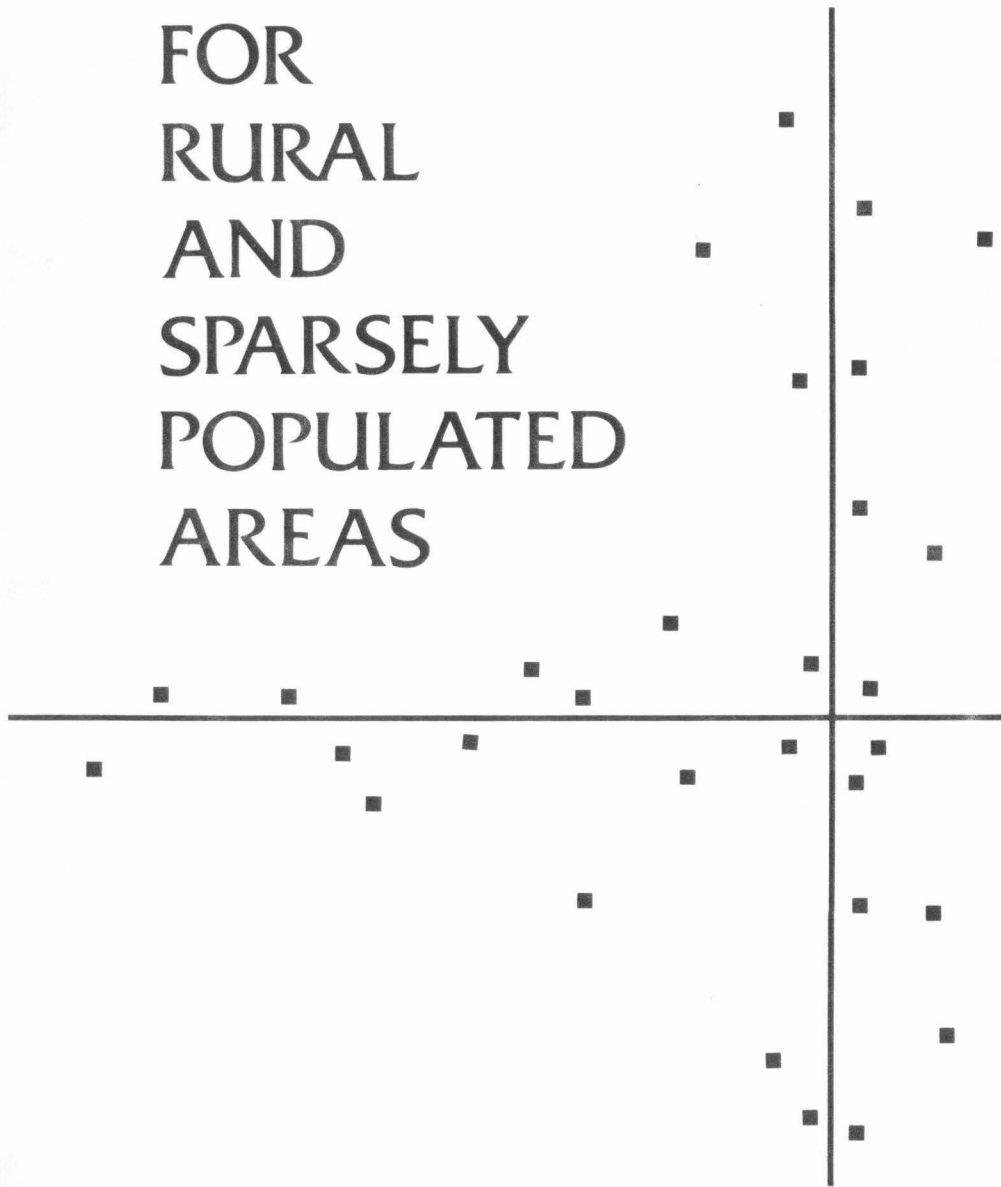


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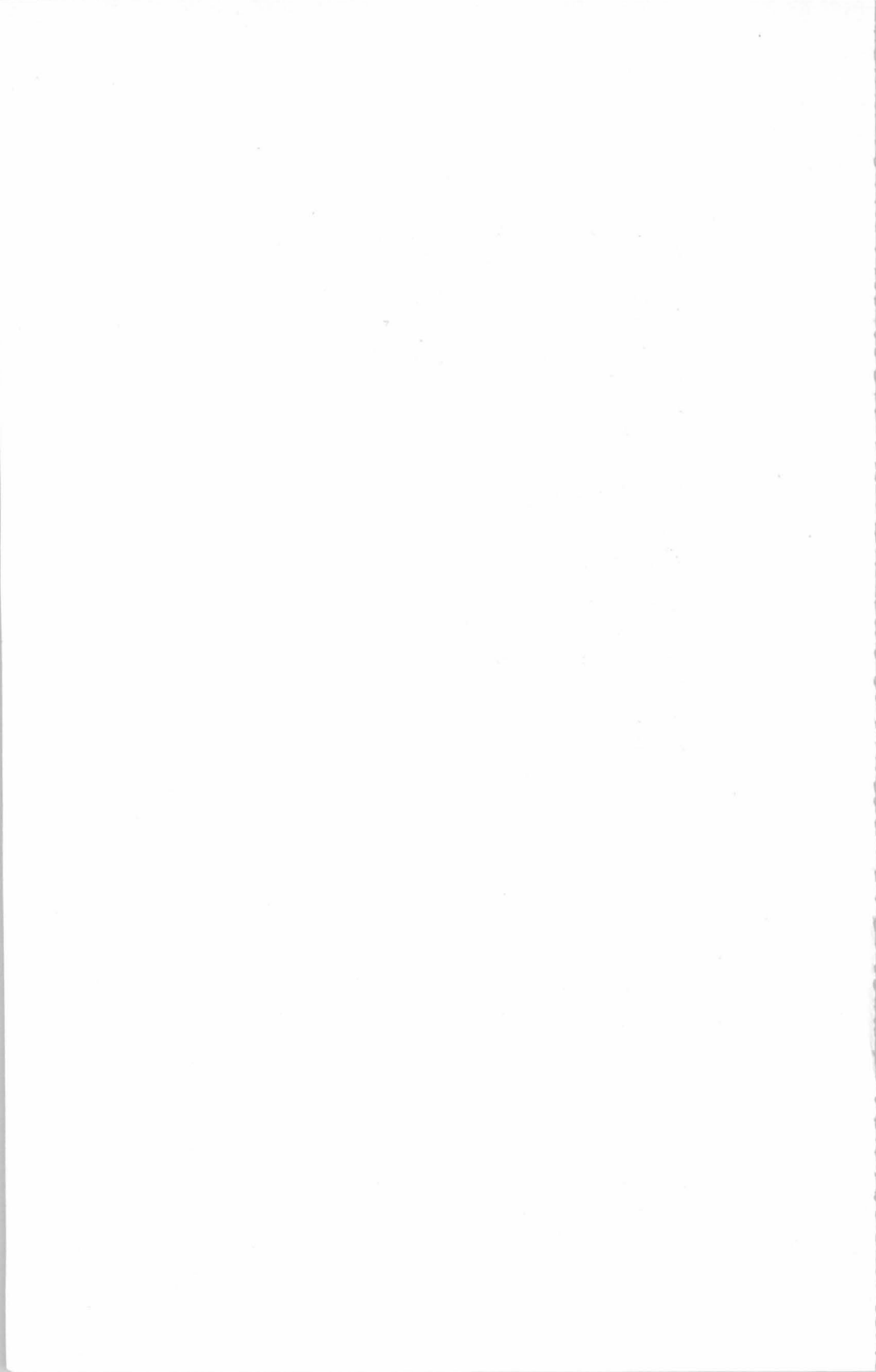


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*EDITED*

*BY*

RICHARD F. WEATHERMAN  
SUE ANN HOLLINGSWORTH

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## FOREWORD

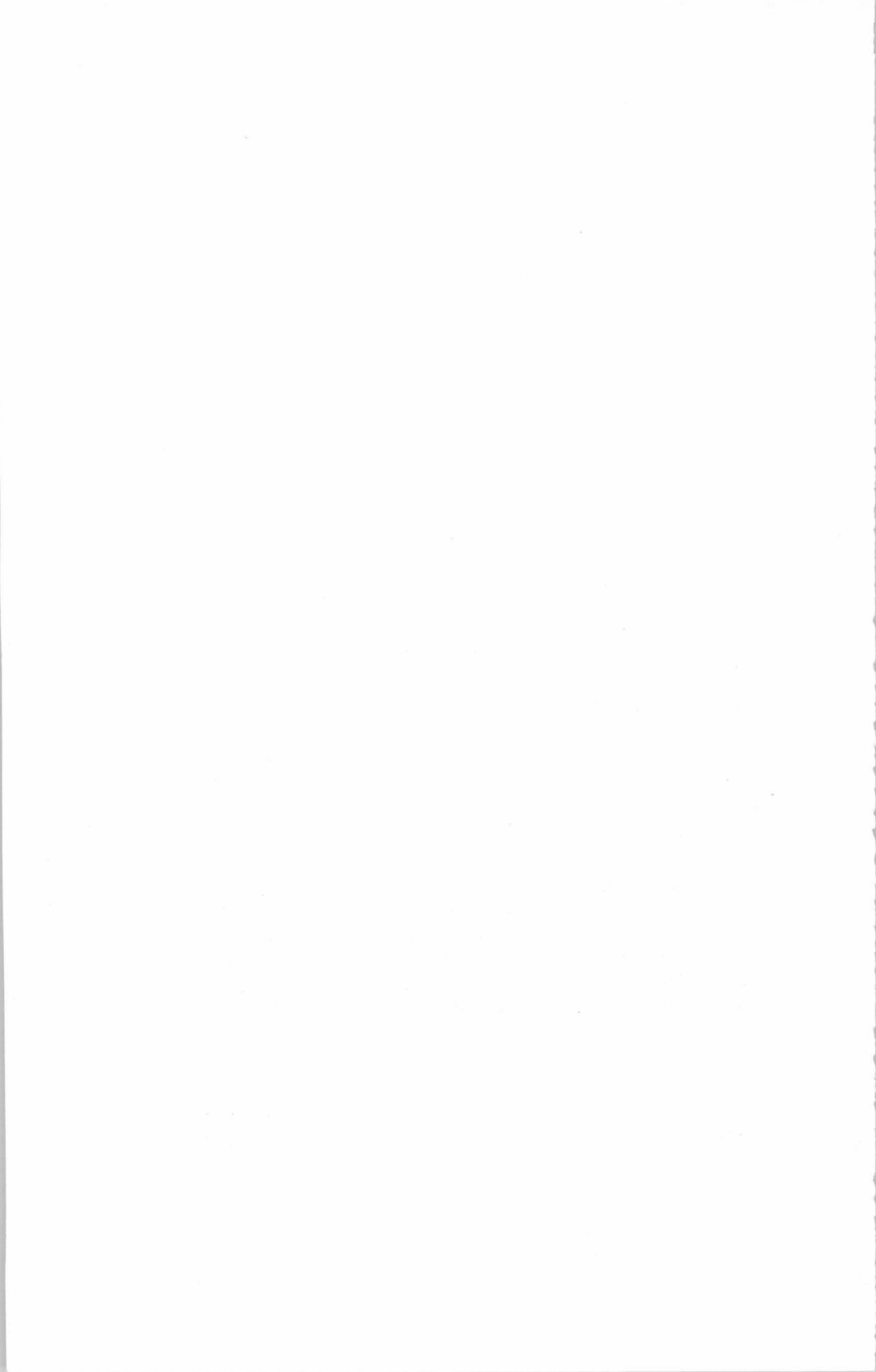
This book is the report of a conference held at the University of Minnesota during the summer of 1975, which was supported by funds available through the Department of Continuing Education and Extension and through the Special Education Administration Training Project (OEG 0-73-7096). Participants were from states where the delivery of special education services are complicated by distance and low population density; therefore, the conference addressed these two critical factors from a multifaceted approach.

The following chapters presented are focused on the future trends and current difficulties educators confront in trying to develop quality programs to serve all handicapped children.

The preparation of this manuscript depended upon the valuable assistance of several departmental staff members. The editors are especially indebted to Kathy Majeski, Debbie Allison and Sharon Olson, for their highly accurate and swift typing of the manuscript into camera-ready form.

October 31, 1975

Richard F. Weatherman  
Sue Ann Hollingsworth



## CONTRIBUTORS

*Larry Anderson.* Director of Special Education for the Becker-Clay County Special Education Cooperative, Audubon, Minnesota.

*Robert Bruininks.* Director of Developmental Disabilities for the State Planning Agency and Professor for the Department of Psychoeducational Studies (on leave), University of Minnesota, Minneapolis, Minnesota.

*Virginia Bruininks.* Assistant Professor for the Department of Psychoeducational Studies, University of Minnesota, Minneapolis, Minnesota.

*Norman Cole.* Special Education Regional Consultant (SERC), Bemidji, Minnesota.

*C. Duane Hensley.* Director for the Division of Mental Retardation--Developmental Disabilities, Missouri Division of Mental Health, Jefferson City, Missouri.

*Wilbur Maki.* Professor of Agriculture and Applied Economics for the University of Minnesota, St. Paul, Minnesota.

*Dwight Maxa.* Director of the Independent Home and Social Living Center for the Becker-Clay County Special Education Cooperative, Audubon, Minnesota.

*Van D. Mueller.* Professor and Chairman for the Department of Educational Administration, University of Minnesota, St. Paul, Minnesota.

*William Naylor.* Director of Administrative Services for Willmar Public Schools, Willmar, Minnesota.

*Thomas Stark.* Superintendent of Public Schools, Mankato, Minnesota.

*Richard Weatherman.* Professor for the Departments of Educational Administration and Psychoeducational Studies, University of Minnesota, St. Paul, Minnesota.

*Judith M. Wolf.* Assistant Professor for the Department of Educational Administration and the Institute of Child Development, University of Minnesota, St. Paul, Minnesota.



