considerable number of consolidations in the open country. It is to be hoped that this kind of consolidation may increase very rapidly as the agricultural population, after all, needs the school as a rallying point for all country interests.

#### AURORA—BARRY COUNTY:

This district has a valuation of just a trifle over \$200,000 which makes transportation practically impossible, as it takes all the funds to maintain the elementary schools. The building is in process of erection at this time and will cost, when completed,

a little less than \$6,000. The state will pay \$1,333 towards this building. For the time being, the high school is held in a country church building with 14 pupils in attendance. The state pays \$800 annually to this school district.

#### PISGAH—COOPER COUNTY:

This district has a total valuation of \$400,000. The district is maintaining a third-class high school with an attendance of 18 pupils.

#### PRAIRIE HOME—COOPER COUNTY:

This district has a valuation of \$300,000 and is maintaining a third-class high school with an attendance of 15 pupils.

#### STAFFORD—GREEN COUNTY:

This district is erecting a well-planned four-room building which will soon be in use.

#### NORRIS—HENRY COUNTY:

This district has absorbed the old Norris Private High School. A new \$8,000 central school building is planned, towards which the state will pay \$2,000.

#### BOOMER—LINN COUNTY:

This district is composed of 3 districts; 2 in Linn and 1 in Chariton County. Because of some opposition to voting bonds, a handful of progressive citizens within this district purchased 5 acres of land and built thereon a one-room building for high school purposes. They then deeded it over to the district. The district contains 18 square miles and has received \$450 aid from the state.

The consolidation by counties up to the present time is as follows:

Counties having one each: Barry, Barton, Bates, Bollinger, Butler, Callaway, Carter, Cass, Chariton, Clark, Clinton, Crawford, DeKalb, Henry, Hickory, Holt, Lawrence, Lewis, Linn, Osage, Pemiscot, Platt, Putnam, and Reynolds.

Counties having two each: Miller and St. Clair.

Counties having 3 each: Cooper and Green.

**Reason for the Failures of the Past Few Years.**—A great many spirited campaigns were carried on under the old consolidation laws, with the net results of a score half of more or less unsatisfactory schools being established in Jackson, Macon, Cass and

one or two other counties. No really satisfactory farmers' schools were established under it.

As a matter of fact, the old consolidation laws were practically prohibitive. Under them (1) the vote could be taken only once each year—at the regular school election in April; (2) in outlining the new district the old district lines had to be followed whether it was compatible with the topography of the country and the wishes of the school patrons or not; (3) unless every school district cast a majority of its votes in favor of consolidation the project would fail. There are several instances on record where the election failed on this ground, although a majority of all the votes in the entire proposed district voted favorably; and (4) the state offered no inducements whatever in the form of state aid for school buildings or school maintenance.

**The Strong Points of the Buford-Colley Consolidation Law.**—Since the enactment last winter of this new law successful consolidation has taken place in every section of the state.

Here are the strong points of the law, which have made all of this possible:

1. It provides for the formation of natural consolidation districts—i. e. the old district lines need not be followed where this would mean a hardship or injustice.

2. The schools may, as a beginning, be centralized under one board of six men without NECESSARILY abolishing the small schools;

3. All the small schools may be abandoned and everything be reorganized as one strong consolidated school, if such is the wish of the community;

4. The small schools may remain intact and a central high school only be organized for the eighth grade graduates and, in particular instances, for the seventh and eighth grade pupils;

5. The patrons may decide for themselves whether or not they shall wish to make use of transportation at public expense, with this proviso, however, that where children are not transported school facilities must be provided within two and one-half miles of all said children.