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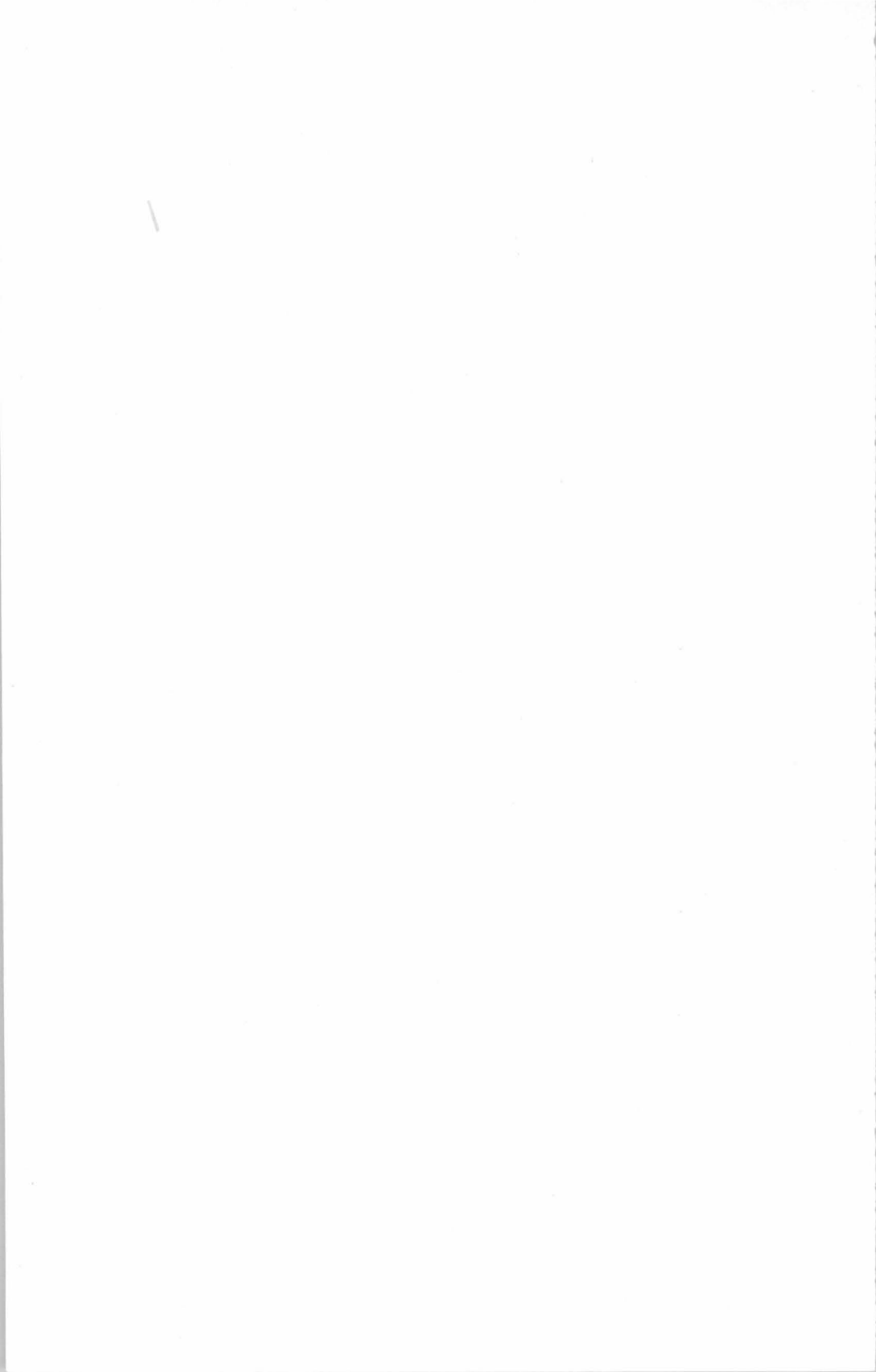
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Chapter One

ECONOMIC OUTLOOK FOR  
HUMAN SERVICE DELIVERY IN  
RURAL AMERICA

*Wilbur R. Maki*

The economic outlook for human service delivery in rural America is improving in the growing areas not too far from major metropolitan and large area service centers. Many rural areas in the Upper Midwest states are becoming more densely populated, not only by people seeking small town amenities, but also by the social service professionals.

For the sparsely settled rural areas of the Upper Midwest region, the perspective on human service delivery is vastly different than in the growing rural areas. Here, the sparsely populated rural areas are more than 100 miles from major metropolitan centers and more than a one-hour drive from the principal area service centers. The total land area is large and the total population is small. Both physical distance and social poverty make access to essential services increasingly difficult for a large percentage of area residents.

The growing areas in the Upper Midwest region are generally located within commuting range of large metropolitan centers or smaller urban centers with an institution of higher education or some other large state or federal facility, or they have certain natural resources for industrial development or recreational amenities which attract a growing year-round population. Declining rural areas generally are sparsely settled and well beyond the extended commuting zones of metropolitan and area service centers. In these areas, school districts, county agencies, municipal service enterprises and institutions of higher education provide the principal human services. State and federal funding sources provide an increasingly larger share of the public support of human service delivery. Both public and private sector institutions are becoming more and more dependent on public financing of human service delivery.

#### RURAL ECONOMIC OUTLOOK

The economic outlook for human service delivery in rural areas is largely dependent upon the general economic outlook. Jobs, taxes, general economic conditions and inequities are all important parts of the total economic outlook.

*Jobs Are Important.* Jobs are of primary importance, for growth in employment is a distinguishing characteristic of growing rural areas. The resident employed population may or may not be employed locally, so commuting takes place between the rural periphery and the urban center of a growing rural region. In the isolated, sparsely settled but growing rural areas, the local resource base provides employment opportunities. Here, mining, lumbering, and primary processing activities make use of the natural and physical resources in production of outshipments to the industrial and urban centers of the nation. High amenity recreation areas also attract people, but the existence of job opportunities in these areas is less important than



low cost or high quality access to the natural attractions offered by lakes and streams and scenic vistas. Employment opportunities will emerge later in local areas as a result of population in-migration.

*Burden of Local Property Taxes.* The property tax is the major source of local public revenue, and in the growing rural areas with increasing requirements for public services, the local tax base lags behind population growth and urban development. In declining areas, the property tax imposes a growing burden on a severely eroded local economic base. For both growing and declining rural areas, transfer payments (from federal and state sources) are increasingly important in covering the rising public costs of maintaining even minimal levels of human services. Health, education and welfare services are prime candidates for expanded state and federal financing.

*Dependence of Rural Economies on National Economic Conditions.* Rural economic well-being is tied to national economic conditions in periods of both contraction and expansion with in-migration occurring in both periods. An economic downswing returns the earlier out-migrant, while the economic upswing brings new migrants who seek small town amenities which they cannot find in the more congested, costly, physically unsafe and psychologically turbulent city environment. During periods of economic expansion, rural areas near major metropolitan centers are prime candidates for industrial expansion and relocation. Metropolitan area residents generally prefer living in rural areas with easy access to both urban and rural amenities to their present residential location in the metropolitan areas. The more distant rural areas attract also the in-migrant from the metropolitan areas who decides to settle and/or retire in the less congested and psychologically turbulent rural area.

*Inequities in Service Access.* Inequities in access to essential human services will increase within rural areas and between rural and metropolitan

areas as a result of limited local economic development and management potentials. The first step in achieving equity in urban and rural areas is welfare reform. Federal takeover of public assistance programs would result in dollar inflow to the community, thus, the public assistance would become part of the community economic base, especially in the declining rural areas. School funding reform is needed also to achieve equity. One approach is simply for each state and the federal government to assume a large share of the cost of common schools. The sharing of local educational costs is justified on efficiency as well as equity grounds because communities which experience high net out-migration underinvest in schooling relative to their ability as measured by the percentage of local income spent on schooling. Moreover, the intergovernmental transfers would compensate in part for local investment in the young people who make their economic contribution elsewhere. Finally, tax reform is essential in reducing the uneven burden of financing human services between rural and urban areas. Less reliance on local property taxes, for example, would raise the disposable income of farmers, but reforms to raise tax rates on capital gains to the level of the rates on earnings could offset the gains. On the other hand, removing the tax loopholes, such as exemptions for interest on state and municipal bonds, would not adversely affect the farmer.

#### POPULATION REDISTRIBUTION

Population redistribution affects human services delivery in rural areas in both demand for and supply of human services. In terms of demand, the new population movements impose heavy pressures on existing health, education and welfare services systems in the growing areas. In declining areas, the out-migration of the young results in a larger dependent population--one that puts increasing pressure on both the public sector and the local work force. The population trends are viewed,

therefore, in both a national and a regional perspective as they relate to the economic outlook for rural areas.

*National Perspective.* From a national perspective, population redistribution is occurring between multistate economic regions. This means that an increasingly larger proportion of the total population is residing in the seaboard states, particularly Florida and California. The American Heartland--extending from Chicago to Pittsburgh--also is holding its own in terms of national population growth. The Northeast--from Boston to Washington--is another major population agglomeration which accounts for a substantial percentage of both present and projected population.

Figure 1 shows the 20-plus urban regions of the United States which are growing regions; they include the more densely settled rural areas which also are growing in total population. In 1970, a total of 27 urban regions accounted for 76.8 percent of the total national population. Within 60 to 100 miles of the contiguous area of the major urban regions are located the principal growing rural areas, which also are the more densely populated rural areas. Additional growing rural areas are identified in a series of two population maps. In Figure 2, counties with net out-migration and net in-migration of population are differentiated for the 1960-1966 period. The counties of net out-migration lie in the intervening areas between the major urban centers. Figure 3, however, shows the newly expanding rural areas which have experienced a recent turnaround in population trends. Before 1960, those areas indicated on the map were declining in total population; they were experiencing heavy out-migration. Since 1960, these areas (e.g., Ozarks, Appalachia, the Upper Great Lakes and the Southern Coastal Plains) have been increasing in total population as a result of net population in-migration.

Rural regions of lagging growth are now confined primarily to the Southern Piedmont and the



- |                                       |                            |
|---------------------------------------|----------------------------|
| 1. Metropolitan Belt                  | 13. Willamette Valley      |
| 1.a. Atlantic Seaboard                | 14. Central Oklahoma—      |
| 1.b. Lower Great Lakes                | Arkansas Valley            |
| 2. California Region                  | 15. Missouri—Kaw Valley    |
| 3. Florida Peninsula                  | 16. North Alabama          |
| 4. Gulf Coast                         | 17. Blue Grass             |
| 5. East Central Texas—Red River       | 18. Southern Coastal Plain |
| 6. Southern Piedmont                  | 19. Salt Lake Valley       |
| 7. North Georgia—South East Tennessee | 20. Central Illinois       |
| 8. Puget Sound                        | 21. Nashville Region       |
| 9. Twin Cities Region                 | 22. East Tennessee         |
| 10. Colorado Piedmont                 | 23. Oahu Island            |
| 11. Saint Louis                       | 24. Memphis                |
| 12. Metropolitan Arizona              | 25. El Paso—Ciudad Juarez  |

*Based on 2-child family projection*

Figure 1: Urban regions, year 2000.

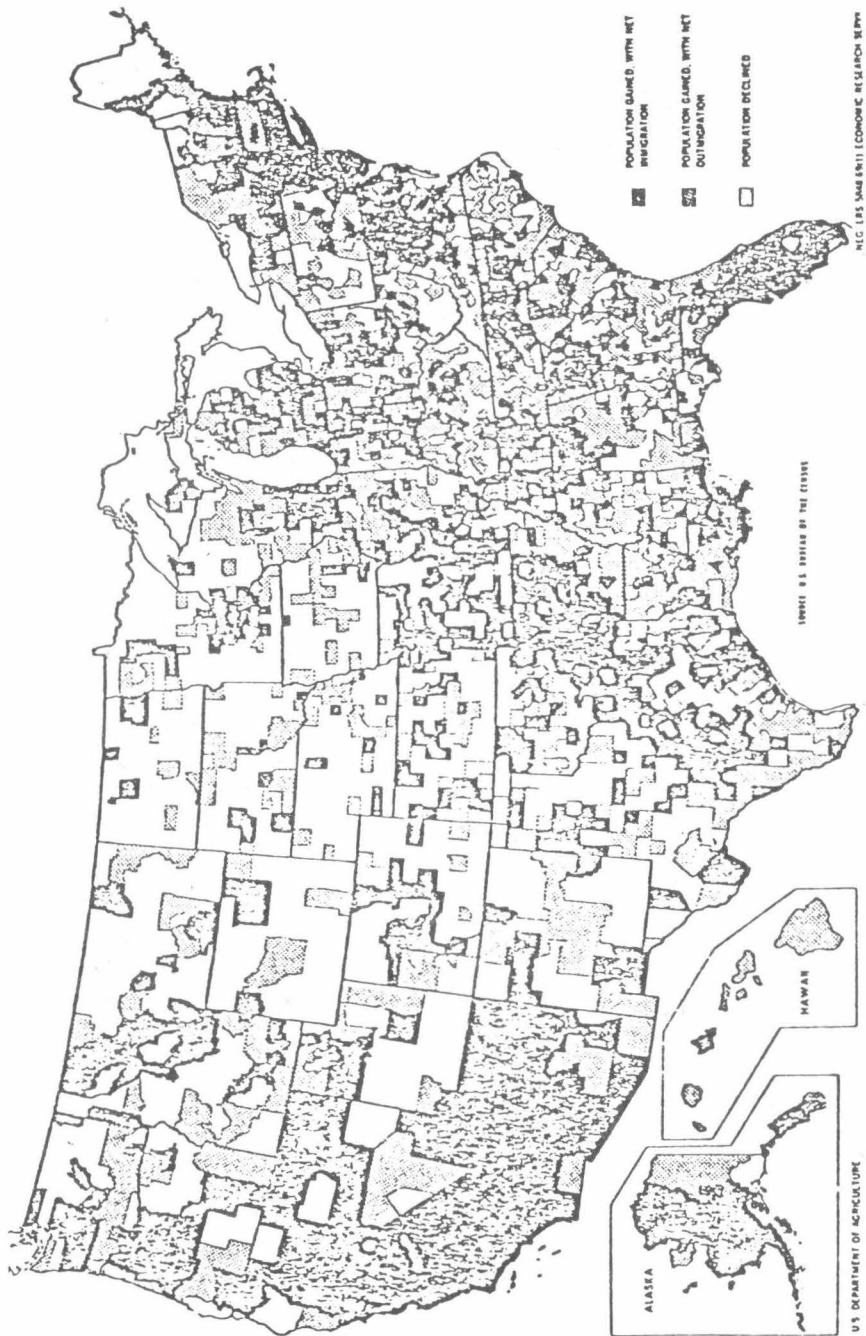


Figure 2: Population change, 1960-1966.

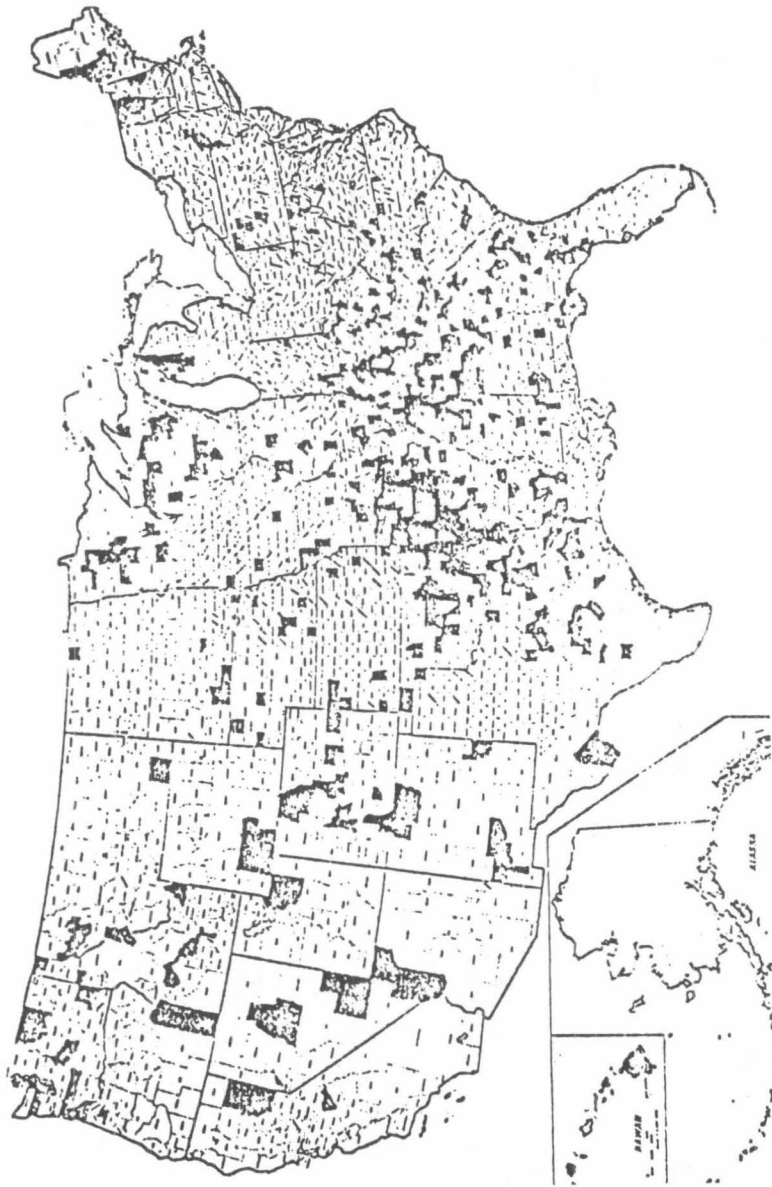


Figure 3: Counties with population growth in the 1960's, after loss in the 1950's.



Western Cornbelt, including the sparsely settled areas of the Mid-Continent region. They are located largely within the triangle formed by connecting the three urban centers: Sault St. Marie, Michigan; El Paso, Texas; and Spokane, Washington. Except for the urban centers and counties in which high amenity recreational resources or coal, timber and other primary resources are located, the region (and especially the sparsely settled and isolated county) is losing in total population.

Parts of the Upper Midwest region lie in two multistate development regions, namely, the Old West region and the Upper Great Lakes region. Included in the Old West region are the states of Montana, North Dakota, and South Dakota, and the states included in the Upper Midwest region are the states of Wyoming and Nebraska. Regional offices of the Old West regional commission are located in Rapid City, South Dakota. The regional commission is undertaking plans relating to the development of its primary resources, particularly coal, and the related community and regional infrastructure. The Upper Great Lakes economic development region, on the other hand, includes the northern counties in Minnesota, Wisconsin, and Michigan. Regional offices of the Upper Great Lakes regional development commission are located in Duluth, Minnesota. This regional commission also is concerned about primary resource development (including recreation) inasmuch as this region is extremely dependent upon its primary resources. Like the Old West region, the Upper Great Lakes region lacks a major metropolitan focal area where high-order business, financial and professional services are located. The Minneapolis-St. Paul focal area serves parts of both regions as do other regional metropolitan centers, e.g., Detroit, Michigan; Chicago, Illinois; and Denver, Colorado.

*Regional Growth Centers.* Growth centers in the Upper Midwest region include the intermediate size regional centers like Duluth-Superior, Fargo-Moorhead, and Sioux Falls, and there are service centers like

St. Cloud, Mankato and Rochester. These centers within their perspective service areas are approaching a threshold level for self-sustaining growth and development. Local service centers are linked economically to their surrounding areas and to the area centers. For certain high order services, the area centers depend on the regional centers. Thus, a hierarchically organized system of urban service centers is delineated in which the rural areas are an integral part of the total urban regional settlement system. Unlike the surrounding rural areas, especially the sparsely settled areas, the regional centers are increasing in total population and economic activity. Population growth is occurring because of the concentration of local industry in these centers (which is coupled, also, with the dispersion of metropolitan area industry into non-metropolitan areas).

The Upper Midwest states include also a series of commuting, shopping and planning areas. The commuting areas are delineated by data on the basis of information collected by the Census of Population and Housing on place of work and place of residence of persons in the employed labor force. For the most part, commuting to work takes place in areas where the urban centers are growing in population and where the resident population in the surrounding areas is unable to find equally satisfying and remunerative work locally.

The delineation of shopping areas is based on certain business statistics pertaining to the service and trade activities which attract patrons and clientele from an extended service area. Size and spacing of competing service centers help delineate the boundaries of these shopping areas.

Planning and development districts for the extended Upper Midwest states are based on a composite set of factors, including governmental. Generally, however, these districts have been delineated with reference to the commuting fields of principal area centers and the service areas of



principal convenience shopping centers. The multi-county planning districts include both urban centers and rural areas, and they provide an organizational capability for undertaking studies and other planning activities which are a prerequisite for federal financial support of proposed development projects. For many districts, however, the economic base imposes a severe limitation on project development potentials. For the sparsely populated agricultural areas, economic activity is declining and income levels are low. For the metropolitan oriented areas, economic activity is increasing and income levels are high. In many intermediate areas, employment is increasing and so are income levels.

#### EMPLOYMENT SHIFTS

Employment shifts in the multicounty planning and development districts are presented under two principal headings--the community economic base and the service sectors. Existence of a viable community economic base is essential to the economic viability of communities and regions. Differences in both the economic base and the service sectors exists between sparsely settled and densely settled areas in the Upper Midwest.

*Community Economic Base.* A distinguishing characteristic of sparsely settled rural areas is their dependence on primary resource based export producing activity. In most rural areas, agriculture is the primary and, oftentimes, sole exporting producing activity in the area. The excess of agricultural employment over the amount of employment that would be found in the nation as a whole per 1,000 of total employment is a measure of the dependency of the area on the agricultural industry. Although the level of agricultural employment has declined, many sparsely settled areas are as much dependent on this employment as they were 10 years ago. Declining employment in export producing activities is not necessarily indicative of either

declining dependency on agriculture or declining total employment in an agriculturally dependent area.

*Service Sectors.* The service sectors include both business related and household related activities, such as transportation in handling freight and transportation in the family car which is serviced by the local garage. The distinguishing characteristic of a service is its availability at the production site which typically, except for transportation, is a fixed site. Yet, if the purchaser of the service is not an area resident, then the employer engaged in producing the service for residents outside the area is export producing. Human service delivery generally is not an export activity for an area; it may be, however, for a particular service center.

The service sectors sometimes are residentiary, i.e., local resident oriented. This term denotes the local economic activity which is not export producing; it is the "residual" activity in accounting for the level of excess employment in the preceding discussion. Of course, some commodity production such as local food products manufacturing for local market also is a residentiary activity.

Employment in the service sectors is changing because of the changing relationship between total employment and export producing employment. Sources of employment change can be represented in terms of a national growth effect, an industry mix effect, and a regional share effect. Service sector employment, as well as commodity producing employment, is changing because of both national and regional factors.

The national growth effect refers to the growth in total national employment, which, for example, in the 1960-1970 period was about 18 percent. If total employment in all areas increased at the national rate, the 1970 employment would have been 18 percent larger than the 1960 total employment. Differences in employment growth rates between a given area and the nation as a whole can be accounted for by the

two remaining effects: namely, the industry mix effect and the regional share effect.

The industry mix effect represents the differential change of employment in a given industry for the nation as a whole. For example, agricultural employment declined by 30 percent from 1960 to 1970, while total employment increased by 18 percent. Thus, the industry mix coefficient for agricultural is 0.48, which represents the percentage difference between the two growth rates. This percentage difference is multiplied by the total base year employment (as was done with the national growth coefficient) to obtain the industry mix effect for the given area. Thus, rural areas, because of a negative industry mix due to agriculture, are characterized by declining total employment.

The regional share effect, on the other hand, is both area specific and industry specific; it represents the differential change in employment in a given industry in one area as compared with other areas. The regional share coefficient is the difference in the percentage growth for a given industry in the area as compared with the same industry for the nation as a whole. The regional share effect for the industry is, therefore, the given regional share coefficient times the base year employment for the area. A declining community economic base often times is associated with a declining regional share effect for the service industries. On the other hand, a possible industry mix among the export producing sectors, coupled with a positive regional share effect, is associated with a positive regional share effect among the service industries. In short, a strong economic base supports an expanding service sector in the growing rural areas.

#### SERVICE DELIVERY ALTERNATIVES

Service delivery alternatives for sparsely settled areas are examined with reference to the population, employment and related economic trends

relationship in the multicounty planning and development districts in Minnesota. The emergence of urban-rural settlement clusters with implications for the organization and management of human service delivery systems, the public financing strategies for constructing and maintaining these systems, and the equalization of human service access financing are important concerns in this discussion.

*Urban-Rural Clusters.* Population, employment trends and relationships cited earlier are cast, again, in a geographic role. Figure 4 identifies the spatial economic linkages between urban centers, and on the basis of those linkage groups of urban centers, they are related to one another and to the rural areas which they serve. The urban regional clusters include the focal areas for the organization and delivery of essential human services especially in the sparsely populated rural areas. Each of the urban clusters in the Upper Midwest states, assuming that all urban clusters in multicounty and multi-area regions were to be delineated, would include a wide range of employment in human services with manufacturing and other export producing industry.

Each urban cluster includes one or more area growth centers; each of the growth centers and surrounding growth areas is linked to larger centers and ultimately to the metropolitan focal area by the prime highway network; and each multicounty grouping urban centers include a full range of educational institutions, e.g., a two-year or four-year college, or a state vocational technical school. Rural areas with easy access to the urban regional network are, typically, the growing areas.

A full range of hospital services are available, also, to the resident of every urban cluster. Every regional hospital is linked to several area hospitals within each urban cluster and to the base hospital, which in Minnesota is located in the Minneapolis/St. Paul area. The area hospitals serve one or more urban places and the surrounding rural communities. The regional hospital provides the high-order

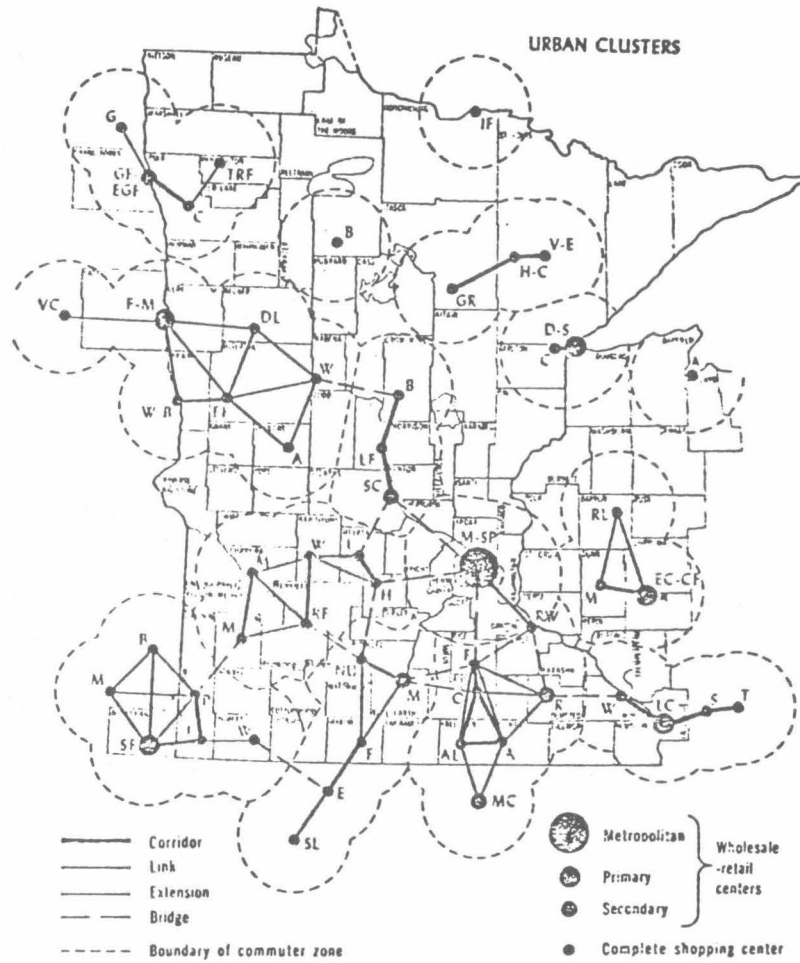


Figure 4: This pattern is tentative but suggestive of multicounty networks likely to become increasingly important in the years to come.

specialized medical services for the entire region, and also, primary services are available for the local resident population.