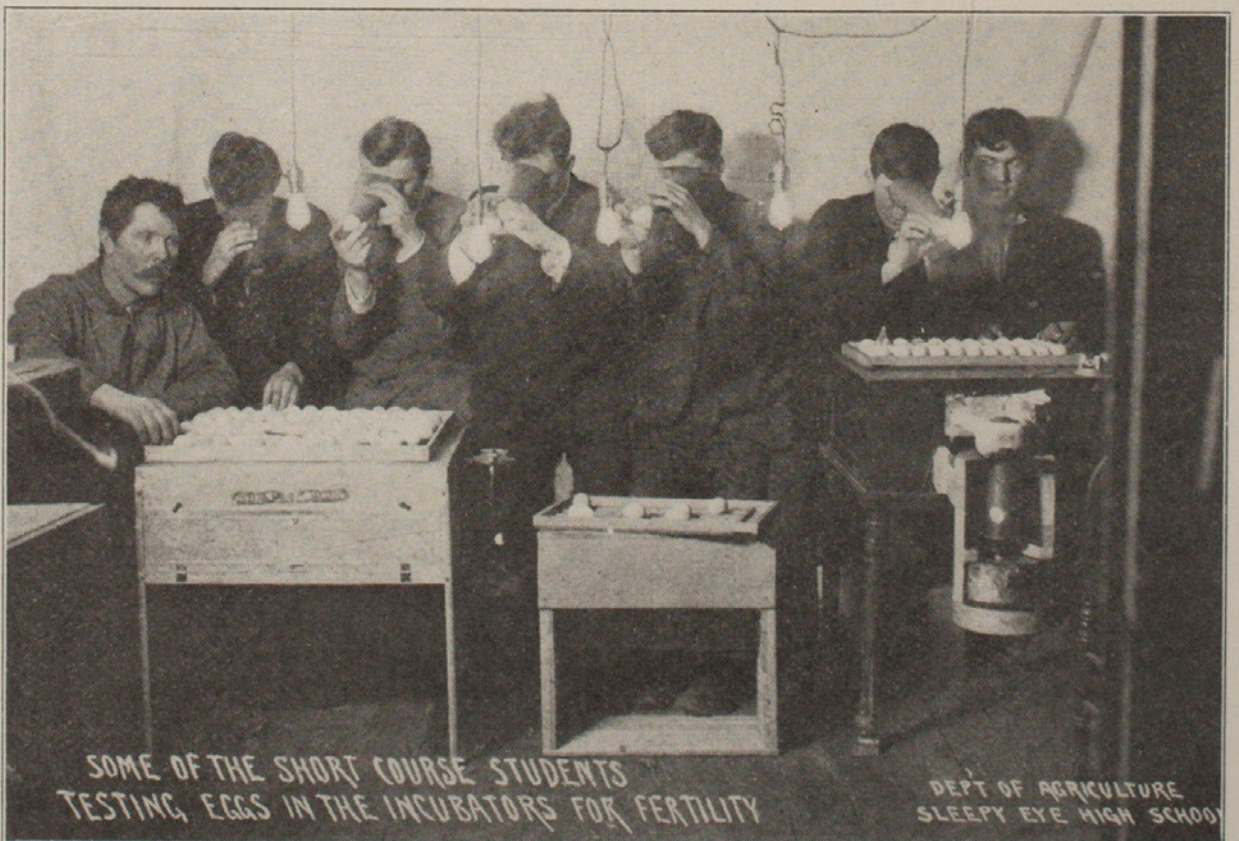
6. It provides, finally, substantial aid for erecting the new school building, and for continued school maintenance.

# HOW TO GET CONSOLIDATED SCHOOLS IN MISSOURI UNDER THE NEW LAW

**Community Spirit Necessary.**—It is useless to attempt consolidation in places where community spirit is at a low ebb. Community spirit is the first essential. A reasonable degree of it is absolutely necessary before beginning the work. A few men and women with the right kind of outlook can do much to inspire a community, and in time even the most conservative neighborhood may be ready for the new system. In many places consolidation is the result of slow but positive growth; in others it is almost spontaneous. Where the latter is the case there are sure to be many people who have permitted personal prejudice to be sunk for the greater good of community union.

The first thing to look for, then, is whether or not the area under consideration has the spirit to work together for the good of all. This is more important than good roads; for with it all obstacles will be surmounted or at least minimized.

**Study Local Conditions.**—The leaders in the movement must make a careful study of local conditions. The proposed district must not be too large. No transportation line should be



THE ASSOCIATED SCHOOLS, SLEEPY EYE, MINNESOTA

The great farmers' schools in Minnesota offer all kinds of agricultural and short courses for farm folks. Why shouldn't our Missouri schools do the same?

much more than five miles long. Nor should the district be very small. A small district will not contain taxable property enough to run a good school without making the levy unbearably high. The topography of the land plays an important role. The worst hills, stickiest roads, and most frequently flooded low-lands should be avoided, at least in laying out the transportation routes. Matters of school enrollment, condition of school house, rates of taxation necessary for school maintenance, etc., must be considered with the greatest care.

**Size and Value of District.**—The preliminary survey of the field ought to be based on these considerations: (1) The proposed district should show a school enrollment of 200, or if attached to a village, at least 150. Under the state laws an enrollment of at least 200 must be shown or the district have at least 12 square miles before THE OPFN COUNTY can organize with village privileges, such as to raise the levy above 65 cents on the \$100 valuation. (2) There had best be a total valuation of at least \$300,000—a little less may do in some instances. From \$350,000 to \$400,000 is much better. These figures are intended chiefly for districts contemplating free conveyance of pupils.