The location of state employment is still another indicator of the degree of dispersion and decentralization of human services among multi-county urban clusters. In Minnesota (as in other Upper Midwest states), much of the state employment is concentrated in the capitol city and the largest urban centers. However, area offices typically are located in each of the area centers.

*Public Financing Approaches.* Figure 5 shows that the local government expenditures per capita for the support of human services vary widely between counties and between multicounty urban clusters, or alternatively, multicounty planning and development districts. Areas of heavy out-migration are areas of large per capita government expenditures. Also, several of the counties with heavy population in-migration show high per capita expenditures. Instability of population levels thus leaves behind a legacy of high governmental expenditures. When local government expenditures are converted from a per capita basis to a per dollar of purchasing power basis, the most rural and sparsely settled areas emerge with the highest per dollar burden of local government. Residents in the metropolitan area, because of higher per capita personal income levels, have a higher ability to pay than residents of a sparsely settled rural area where personal income levels generally are low.

*Service Access Equalization.* Fiscal equalization in Minnesota, for example, is more readily achieved than equalization in access to human services. The low income aged resident in an isolated corner of a multicounty urban cluster would have much less potential access to the urban services in the area center than would the resident of the area center. Public transportation may reduce the difficulty of access, but a desire must exist for this isolated resident to avail himself of particular services, including essential health care and related services.



All Local Government Direct  
General Expenditures

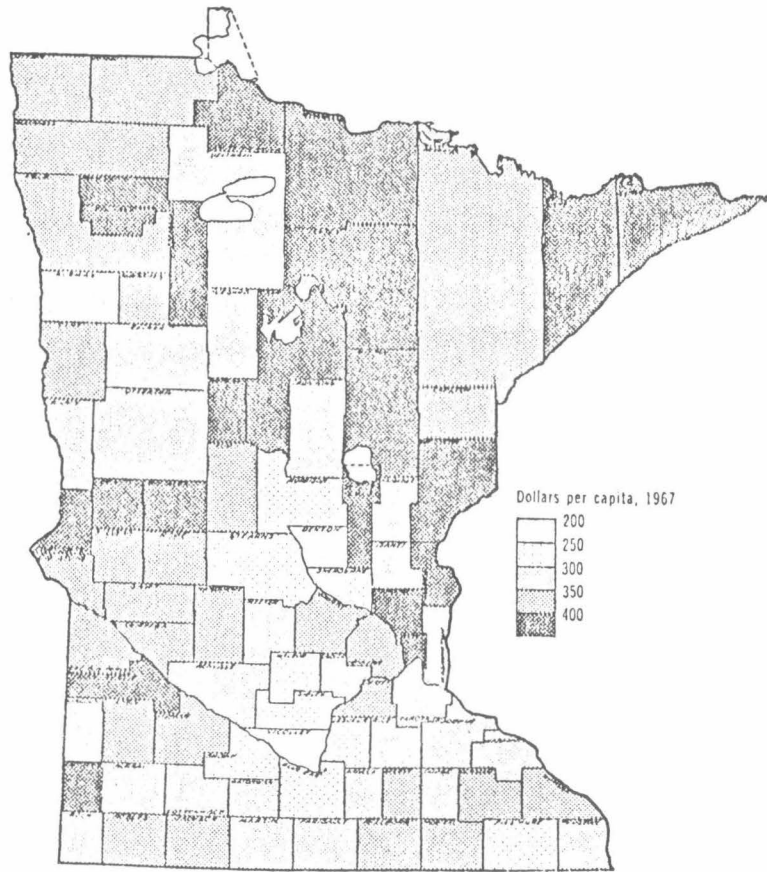
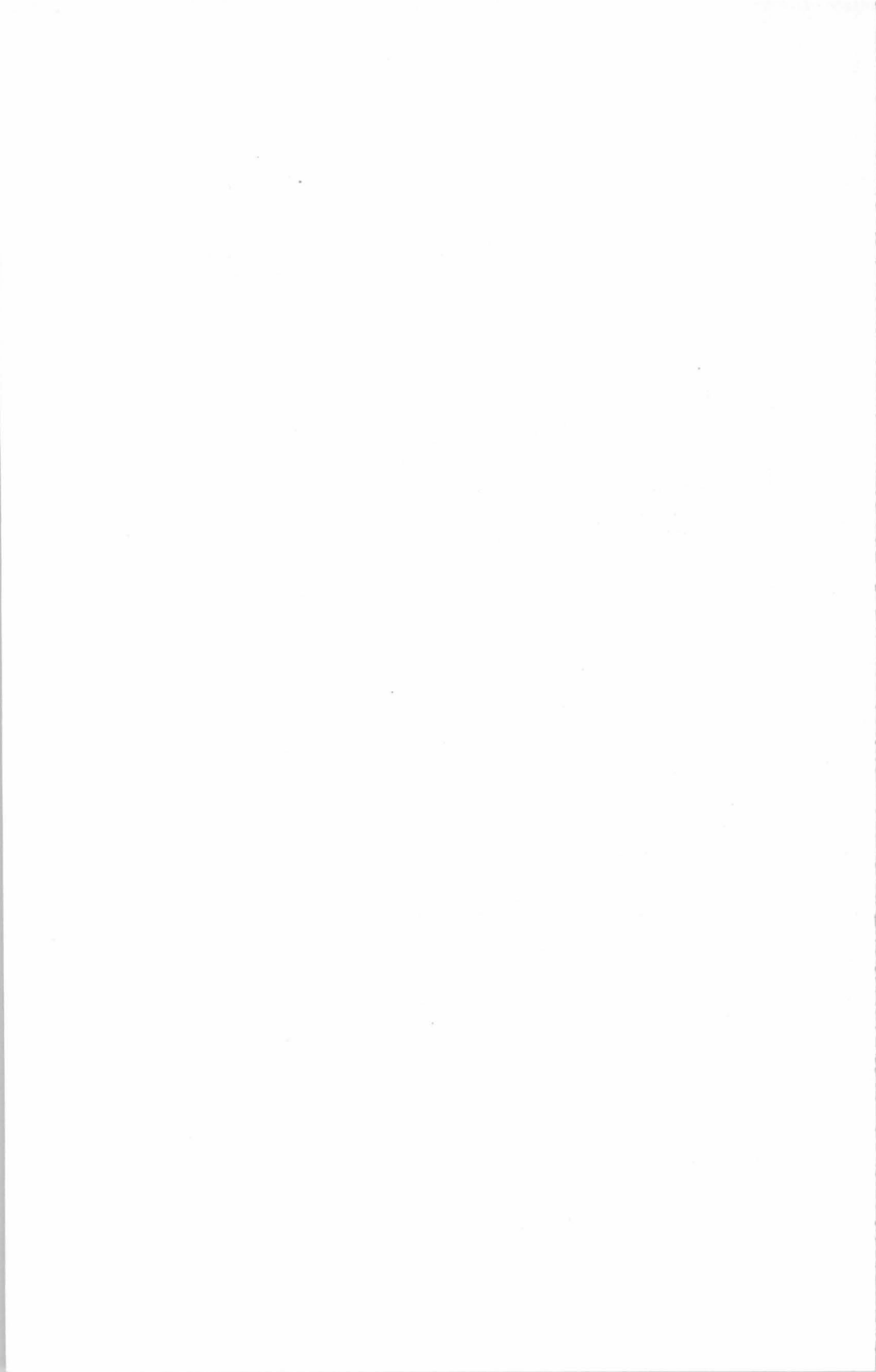


Figure 5: Data from the United States Census of Governments, 1967.





## Chapter Two

# A STATEWIDE REGIONAL PLAN FOR SPECIAL EDUCATION

*Norman Cole*

The purpose of this chapter is to outline the direction which schools in Minnesota are currently moving relative to planning, implementing, and evaluating instruction and services for children and youth who happen to be handicapped.

### THE LAW SAYS

In 1971, Dr. Sidney Marland, United States Commissioner of Education, set the following goal: that the United States should provide a full educational opportunity for every handicapped child in the nation by 1980. The special education section of the State Department of Education believes that that goal is a most appropriate and reasonable goal for Minnesota. However, there are two ingredients necessary for the ultimate realization of this goal. First, every school district must cooperate and accept that goal as its own. Secondly, a plan for implementing a total special education system in

every district must be developed. In order to help Minnesota school districts meet the goal of providing full services to all handicapped children by 1980, the Minnesota Department of Education is helping them to develop a systems approach to planning, implementing, and evaluating their special education services. The system is entitled, "total special education system," or TSES. Prior to reviewing the TSES, however, four basic items about Minnesota services will be reviewed:

- Summary of Minnesota Special Education Law
- Service growth: 1957-1974
- Impact of the statewide Special Education Regional Consultant (SERC) project
- Impact of the special education leadership interdistrict cooperatives

Minnesota law defines *who* the handicapped are, defines school responsibility, and school ages (4-21) which may include preschool. They have made school districts legally aware of their continuing service to their community. Where can a school district get service for special education? Special education instruction and services may be provided by using one or more locations: a regular class, a special class, through home or hospital instruction, in other districts, a university or state college laboratory school, in a state residential school, in other states, by contracting with public, private or voluntary agencies, or by any other method approved by the Commissioner. The law specifies that a full range of services must be available and that districts must cooperate together to provide those services if necessary.

Another legal aspect created by the Minnesota law is that parents have the right to appeal the system. This means that parents have the right to appeal to the Commissioner of Education for assistance. In the past few years, this component has played a critical role in special education in Minnesota because there have been 304 appeals.

These laws were created in 1957, and during that year the reported cost was approximately 2.5 million dollars with 14,500 children served. In 1972 and 1973, there were 77,000 children served with a 50 million dollar cost. This past year that 50 million dollar cost is up another 11 million dollars, so it is a significant budget; of that total sum, the state department picks up 23 million dollars. In the state of Minnesota, the law says that the state will provide 60 percent of the reimbursement to the school district, but in actuality it is only about 48 percent. The state reimburses 60 percent of the salary of essential personnel not to exceed \$5,600, 50 percent of the cost of materials, supplies, and equipment not to exceed an average of \$50 per year for each student receiving instruction, and 60 percent of instructional costs (less foundation aids) for programs in residential facilities. The state also reimburses each district the actual cost incurred in providing instruction and services for a handicapped child who has been placed in a foster facility when parental rights have been terminated, parent or guardian is not living within the state, or when no district of residence can be established. Educators in Minnesota commend its legislators for enacting this subdivision because it helps assure that all children living in Minnesota will receive an appropriate education. It also protects the school district from unfair fiscal burdens.

#### GROWTH IN SPECIAL EDUCATION

It is the belief at the state department that if services are going to be provided in a well organized, efficient, and effective manner, leadership at the administrative level is a critical factor. For this reason, in 1967-1968, the departments made as the top priority for Title VI funds the development of director of special education positions in Minnesota school districts. Prior to the use of Title VI money, the number of special education directors for the state was seven; and, they were single district

directors. Today, there are 69 special education directors and 386 districts under their direction. Of all the school districts, 87 percent are represented by a director of special education who is involved in the development of the total special education system. For example, in the northwest region of Minnesota, there are 54 school districts, all the districts have a special education director, and 4,100 kids are being served (about 9.5 percent of the total population). That region is one of the smallest population areas compared to the metropolitan area of Minnesota which serves 8.8 percent.

One goal of the state is to cover Minnesota with directors of special education. This has not been totally achieved, but the state is spending about 60 million dollars a year which is up from the 2.5 million dollars in 1957, and this growth reflects the work of special education directors.

#### SERC

In an effort to assist districts develop the needed special education cooperatives, a Special Education Regional Consultant (SERC) was funded in each governor's region. The SERC worked closely with the superintendents in the area identifying the services needed and the need for administrative leadership in the form of directors of special education. The SERC project was most successful in terms of identifying the need for director of special education. Just as Title VI funds were the base for funding the special education director positions, Title VI has also had a significant role in financing the SERC positions. Between 1968--a time when 1 percent of the districts had directors of special education--and 1974--when 87 percent had directors--the numbers of students receiving services almost doubled. Directors of special education appear to be the key figures in terms of generating services to children.

## IMPACT OF COOPERATIVES

Leadership has made the difference in Minnesota. Prior to 1968, services to the severely handicapped population were provided at a state residential facility, in one of the large school district programs, or it was not provided at all. Unfortunately, the latter was often the case. With directors of special education providing administrative leadership, schools began cooperating with each other to provide the services which a single small district could not provide alone. In several regions, low incidence consultants were hired (again utilizing Title VI funds) to assist schools in determining educational needs and providing needed services of the hearing impaired, visually impaired and physically handicapped children and youth, and to attend a residential program which can be provided for in their local school district or in the cooperative program. Because of the leadership of directors of special education, the commitment of superintendents and boards of education, the mandatory special education laws and the careful planning and utilization of Title VI funds, the zero reject philosophy has become a reality in Minnesota.

## TSES

What is the state of Minnesota asking? Not later than the end of the year 1978-1979, all applications claiming special education reimbursement will call for each district to give evidence of having implemented a total special education system (TSES). It is intended that in the year 1978-1979, a TSES plan must be written before a district will be eligible for any reimbursement on their special education staff. There are three purposes of the TSES: to identify the needs of each student, to give them instruction, and to insure that the equal protection process for every student is carried out. These three basic responsibilities are labeled by three subsystems: administrative, management, advocacy

subsystem (AMA), child study subsystem (CS), and instruction and services subsystem (IS).

The AMA system is primarily the director of special education--what does he do. This is not a job description because the director does not do it by himself. He sets the goals of the child study and the instructional services system. In the northwest region, for example, they are involved with computer data (precision teaching) being collected continuously on 7,000 children. This data is now starting to make sense. That is the basic function of the AMA, and its directors have chosen to use various parts of the system.

The basic function of the child study system is to identify and assess existing data to answer such questions as how to help agencies, parents, teachers and administrators become involved in serving handicapped children.

The basic function of instructional services is for the district to develop an instructional plan for every handicapped child. This plan must include material, staff and location, because Minnesota believes that every special education child is special!