**Campaign of Education.**—(1) There must be the preliminary canvass, suggested above, to ascertain the feeling in the community. Any public-spirited man or set of men can do this. (2) Such a canvass should be followed up with a publicity campaign. The men who have undertaken to lead the movement should send to the state schools or the state superintendent for bulletins from which to clip and compile enough material to make a fair, concise statement of fact. This should then be printed and put into the hands of the voters in the proposed district. (3) After all have had time to study the question, public meetings must be held. To these should be invited experts from the several state schools and the office of the state superintendent of public instruction. Such meetings will offer opportunity for the discussion of many things not clear to the average voter. (4) As a last step the campaign must be carried into every district within the proposed consolidation district. An excellent idea is to give at least one lecture (illustrated, if possible, with stereopticon slides) in every school-house.

**Steps of Procedure Under the Buford-Colley Act.**—The new law is reproduced below, section by section, together with



CACHE LA POUDE CONSOLIDATED SCHOOL, LARIMER COUNTY, COLORADO

This great school is attended by 263 rural children, 163 being conveyed to school in 7 transportation wagons. On the four and one half acre campus there is a cottage for the principal and barn for horses and transportation equipment. This school, which cost \$35,000 to build, lies in the open country.

such explanations as may cast additional light upon the technical phraseology of the context:

**Section 1. Consolidated district for elementary and high school may be formed.** The qualified voters of any community in Missouri may organize a consolidated school district for the purpose of maintaining both elementary schools and a high school as hereinafter provided. When such new district is formed it shall be known as consolidated district No. . . . of . . . County, and all the laws applicable to the organization and government of town and city school districts as provided in article IV, chapter 106 of the Revised Statutes of Missouri, 1909, shall be applicable to districts organized under the provisions of this act.

**Section 2.—Consolidated district—area and enumeration of.**—No consolidated district shall be formed under the provisions of this act unless it contains an area of at least twelve square miles or has an enumeration of at least two hundred children of school age: **Provided**, that no district formed under the provisions of this act shall include within its territory any town or city district that at the time of the formation of said consolidated district has by the last enumeration two hundred children of school age.

Sections 1 and 2 make it evident that the initiative should come from the school patrons themselves. They should begin the movement. The consolidated district is conducted under the laws applicable to villages and town districts—i. e. there will be a board of six members, the tax rate may exceed 65 mills, etc. The new district must either contain an area of at least twelve square

miles or have an enumeration of two hundred children of school age. If it can have both this would be highly desirable.

**Section 3. Petition to form consolidated district filed with whom—duties of county school superintendent—meeting—organization of.**—When the resident citizens of any community desire to form a consolidated district, a petition signed by at least twenty-five qualified voters of said community shall be filed with the county superintendent of public schools. On receipt of said petition, it shall be the duty of the county superintendent to visit said community and investigate the needs of the community and determine the exact boundaries of the proposed consolidated district. In determining these boundaries, he shall so locate the boundary lines as will in his judgment form the best possible consolidated district, having due regard also to the welfare of adjoining districts. The county superintendent of schools shall call a special meeting of all the qualified voters of the proposed consolidated district for considering the question of consolidation. He shall make this call by posting within the proposed district ten notices in public places, stating the place, time and purpose of such meeting. At least fifteen days notice shall be given and the meeting shall commence at 2 o'clock p. m. on the date set. The county superintendent shall also post within said district five plats of the proposed consolidated district at least fifteen days prior to the date of the special meeting. These plats and notices shall be posted within thirty days after the filing of the petition. The county superintendent shall file a copy of the petition and of the plat with the county clerk and shall send or take one plat to the special meeting. The special meeting shall be called to order by the county superintendent of schools or some one deputized by him to call said meeting to order. The meeting shall then elect a chairman and a secretary and proceed in accordance with Section 10865, R. S. 1909. The proceedings of this meeting shall be certified by the chairman and secretary to the county clerk or clerks and also to the county superintendent or superintendents of schools of all the counties affected. If the proposed consolidated district includes territory lying in two or more counties, the petition herein provided for shall be filed with the county superintendent of that county in which the majority of the petitioners reside. The county superintendent shall proceed as above set forth and in addition shall file a copy of the petition and of the plat with the county clerk of each county from which territory is proposed to be taken.

The election may be held any time during the year. The county superintendent shall give at least fifteen days' notice of the special election. He must take action very soon after receiving the petition signed by the twenty-five qualified voters, because all his plats and notices must be posted within thirty days after the filing of the petition. This will make the longest possible time between the filing of the petition and the holding of the special election, forty-five days. The special meeting is governed by Section 10865, Revised Statutes, for the year 1909. The two important steps to be heeded are these:

FIRST.—To organize as a town or city school district, those voting for the organization shall have written or printed on their ballots "For organization", and those voting against the organization shall have written or printed on their ballots "Against organization"; and each person desiring to vote shall advance to the front of the chairman and deposit his ballot in a box to be used for that purpose. When all present shall have voted, the chairman shall appoint two tellers, who shall call each ballot aloud, and the secretary shall keep a tally and report to the chairman,

who shall announce the result; and if a majority of the votes cast are "for organization", the chairman shall call the next order of business.

SECOND.—To elect six directors, as follows: Two shall be elected for three years, two for two years, and two for one year, and each director shall be elected separately and the result announced in the manner prescribed for organization. If said election is held at a special meeting, from then until the next annual meeting shall be taken as one year, so far as relates to the terms of the directors elected. The directors chosen must comply with the requirements of section 17868 of this article. The chairman and secretary of such meeting shall keep a record of the proceedings thereof and turn the same over to the board of education of such district, to be entered upon its records by the clerk of such district.

The following form should be used when petitioning the county superintendent to take steps to organize the consolidation district :

**FORM OF PETITION.**

—————Mo.,—————191—

We, the undersigned qualified voters of school districts numbered—,....., and adjoining school districts, in accordance with the provisions of an act of the Forty-seventh general assembly of the state of Missouri, entitled "An act to provide for the organization of consolidated and rural high schools, and to provide state aid for such schools, with an emergency clause," do hereby petition the county superintendent of.....county to visit this community, to investigate the needs of the community, to make and to post the plats of a consolidated school district in this community, and to post notices of a special school meeting to vote on the organization of said consolidated school district.

Names.	Names.
--------	--------

This form will be used by the county superintendent when calling the special school meeting:

**FORM OF SPECIAL SCHOOL MEETING NOTICE.**

In accordance with the provisions of an act of the Forty-seventh general assembly of the state of Missouri, entitled "An act to provide for the organization of consolidated schools and rural high schools, and to provide state aid for such schools, with an emergency clause," notice is hereby given to the qualified voters of proposed consolidated district No....., county of....., state of Missouri, that a special school meeting of said proposed consolidated district will be held at....., on....., the....day of....., 191..., commencing at two o'clock p. m., and the following things will be considered:

- First: To organize a consolidated school district in this community with boundaries as laid out on the plats posted.
  - Second: To elect six school directors for said consolidated school district; two for three years, two for two years, and two for one year.
- Done this the....day of....., 191...

.....  
County Superintendent of Public Schools.



ONE OF THE SIX ORIGINAL SCHOOLHOUSES AT CACHE LA POUFRE SCHOOL

This building was remodelled at a cost of \$700.00 and transformed into a fine seven room cottage for the principal of the new consolidated school.

When the new school board calls an election to vote bonds and purchase school site it should use the following form:

**FORM OF NOTICE OF SPECIAL SCHOOL ELECTION.**

Notice is hereby given to the qualified voters of consolidated school district No. 1, of . . . county, Missouri, that a special election will be held at the schoolhouse in said consolidated school district, on . . . , the . . . . . day of . . . 191 . . , polls opening at 7 a. m. and closing at 6 p. m., to vote upon the following propositions:

1. To authorize the school board to issue bonds to amount of . . . thousand dollars (\$ . . . ), for the erection of a central school building and the purchase of a central school site.

. To select . . . . . acres of land located (describe land . . . as a shool site for the central school building.

Done by order of the school board this . . . day of . . . , 191 . .

.....  
Secretary of School Board.

**Sec. 4. Transportation—may be voted on.**—The question of transportation of pupils may be voted upon at a special meeting above provided for, if notice is given that such a vote will be taken. If transportation is not provided for in any school district formed under the provisions of this act, it shall then be the duty of the board of directors to maintain an elementary school within two and one-half miles by the nearest traveled road of the home of every child of school age within said school district: PROVIDED FURTHER, that if transportation is not provided for, any consolidated district may by a majority vote at any annual or special meeting decide to have all the seventh grade and the eighth grade work done at the central high school building, provided fifteen days' notice has been given that such vote will be taken. Such seventh and eighth grade work at the central school may be discontinued at any time by a majority vote taken at any annual or special meeting.