## Chapter Three

# PROBLEMS AND ISSUES IN A RURAL COOPERATIVE

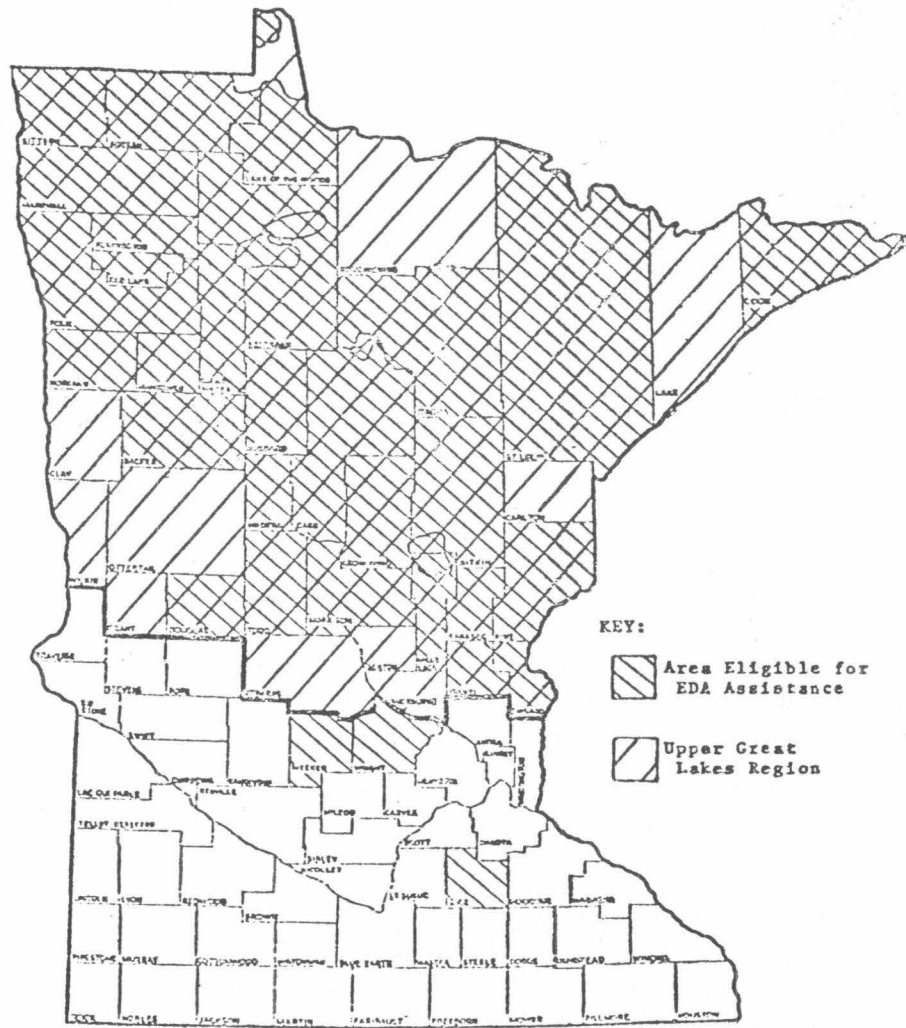
*Larry Anderson*

To help survey some of the problems of the special education cooperative, administrators should utilize the total team of the community. By viewing the economic development and understanding the percentage of high school dropouts, and by observing the population density and the development of unemployment and employment in an area which is served, administrators can anticipate the key problem in the cooperatives of his/her region.

### BECKER-CLAY COUNTY SPECIAL EDUCATION COOPERATIVE

*The Area.* Becker-Clay County Special Education Cooperative touches sections of Norman, William, Ottertail, Becker and Clay Counties in the state of Minnesota (see Figure 1). The area covers 2,300 square miles, eight school districts, and a total K-12 population of 10,000 students. There are services this year for over 900 special needs





Source: Minnesota Department of Economic Development, Saint Paul, Minnesota, December 1, 1971.

Figure 1: Economic Development Act designated depressed areas and counties in the Upper Great Lakes regional area.

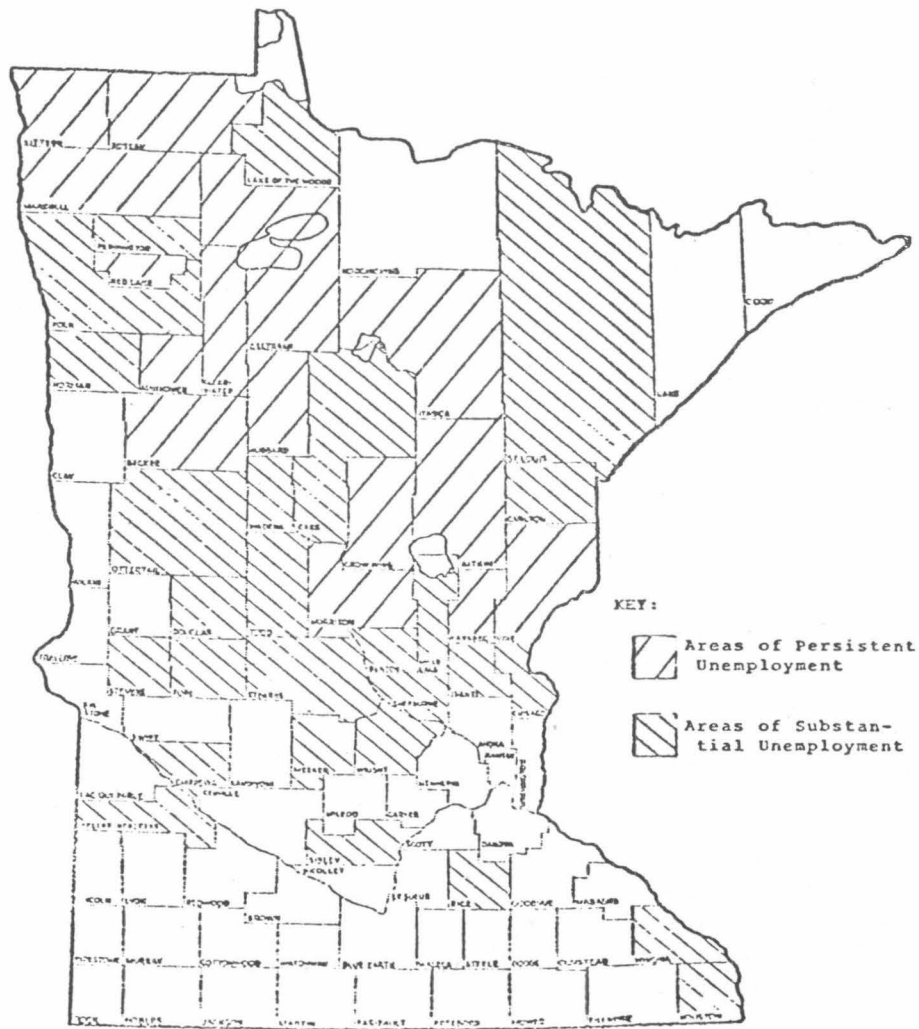


students who receive services at least twice a week. Figure 1 illustrates the kinds of depressed areas in Minnesota and those areas which are eligible for Economic Development Act (EDA) assistance. Becker County, of course, is one county that emanates much economic depression. Clay County, on the other hand, is a rich rural farm area with no economic depression. Figure 2 shows that Becker County also has a higher unemployment rate because of the Indian reservation and because of seasonal work. Figure 3 illustrates the total number of school dropouts for the 1969-1970 school year. The total number of school dropouts for Area 4, a nine-county area, is 249 or .68. When comparing this area to other areas in Minnesota (excluding the Twin City area), the number is lower because there are less people; and, as far as schools are concerned, most dropouts in the Becker-Clay area are minorities. Figure 4 shows the percentage of the population under 20, 20-64, and over 65 years of age. The majority of Area 4's population is a younger population.

The review of these figures sets the stage of the economic and geographical area of Becker-Clay County Special Education Cooperative.

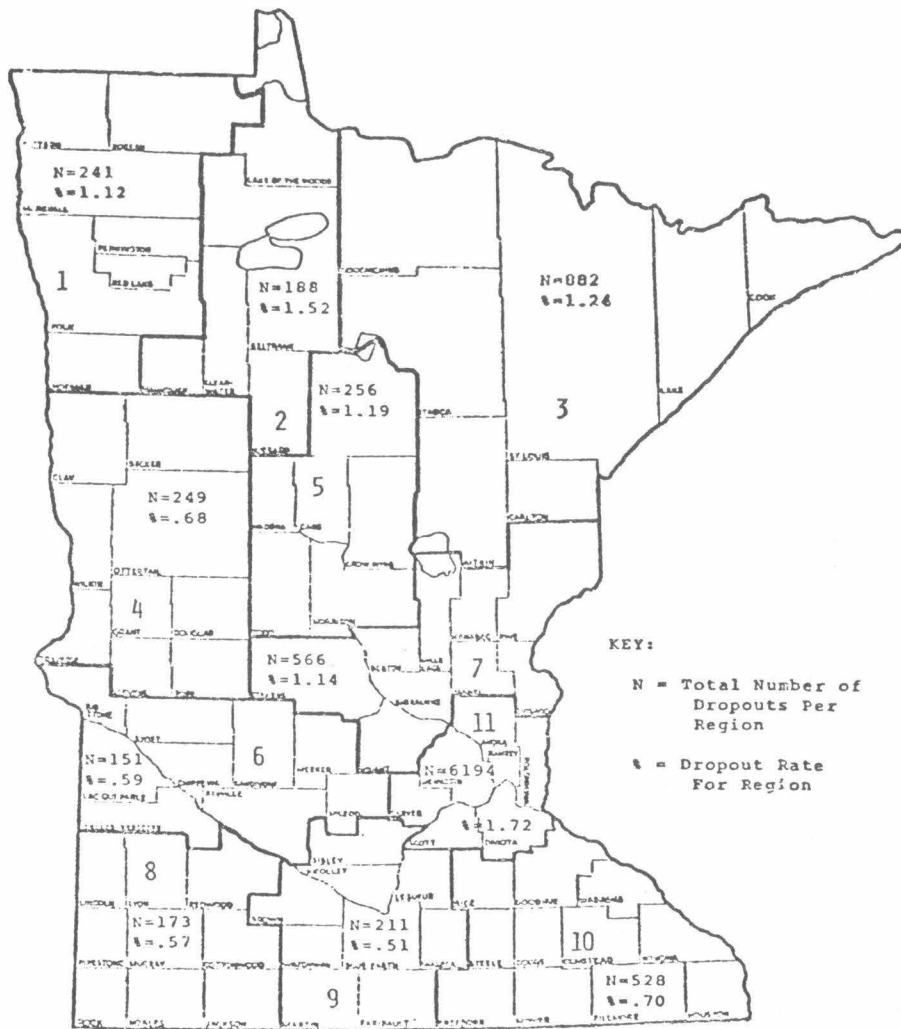
*Problems and Issues.* Observing problems and issues of the future is difficult because educators are reactors. They react to such things as people calling on the phone and asking such questions as: Why is Bobby doing poorly in school?; Why didn't I get a raise?; Who got on the school board last time?; How many turkeys were received by the hot lunch program?; Why is the coffee in the teacher's lounge no longer free?; etc. How can administrators be involved with contemplating problems and issues of the future when they are trying to put out all the fires that are currently burning?

It is true that educators are reactors, and sometimes they do not have the time to put things in retrospect. The best example of this was given in a sermon by a local priest. He told about a



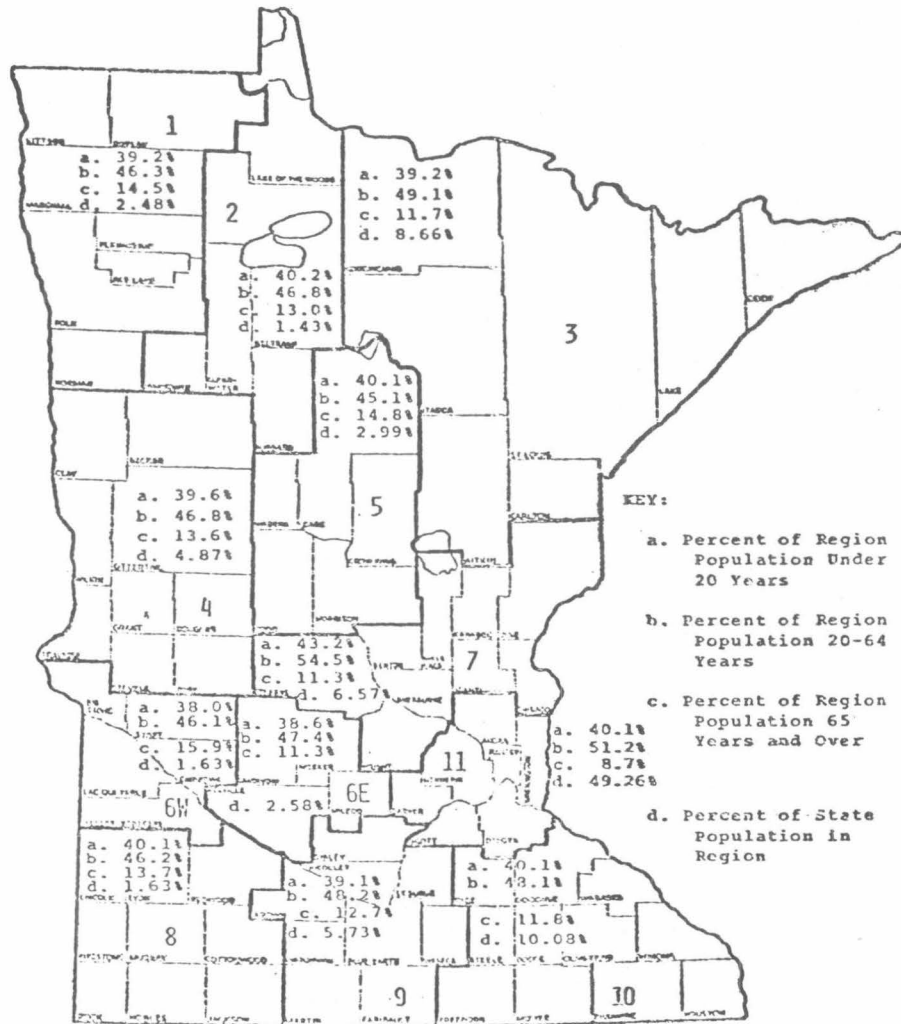
Source: Research and Planning Section, Minnesota Department of Manpower Services, Saint Paul, Minnesota, December 17, 1971.