If transportation at public expense is not provided, it will in most instances become impossible to abandon all the small schools, because the district must maintain an elementary school within a walking distance of not more than two and one-half miles of every child of school age. This section does not alone require two-thirds of the voters, but two-thirds of the voters who are tax payers.

**Sec. 5. Parts of districts remaining after consolidation—procedure.**—Whenever by reason of the formation of any consolidated school district a portion of the territory of any school district has been incorporated in the consolidated district, the inhabitants of the remaining parts of the districts shall proceed in accordance with section 10882, providing for the annexation to city school districts and the consolidated district shall be governed by the same provisions as govern city school districts in such cases. The inhabitants of the remaining parts of the districts may also annex themselves to any other adjoining district or districts by filing a petition asking to be so annexed with the clerk or clerks of the district or districts to which they desire to be annexed and by also filing a copy of all such petitions with the clerk of the county court.

**Sec. 6. Settlement of property—original districts to continue—how long.**—Whenever any consolidated district is organized under the provisions of this act, the original districts shall continue until June 30th, following the organization of said consolidated district, and at that time all the property, money on hand, books and papers of the school districts whose schoolhouse sites are included within said consolidated district shall by the officers of aforesaid districts be turned over to the board of directors of the consolidated district, and also all bonds outstanding against the aforesaid districts shall become debts against the consolidated district. The division of property and money on hand in case school districts are divided by the formation of any consolidated district shall be governed by sections 10839 and 10840.

The State Superintendent's interpretation of Sections 5 and 6 is as follows:

These sections provide that the boards of directors of the original districts shall continue until June 30th following the formation of the consolidated school district. Such boards of directors continue only for the purpose of completing the business already begun in the original districts. They have no power to make any contracts extending beyond June 30th.

At any time after its organization, the board of directors of the consolidated district has power to call a meeting for the purpose of voting bonds for the erection of a central school building or other needed buildings.

In the event a consolidated district is organized between the date of the annual school meeting and June 30th, the board of directors of the consolidated district must on June 30th assume all the contracts made by the boards of the original districts prior to the organization of the consolidated district. Only such contracts as are in writing should be assumed. Copies of all such contracts must be delivered by the boards of directors of the original districts to the board of directors of the consolidated district.

**Sec. 7. State aid—when granted—how.**—Whenever a district organized under the provisions of this act has secured a site of not less than five acres for the central high school building of said district and has erected thereon a school building, suitable for a central school and containing one large assembly room for the meeting of the citizens of the district and has installed a modern system of heating and ventilating, the state shall pay one-fourth of the cost of said building and equipment, provided the amount thus paid by the state shall not exceed two thousand dollars (\$2,000.00) for any one district. The state of Missouri shall out of the general revenue fund of the state make adequate appropriation for carrying out the provisions of this section and the money due any district shall be remitted by the auditor to the county treasurer of the proper county on receipt of a certificate from the state superintendent of public schools stating that the conditions herein prescribed have been complied with.

The purpose of this section is to encourage the community to erect real farmers' schools in large areas of ground to be used for experimental purposes. Before any aid can be granted the district must provide a building satisfactory to the state department of education; it must maintain at least two years of approved high school work; and must give an approved course of one year in agriculture.

**Sec. 8. Special state aid granted—when—how.**—When a consolidated district has been organized as herein provided and has provided adequate buildings for school purposes, the state shall grant a special aid of twenty-five dollars (\$25.00) per year for each square mile or fraction thereof in the area of said district: PROVIDED, the district maintains an approved high school of at least the third class and gives an approved course of at least one year in agriculture; AND PROVIDED FURTHER, that no district shall receive more than eight hundred dollars per year under the provisions of this section. The State of Missouri shall out of the general revenue fund of the state make adequate appropriation for carrying out the provisions of this section. The money herein provided shall become due on June 30th of each year and the district clerk shall on or before June 30th make application to the county clerk for the aid due his district and the county clerk shall certify these applications to the state superintendent of public schools, who shall approve them and certify to the state auditor the amount due each district under the provisions of this act. The state auditor shall draw his warrant on the state treasurer for the said amount and remit to the treasurer of the proper county.

This section makes it possible to obtain state aid even though the school may not have the five acres of ground mentioned in section 7.

**Sec. 9. Emergency.**—On account of the immediate need of consolidated schools and rural high schools, there is created an emergency within the meaning of the Constitution; therefore, this act shall take effect and be in force from and after its passage and approval.

A sum of \$50,000 was appropriated to meet this emergency for the biennial period ending December 31, 1914.