Figure 2: Areas of substantial and persistent unemployment and areas with high rates of unemployment of youth.



Source: State Aids, Statistics, and Research Section, Minnesota Department of Education, Saint Paul, Minnesota, December 1971.

Figure 3: Total number of 1969-1970 school dropouts K-12 by planning region and total percentage of dropouts for grades K-12.



Source: State Planning Agency, State of Minnesota, Saint Paul, Minnesota, January 1972.

Figure 4: Population density in Minnesota by planning region and age group.

mother who had finally received a letter from her college-age daughter. It read:

Dear Mom,

The other night I was smoking grass in my dorm room. Apparently, I got so high that I fell asleep, burned the rug in my room, and started the dorm room on fire; so, I jumped out of the window, and I broke one of my legs and sprained my wrist. That wasn't so bad because I had the privilege of being taken to an excellent hospital where I met a fantastic orderly who took care of me. After my leg was in the cast for a few days, I tried to go back to my dorm room, but going up those two flights of stairs were impossible, so John, the orderly that I met at the hospital, said that I could stay at his home until it got better. I certainly like living with John; he is a nice fellow. I have been living with him now for about a month and a half, and I think I'm pregnant, Mother, but you don't have to worry about planning any wedding because John and I are going to continue to just live together and do not plan on any marriage.

The daughter went on to say:

Mother, really, I wasn't smoking grass in my dorm, and the joint didn't start a fire on my carpet. Thus, I didn't jump out of the second story window, I didn't break my leg, I didn't meet an orderly named John, I'm not living with a man named John, I'm not pregnant, and I'm not getting married. However, I just wanted to put it in retrospect that I got a "D" in geography and I'm flunking English.

Too many times, educators do not have time to sit, look, and listen, which would make education better. Too many times they are under such pressure that they have to become reactors.

The Becker-Clay County Special Education Cooperative has its problems, too. It has eight school districts (a population of 10,000 through the grades K-12), and a board of directors, which consists of a school board member from each school district. The Cooperative was established under the Joint Powers Agreement Act of 1939 in the state of Minnesota. The Becker-Clay County Special Education district or cooperative is much different from most in the state because they have some elements that most do not. They have a board of directors which are elected officials from district school boards (see Figure 5). The Becker-Clay Cooperative also has an advisory council, composed of the eight superintendents, which serves as an advisory cabinet to the executive director and the board of directors. These people serve the components listed at the bottom of Figure 5.

The first component, A, is Administration and includes the director of special education. Under Child Study, Component B, there are psychologists, hearing coordinator, speech coordinator, special learning and behavior problems (SLBP) coordinator, school social worker, home bound, vision, and school liaison persons. These are the people that are continually traveling throughout the given area. Both Components A and B are like most other cooperatives in organizational structure. However, Components C, D, E, and F are components that most special education cooperatives do not have. Component C stands for the Career Education Center, which is a secondary vocational exploration and training center for special needs students aged 14-21. This program does not only address itself to vocational exploration and training, but it is involved in the total growth of each student, e.g., academic achievement, social and personal development. Component D addresses itself to the Home and Social Living Program, and

# Organizational Structure

## Local School Districts (School Boards)

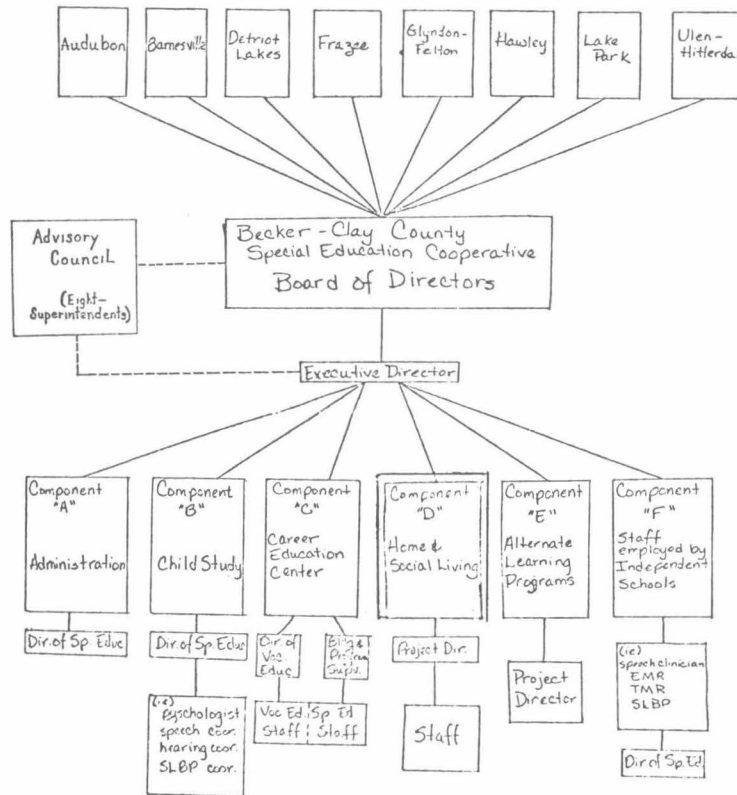


Figure 5: The Becker-Clay County Special Education Cooperative.



Component E is the Alternative Learning Program which is for adjudicated and perspective delinquents and is sponsored by the State Crime Commission. The latter component is a multi-agency approach for serving students and provides additional court options for juvenile delinquent placement. Component F includes the people who are employed by the independent school districts, i.e. instructors of trainable mentally retarded (TMR), educable mentally retarded (EMR), and special learning and behavior problems (SLBP) tutors; resource people; and speech clinicians.

#### ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE--DETAILED

*Career Education Center.* Most of the previously mentioned components are self-explanatory. However, Component C needs more explanation.

As stated earlier, the Career Education Center is a program for secondary special needs students at the age of 14-21, and its chief emphasis is in exploration and vocational training. One of the biggest factors emphasized is not only occupational adequacy, but personal and social adequacy as well. Also emphasized is the Center's related academic area, which is related to the vocational areas. The curriculum has over 60,000 individual skill steps or task analysis sheets which cover 10 basic areas-- but with a proliferation of about 15 areas. Some of these areas are food service, welding, wood shop, auto body, auto tune-up, gas station attendant, department store, photography, conversation, etc. To complement the task analysis sheet for these basic areas, there are colored slides and the audio to go with these tasks. For example, if a student were asked to make a jello salad when working in the kitchen as a fry cook, that student would go to the multi-media center and check the slide and audio sound. Therefore, a nonreading student could excel in this program, and a child with severe learning disabilities that made a jello salad three weeks ago could know how to prepare a jello salad even after he/she had thoroughly forgotten this task. Each of the tasks



are numbered, and they get more difficult in each succession of tasks completed. These vocational tasks are oftentimes tied into the academic areas also. For example, in the area of baker, the baker has to show how to measure and sift flour. If the student does not know fractions, it is most difficult to measure ingredients while baking. Thus, there must be a correlation, with the vocational instructor writing a prescription to the academic teacher stating the problem. In other words, each student that is involved in the academic area proceeds on his/her own level of functioning and at his/her own speed with only the student competing against himself/herself.

Another unique area of the Center is the use of a checkbook. These are used on a token economy system. If students would like to gain employment but are not ready for on-the-job training or full time or part time competitive employment, they apply for jobs within the Center. That student must then fill out an application and submit three recommendations from three teachers. If these requirements are met and if the application is filled out correctly, then an interview date is set. If this interview is profitable, then the student is more than likely hired. The student then is paid a wage, which would be commensurate with regular uptown pay, and given Career Education Center token economy money. Some of the things that students might be able to buy within the school facilities is a movie of the week, a field trip, a camera, pens and paper, magazines, ice cream, donuts, cookies, etc. Students can also start savings accounts and get interest on the money that they have in the bank.

The unique factor that makes career education very different is that all the work is done by the students; it is like a self-sufficient cooperative in which everyone does his/her own job.

Another unique fact about the Career Education Center is its smoking lounge for smokers 18 years of age or older and for students who receive written parental permission to use the smoking lounge. This

is a privilege and, like most privileges, can be easily lost if the student is not doing well in his/her classes or vocational areas.

The Career Education Center has many options, and each student that goes there certainly does not necessarily have to be at the Career Education Center all day long. A student, for example, may be in the vocational center for one-half day and at the Career Education Center for the other half of the day, half time in an Area of Vocational Technical Institute (AVTI), and one-half day at the Career Education Center, on the job for a half day and half time in his regular school, or half time on the job and half time at the Career Education Center.

*Home and Social Living Project.* This component was funded, through a grant, by the Hartz Foundation. There are three parts to this component: the laboratory school (which is the day period and for which a four-bedroom house across the street from the regular school is utilized to teach many different home-living social skills); the evening home program (the home, supervised by a young couple serving as house parents, is used by students so that they may learn how to live independently or as a group); and the independent apartments (students have a male and a female counselor who help with their independent living in an apartment complex in Detroit Lakes). In this last step--before students go off on their own--students buy their own groceries, do their own laundry, prepare their own meals, plan a good share of their own recreational time, and meet and talk with the counselors whenever they feel the need.

*Alternative Learning Program.* The alternative learning program is sponsored by the Crime Commission grant. The two staff members involved under this component are "youth advocates" and they work with the courts, the home, the probation officers, and the law officers to aid the courts with options for placing students in independent apartments, and/or in day school at the Career Education Center, with in-depth counseling. This program would be for

students who are adjudicated delinquent or possibly predelinquent and show evidence that they are or possibly might be on the road to much more delinquency.

#### FUNDING COOPERATIVES

One question that people ask regarding cooperative assistance is, "Where do you get your funds, and who gives you the money?" The Becker-Clay County Special Education Cooperative receives assistance from several different agencies: special education, vocational education, vocational rehabilitation, private foundations, welfare, Crime Commission, Title III, Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), private donation, National Association for Retarded Children, Rural Minnesota Concentrate Employment Program, Department of Labor, Mahnomen-Hubbard-Becker (MAHUBE) Counties (which is an OEO program), and federal and state hot lunch programs.

Another question asked by many educators is, "How are the raises negotiated?" In the Becker-Clay Cooperative, teachers have their own negotiating unit, and these teachers negotiate with assigned representatives from the board of directors.

Some people ask, "What are the problems you have in transportation?" That is an awesome problem when the area coverage is so vast. To compensate, there are taxi-cabs, and student buses that run every hour on the hour.

The last question many people ask is, "What does the financial picture look like in our special education cooperatives?" It certainly has improved this past year. Previously, Becker-Clay Cooperative received 60 percent, up to a maximum of \$5,600 in special education reimbursement. This year, they will be getting 65 percent to a maximum of \$10,000. That increase certainly helps to pay for specialists like psychologists, consultants, etc. The increase will benefit the cooperatives now, but no one can foresee what the legislature is going to do for the coming years.

CONCLUSION

There are many variables and factors that cannot be controlled in our educational society, but one of the best solutions and the biggest factor in solving problems that we have found is a good staff. Even with an excellent staff, there must be team work. This team must be aware of the total goals and must be somewhat in agreement or at least agree to carry out these goals. Also, this team has to be continually concerned in making the students, the parents, the community and themselves winners; and, there is no one more important in becoming a winner than our students.

## Chapter Four

# THE SOUTHWEST REGIONAL EDUCATIONAL SERVICE AGENCY FOR MAINSTREAMING HANDICAPPED CHILDREN

*William Naylor*

The main purpose of this chapter is twofold. First, the overall Educational Service Area (ESA) concept will be discussed. What is it, and what does it do in terms of organizing for delivery of not only special education services but a vast array of services that can be organized cooperatively? What are some philosophies behind this, and why does this seem to be needed? Secondly, how special education ties into the overall ESA or regional education concept will be described. In addition, the emphasis or direction which special education services have taken in the ESA structure will be indicated.

### OVERALL ESA CONCEPT

The Educational Service Area (hereafter referred to as the ESA) covers a 24-county area in

southwestern and west central Minnesota. The reason such a broad area is covered is because this is a pilot program for the state in terms of setting up intermediate units or regional educational programs. As a result of this vast territory (120 by 80 miles), communications will be a major problem until this territory can be broken into smaller areas. Fortunately, the legislature set up the Minnesota Development Regions some years ago, and this has been helpful. Regional development is becoming a more important organizational factor not only in the delivery of services in education, but in the political area. Minnesota currently has regional development commissions; these are operational. Many governmental types of problems, funding, control mechanisms, etc. are being handled and channeled through this mechanism. Such a political development is threatening to some people (namely the counties) because at some point in time it threatens to supplant the county system. It is fortunate for the ESA that the state was divided into planning regions because this provided the needed geographic structure. As various special education cooperatives and other cooperative arrangements have developed, various schools learned to work together in coordinating certain types of services; and, the ESA, in fact, has grown out of previous cooperative endeavors. For example, southwest Minnesota had the Educational Research and Development Council (ERDC), the precursor to the ESA. Had it not been for that organization, the ESA probably would not have emerged.

The ERDC started in 1967 when the southwest region secured a large Title III grant to develop supplementary educational service centers. This enabled the southwest to employ various types of itinerant specialists and consultants to its rural schools, i.e., school psychologists, social workers, nurses, reading and curriculum consultants. As the program developed, the federal money was phased out over a three-year period. Then, programs were financed by local funding or contract for services with special education as the primary service. Through the combination of state aids, local money and



contracting for services, these programs are being maintained and supported.

As the ERDC developed, there was a need for a more permanent type of structure. The ERDC was organized under a joint powers agreement and administered by superintendents who served on the board of directors. By contrast, the ESA has its own specific legal structure and is controlled by local school board members.

Since the late 1960's, the State Education Agency had developed and proposed the MESA bill; however, several proposed MESA (Minnesota Educational Service Agency) bills never got off the ground. Observing this, the southwest region wrote their own bill for the 1973 session of the legislature, called it the pilot ESA, and the legislature did pass that bill in 1973.

The pilot educational service area was started with the administrative structure as shown in Figure 1. At the top of this figure is the board of directors, composed of a 12-member lay board elected at large from school board members throughout all the schools in the region. Four categories of services are provided by this unit (the research and development section is not in function at this time): administrative and staff personnel services, instructional services, special education services, and media services. Each of these components has its own advisory committee which is aimed toward giving local input into the programs.

In total philosophy, the ESA is service based. The ESA develops services that people in the local schools want; therefore, it is set up to give the local schools 100 percent control of its programs. The services are all discretionary, and schools are not even required to belong to the ESA.

The other factor which establishes local control is the direction provided by the ESA board of directors

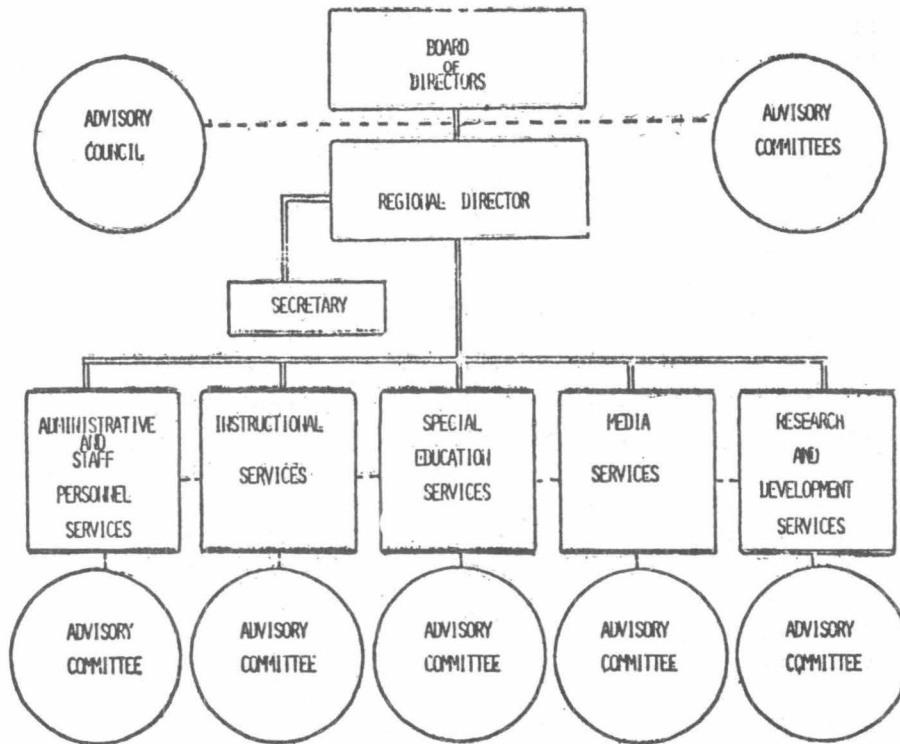


Figure 1: Proposed organization chart of southwest and west educational service area.



consisting of local school board members. This group makes all final policy decisions. Thus, major decisionmaking is tied to local people starting with the board of directors and extending through advisory committees. For example, each special education center has an advisory committee consisting of school personnel. The person who works with that advisory committee is largely a special education director, and these people meet three to four times a year. Any major programmatic changes, policy decisions, etc. are brought to that committee and discussed, because these are basically decisions which affect local schools. Perhaps there is a need to involve different personnel, to move to a different delivery system or to even recommend salaries. Local recommendations, in turn, are relayed to a comprehensive regional advisory committee and eventually to the ESA board of directors.

#### SPECIAL EDUCATION TIE-IN TO ESA

Figure 2 best illustrates the special education tie-in to the ESA. The smallest circle shows all the services offered. Under instructional services there are programs for gifted students, and at this point, a task force is meeting regularly and attempting to find ways of providing more options for these students. The ESA has an individually guided education (IGE) league consisting of a group of 25 schools who have developed the IGE structure at the elementary level. In the area of human relations ESA has developed a common model program which could be taken into an individual school district and used. Another instructional service is the social studies league, which is essentially a group of social studies teachers who plan in-service and staff development activities. During 1975-1976, the Council for Quality Education has funded a program to improve the fine arts in ESA schools. Finally, instructional services include a resource center for Right-to-Read programs and the regional Right-to-Read. Directors have been administratively assigned to the ESA.

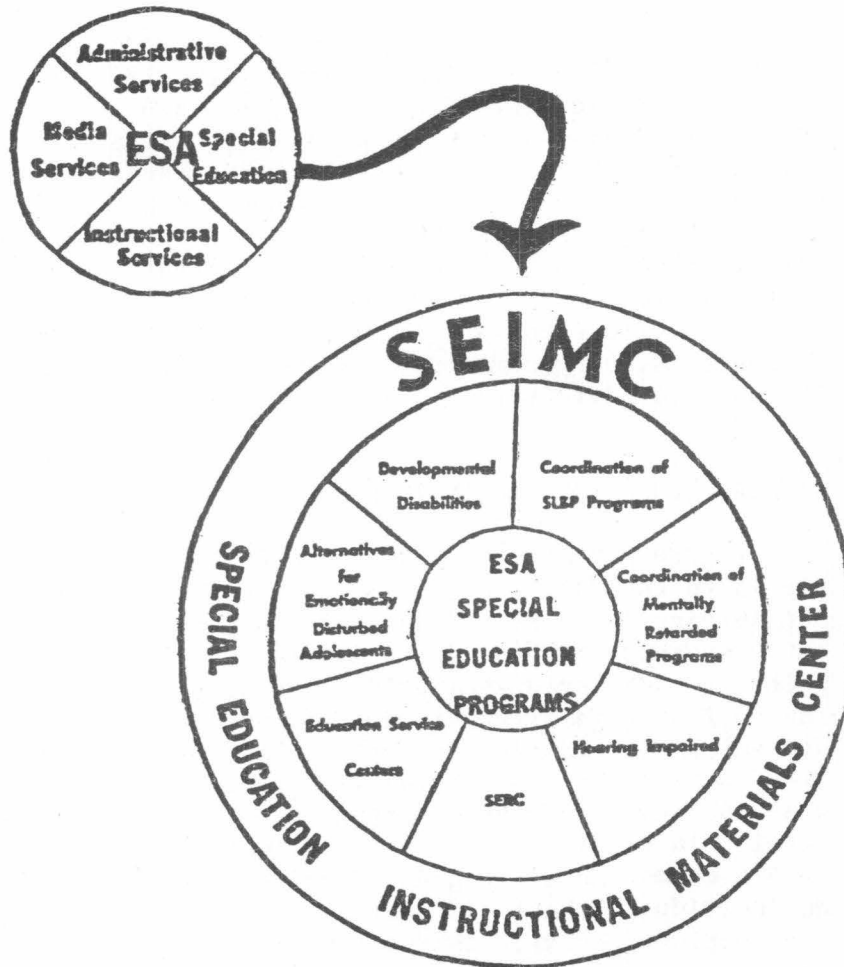


Figure 2: Special education tie-in to the ESA.

Administrative services include: data processing (budgets, scheduling, time share, etc.); educational planning (helping schools with comprehensive needs and goal setting of students, prioritizing of concerns, and helping schools with curriculum planning and evaluation); federal program development (Title III, Title I, Title VI); and development of a professional information center including social studies, arts and humanities, media, right-to-read, and comprehensive special education libraries.

Media services include: cooperative purchasing, audio-visual equipment repair, printing services, and a shared 16 mm. film library.

The large wheel in Figure 2 represents the special education instructional materials center (SEIMC) which is the major support service for special education programs. The center was developed through federal funds derived from Titles III and VI of ESEA. A library valued at \$100,000 exists for the purpose of being used prescriptively in the educational programs for handicapped students. SEIMC uses a special retrieval system to match materials to educational prescriptions. Materials are vanned to schools on a regular schedule, and all materials are shared by ESA schools. The instructional materials center is currently being supported by local funds charged to all participating schools on a per student basis.

The ESA also hosts four special education cooperatives with each center headed by a special education director. Each cooperative employs itinerate consultative personnel through the ESA including: school psychologists, school social workers, learning disability consultants, speech supervisors and prescriptive resource teachers. Generally speaking, the ESA employs the support personnel while individual schools hire direct service teaching staff. The one notable exception is in speech pathology where schools still employ some therapists through ESA.

In addition to the above, ESA has added consultants through the approval of federally funded

programs. These include a consultant for preschool programs for the developmentally disabled, a regional consultant for the hearing impaired, a consultant for the educable mentally retarded, and an additional learning disabilities consultant.

Indicating the comprehensive scope of special education services in ESA, the Special Educational Regional Coordinator, SERC, for southwest Minnesota has been assigned to the ESA. The SERC provides overall coordination and liaison with the State Education Agency.

#### SPECIAL EDUCATION EMPHASIS

It is obvious that a regional approach to special education, which at the same time emphasizes local control, provides a number of major advantages in delivering services:

- Special education becomes integrally related to a total education program. This is particularly significant when emphasis is placed on "mainstreaming."
- A comprehensive program is possible through ESA with a great deal of staffing flexibility. Economies of scale also allow added support services such as the special education instructional materials center.
- The ESA permits better coordination of services, particularly in the area of special education. It is possible through this structure to develop a regional plan in addition to strategies developed locally.
- Schools can purchase services to the degree needed and desired, and this advantage becomes increasingly important during times of declining school enrollments in rural schools. The broader geographic base makes such an advantage possible.

Special education services in the ESA emphasize a basic commitment to a systems approach. Schools

are currently attempting to operationalize comprehensive child study and instructional services systems for special education. Under these systems a process would be clearly delineated under which handicapped students are identified, their needs diagnosed, assessed, and addressed by means of an educational prescription. Follow-up and evaluation are the concluding steps in this overall process.

A continuum of services model is employed by ESA schools. Generally speaking, children are moved to more structured programs as they are unable to function adequately under mainstream options.

A third commitment is toward developing an effective staff evaluation program. Currently, ESA staff are exploring use of management by objectives or MBO methodology. It is the philosophy of ESA not to force systems on staff or schools, but to explore alternatives related to prioritized needs with staff and schools and to involve "consumers" in development of the systems which they can then become a part of that system. Management by objectives allows a process of negotiation between a special education director and his/her staff. Staff have a clear and concise voice in determining the objectives by which they will be evaluated.

#### SUMMARY

The ESA provides structure or an umbrella under which a vast array of educational services and programs can be delivered. Since the services and programs are discretionary and basically controlled by contracts with local schools, it is necessary that the ESA employ qualified staff who are capable of assuming the rigors of this type of built-in accountability.

Under the ESA special education is an integral part of a total educational program and not isolated from regular education. The emphasis in special education is placed upon providing a comprehensive staff, adequate support systems through the instruc-

tional materials center, and importance is placed upon developing a systems approach emphasizing the least restrictive alternative and a comprehensive evaluation and staff development plan.

Chapter Five

IMPLEMENTING EARLY EDUCATION  
PROGRAMS FOR  
HANDICAPPED CHILDREN

*Judith Wolf*

The past quarter of a century has been marked by a shift in viewpoint concerning the function and importance of stimulation in early childhood, and consequently the child's early years have taken on new significance. A generally accepted belief held until this century by psychologists and educators was that development was fundamentally a maturationally-determined process. Child studies during the 1930's challenged the concept of the fixed IQ. These studies provided some of the earliest research findings to demonstrate the effects of environment on the young child's cognitive growth. Leading psychologists and educators have contributed enormously to the efficacy of early education, and many have stressed the need for quality childhood education.

The federal government has also expressed concern for early childhood education, planning and



implementation. The past ten years, particularly since President Kennedy's 1963 Message to the Congress, have seen early childhood education emerge as one of the Nation's key interests. Robert Hess in 1968 expressed this public commitment when he stated the following:

...the current growth of programs in early education and the large-scale involvement of the schools and federal government in them is not a transitory concern. It represents a fundamental shift in the relative roles and potential influence of the two major socializing institutions of the society--the family and the school.

(p. 1)

#### EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION OF HANDICAPPED CHILDREN

The unique educational needs of handicapped preschool children are in the forefront of concern by educators and researchers alike.

In a telephone survey conducted by the Council for Exceptional Children Information Center, 57 investigators in the area of special and regular education identified early childhood as one of the major areas of research activity (Jordan, 1971). Bloom (1964) suggests that a major proportion of the variance in adult intellectual achievement, measured by a wide variety of procedures, is already accounted for by the time the child reaches the age of five. Special educators have become aware that selected and critical affective, linguistic, and cognitive patterns are formulating in the early years.

In recognition of many unmet needs of handicapped children in the preschool age range, Congress in 1968, passed the Handicapped Children's Early Education Assistance Act. Since this time, the



Office of Education's Bureau of Education for the Handicapped has established and supported a wide variety of early childhood programs. One example of such a program is the statewide plan for preschool severely handicapped children and their families in Minnesota. Another activity of the Bureau has been the creation of Research, Development and Demonstration Centers at four major Universities, committed to the investigation of and programming for the cognitive potential of preschool handicapped children. Martin (1971) stated that a prime objective of the Bureau by 1976 is to have facilitated the implementation of comprehensive early education for 75 percent of all handicapped, or potentially handicapped, preschool-age children.

#### RURAL PROBLEMS OF EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

Educators and investigators are inclined to pioneer in their own defined area often without a concern for its many related fields. It is this absence of systematization in early childhood which has brought Rowrer (1970) to state, "The research and development phases of early childhood programs have succeeded but the implementation phases, thus far have largely failed." Rowrer cites as evidence of this situation the apparent limitations of compensatory education on the one hand and compelling evidence of success for some relatively small scale programs on the other. Martin (1971) has suggested that the development of preschool programs for the handicapped has been inhibited by the paucity of prototype programs for local planning and lack of structured information on how to create and implement successful programs in early intervention for handicapped children.

Preschool educators in rural and sparsely populated areas face an even greater problem than do urban educators in terms of available materials, staff and resources for early education.

## IMPLEMENTING PROGRAMS FOR THE PRESCHOOL HANDICAPPED

Three major areas of concern confront the educator in designing and implementing programs for the preschool handicapped child in rural and sparsely populated areas. One obvious concern is for resources. Even if preschool investigators were to acknowledge that individual stimulation on a day-long basis would be optimal for every child, financial restraints would surely prevent this from happening. Considerations such as length of day, materials needed, space involved, transportation involving long distances and quantity and quality of staff employed all become important concerns in planning early education programs, especially in rural areas.

Design decisions confront one continuously in planning early education programs, and selection of a basic model becomes an immediate issue. In general, four models have been employed. They differ mainly in degree of structure, setting involved, and educational delivery system.

A frequently employed model could be called the *school model*. Here, children are removed from the home and educated together at a central location. Advantages are that as an educator he/she can control many learning variables, and thus modify the total environment. The major disadvantage is the heavy financial burden that results in transporting children to a center in a sparsely populated area. Also, there is the possible danger of alienating parents due to their relative lack of involvement in the child's program.

An *itinerant teacher model* is when a trained tutor is sent into the home to work with the child for a specified amount of time. Although this is a relatively convenient method of providing stimulation, parents may choose to leave during tutoring so that the educational experience and the home environment may have no positive interacting effects.

Also, depending on the distances traveled, expense may be great if using this model in a rural area.

In a *home visit model*, an educator goes into the home to train the mother or father to stimulate their child. Outcomes using this model can be substantial, provided the interaction between the visitor and parent is positive and motivating. Financial considerations relating to long distances again become important when using this model.

A *support group model* attempts to strengthen parent-child bonds by having parents train outside of the home as a group. Although there is no direct monitoring of stimulation activities with the child, the parents gain support from other parents facing similar problems with a handicapped child, and the experience may enhance self-awareness and facilitate better child-rearing behaviors. The advantage of this model is that financial commitment is limited, but the model is disadvantaged by offering no direct stimulation for the child.

A variety of social issues historically associated with early intervention have been related to the fear of tampering with the almost mystical relationship between child and family, although research has shown that the bonds within the family may actually strengthen if the child is offered stimulation, especially if the family is given support and/or training (Kagan and Whitten, 1970). Still, early educators need to be very concerned about the possibility of creating a gap between child and environment, and recognize the fact that traditionally children have been "schooled" at home until five years of age.

Another serious sociological problem is the issue of continuous programming for the child from preschool through his school years. Preschool provides a somewhat protective, generally individualized, situation where there is often one-to-one child-staff interaction and active parent involvement. Upon entering the public school system,

the handicapped child may be labeled and placed in a special class based only on test scores and disregarding functional level. Parents who have had three years of interaction with preschool staff who have encouraged the normalization of their handicapped child may feel very resentful of the public school approach to placement and programming. Continuity from preschool through the elementary years is a very real issue in early education.

Other significant issues in implementing programs for preschool handicapped children include child assessment, curriculum, program evaluation, educational alternatives and leadership development in early education.

#### CHILD ASSESSMENT

There are many new and interesting approaches for identifying and assessing the young child. In outstate areas many handicapped children are not identified at all before school, and children who are screened before school may be offered only hearing and/or vision screening. Children with other potential learning problems are generally not identified until school entrance. Clearly, lack of early identification impedes attempts to provide adequate preschool programming for all handicapped children.

One new assessment area is neonatal screening. The emphasis here is on infant reflexes and responsiveness. As the level of measurement sophistication increases, investigators hope to be able to predict potential educational problems with some degree of accuracy by linking infant measures of responsiveness to the cognitive and perceptual demands of a learning situation.

An infant development test being used experimentally by some investigators, called the Uzgiris-Hunt Scales, offers a unique way of viewing

infant intelligence. The Scales purport to test prelinguistic or precognitive skills that seem to precede preconceptual and formal stages of learning. Innovative measures such as these may eventually prove to predict school-age intelligence more successfully than the traditional measures of intelligence.

Another way to measure child performance is by the use of a criterion-referenced test. For example, one could identify a discrete number of tasks preschool children might be able to accomplish, i.e., some notion of minimum essential competencies, and test children's performance of these tasks. Instead of recording correct or incorrect responses, children would be graded on level of response. A level one response would be a response that required no input from an adult. A level two response would be a response completed after verbal command or instruction offered by an adult. A level three response would require completion of a task after receiving an imitative stimulus from an adult. A level four response implies that the child needs manual guidance to complete the task. Because each of us has different levels of understanding and skill ability on tasks, this strategy of measuring behavior is an attempt to assess the level of independence at which a child understands and can work toward completion of a task.

Another important change occurring in child assessment is the ethological approach to measurement. Although ethological or anthropological field methods are not new to educational research, use of these techniques with handicapped preschool children is a relatively novel adaptation of the basic observational methodology. Ethological approaches can be characterized by observing and recording behaviors using a sampling (time or event) approach, noting patterns of behavior from a theoretical basis or "set" and developing an appropriate data base. Information obtained from ethological approaches can be used for the

development of criterion-referenced testing, prescriptive programming for children or parent-child dyads, further observation involving children or their parents, and a measure of program effectiveness. The procedure for employing an ethological approach involves selecting a child or child-parent dyad for observing, selecting an observational scheme such as an ethogram, category system or behavior checklist, collecting observational data, analyzing the data in order to draw implications and conclusions, and utilizing the data for future programming and/or assessment.

#### CURRICULUM PLANNING

One of the most important areas of research has been the study of differences in curricula as they relate to program effectiveness. Weikart (1969) compared a traditional preschool program with a cognitive program and an academic skill program. Each curriculum model was presented to a group of eight functionally retarded preschoolers on a one-half day basis, supplemented with home visits twice monthly. After one year, each program group made intellectual, developmental, and social improvements with no significant differences between program groups. Weikart suggests that the operational conditions of an experimental project are far more potent in influencing outcomes than the particular curriculum employed. If one thinks carefully about what is meant by this statement, one finds that Weikart is suggesting that one of the most important forces in effective early childhood education is the organization and technical leadership inherent in being part of any curriculum project. This statement has direct implications for training needs which will be addressed later in this discussion.

#### PROGRAM EVALUATION

Programs are evaluated for a variety of reasons: for selecting a program mode, for decisionmaking



on the continuation or expansion of a program, or for developing a program design. The essential fact is that program evaluation is a continuous, ongoing process. At the initial stages of evaluation, formative evaluation, used for developing or adjusting a program design, is most appropriate. During the implementation of the program, a transition from formative to summative evaluation, an outcome selection and decision process, is most effective. One should evaluate not just for program effectiveness, but for the nature and causes of the effects. Because most programs show multiple effects, it should be accepted that evaluation is an integral part of designing and implementing educational programs.

#### LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

The severe shortage of personnel trained and experienced in special education, early education and administration is clearly recognized. This lack of trained leadership acts as a genuine deterrent to serving handicapped children. Early education for handicapped children cannot fulfill its public and governmental commitments or serve its needy population of children without trained leadership. Development of programs utilizing creative service delivery systems is dependent on an administrative model and trained leadership personnel.

There are many specific problems and issues in considering early education programs for handicapped children in rural and sparsely populated areas. In the state of Minnesota (and there is reason to believe the situation is similar in other states), there are no requirements for such leadership personnel. State guidelines suggest that only if the word "school" appears in the name of the program must there be one qualified (presumably through appropriate experiences and/or certification) individual on the staff, and this individual does not have to be the director or



administrator of the program. In practice what seems to occur is that the trained persons in early childhood education remain in the population centers, and the rural and sparsely populated areas are the employers of the poorly prepared staffs. The small percentage of handicapped children being served in the rural and sparsely populated areas highlights the urgency for program development and leadership personnel.

A response to the lack of comprehensive programming for the early education of handicapped children is that public schools assume leadership and responsibility. However, public school control of early childhood education will not itself address the leadership issue, nor solve the shortages of trained personnel in rural areas. Training programs will still be needed to develop a leadership pool of teachers now residing in outstate areas. There is no adequate statement concerning the amount or type of training needed by an individual in this unique situation. Nor is there job or position analysis literature available providing a description on the role/function of such an individual. Various guideline documents and numerous informal conversations held between the author and other early educators suggest that the preschool administrator should be skilled in the following areas:

- knowledge of current trends in methods and materials for handicapped preschool children, especially trends in noncategorical approaches in education;
- understanding of models of curricula and delivery system alternatives for serving young handicapped children;
- insight and understanding into family integration, problems and nature of relationships especially in rural situations;
- knowledge of child development and current trends in theory and philosophy;
- knowledge of current assessment strategies

- in child measurement, staff development, and program evaluation;
- understanding of all state and local regulations affecting preschool handicapped children;
  - establishing working relations with all other agencies serving handicapped preschool children;
  - recruitment, training, and evaluation of qualified early education personnel;
  - reporting and communication skills for dealing with federal, state, and local officials;
  - budget planning and implementation; and
  - involvement in policy determination in district and statewide purposes and goals.

A field-centered competency-based model for management skill development of individuals in administrative positions is one way to approach the training needs of regular and special educators involved in early education. Many of the present preschool directors may be in outstate rural areas at some distance from the urban educational centers, which makes participation in the usual manner--coming on campus to take courses during the school year--difficult. Almost all directors are employed on 48-week contracts, which eliminates the possibility of attendance at a five-week or longer summer session; and, taking a year's leave of absence is not a viable option of obtaining further training, since most of the target population are new persons in their positions. While a number of these newer directors may return to school in some capacity within the next five years, they need leadership training now. An alternative program in addition to a campus-based model could be designed to provide instruction in specific skill areas needed for administering early education programs for handicapped children in outstate areas. Didactic teaching units would be combined with simulation experiences in order to provide the director with a field as well as academic base specific to the unique demands of the preschool setting.

## EDUCATIONAL ALTERNATIVES

The primary vehicle for providing educational services to handicapped children has traditionally been the special class. It is only natural that preschool programs should have followed suit and have moved to develop self-contained programs for handicapped preschool children. Recently, because assumptions regarding the efficacy of special class placement for handicapped school-aged children has been subjected to critical review, preschool educators have begun to question their policies and procedures concerning the segregation of handicapped preschoolers. Some basic philosophical issues should be considered. Individual or prescriptive programming is an accepted goal by special and regular educators alike. A commitment to this concept would suggest an appropriate placement for each preschool child, depending on his or her needs and abilities. This may mean placing the handicapped preschool child in a neighborhood daycare center, a nearby Headstart program, or in the case of the child in a rural area placement, in the nursery school in the nearest town available.

The adoption of this procedure leads quite naturally to the acceptance of two additional management concepts in special education: normalization and noncategorization. Normalization means providing opportunities for the handicapped individual to lead a life as close as possible to the activities and norms of the mainstream of society. In early education, this principle would urge placement of a child in a preschool situation which would allow for the maximum amount of expression, mobility and peer interaction. If children are placed in what the courts have referred to as the "least restrictive alternative" and offered an individualized program, a noncategorical approach to early education would be an outcome. Preschool children manifesting a wide range of handicapping conditions could be served by trained personnel utilizing a variety of delivery systems.

## SUMMARY

This overview of problems and issues relating to the early education of handicapped preschoolers in rural areas is both pessimistic and optimistic. Within our grasp is an opportunity to identify and provide stimulation for handicapped children at an optimal stage in their development. But, training and resource needs are great. Leadership development and creative management and evaluation systems will be the decisive factors determining the overwhelming success of early education or the dismal disillusionment of just another educational fad.

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## Chapter Six

### A LOOK AT REGIONAL CENTERS SERVING HANDICAPPED CHILDREN

*C. Duane Hensley*

The only thing that really saved me in school was the fact that somebody taught me how to read. Later, in 1961, I became a teacher of history and English. The first students I met were the "dumb kids" and those youngsters whose behavior was not suitable to the system. Seeing these children who didn't quite fit, I recalled my own difficulties in school and I said to myself, "That's me. I've been that route before. Why don't I get interested in these kids."

The school principal gave me a class for the gifted and a class of educable mentally retarded (EMR) youngsters, and I liked it. I was commissioned to dip them in something and send them back to the regular class wholly functional. I was determined that I would do something that would undo what orthodox academia had done to them.

In 1967, a bunch of rebels gathered together and formulated an education program with a range

and style quite different for the state of Missouri. At that time, there was a very limited special education law. Slowly, the Missouri Department of Mental Health began to assimilate the public school rejects. Department of Mental Health sponsored vocational technical programs, special education classes, and day care centers which were started throughout the state for developmentally disabled and behaviorally disordered youngsters. According to Missouri Statutes, there is little that the Department of Mental Health cannot do in terms of treatment services including education. There is wide-open responsibility, and the agency is seen by most as the advocate for the handicapped child. If the child is on the agency caseload, the agency can tell a school district that they are wrong, put them in another school, and bill the local school district. The Attorney General has offered an opinion which states that the Department of Mental Health may provide or procure, but they must assure that school-aged children on their service registers be provided educational opportunities. Because our special education law is new, however, the Department of Mental Health has moved slowly in effecting a penalty process upon the local educational agency. It has chosen to develop within rather than to detail a child to an alternative situation.

#### PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER

Missouri has a system of regional advisory councils, state advisory councils, and a mental health commission. There are 11 regional advisory councils who make recommendations regarding children receiving services throughout the state. They do this through a state advisory council which consists of parents, handicapped consumers, educators, psychologists, doctors, lawyers, etc. Anytime help is needed, these people are readily available.

Missouri Statutes define developmental disabilities as mental retardation, epilepsy, learning



disabilities, autism, cerebral palsy and other neurologically handicapping conditions closely related to mental retardation. The Division of Mental Retardation-Developmental Disabilities also supervises special education services for the emotionally disturbed and behaviorally disordered through the Mental Illness (MI) section of the Department. Thus, it has a comprehensive network of services in rural/sparsely populated and metropolitan areas of the state.

#### THANK GOD I'M A COUNTRY BOY

Much of what I learned as a boy was related to rural America. My grandfather used to say that one should first, "Build a straight fence" (one you can be proud of ten years later); second, "Hoe a clean row" (do the job well and get maximum use of your resources); third, "Grease your plan well" (take care of what you have through wise utilization and management).

Missouri's system of regionalization is a productive, well conceived program which has greatly strengthened special education services, especially in sparsely populated areas. No rural school can use the excuse that it does not have adequate diagnostic or supportive resources to assist in the development of individualized educational services. Each regional center has three to four diagnostic classrooms, speech and audiological, neurological, psychological and other service components designed to meet the needs of school-aged children. Approximately 70 percent of each regional center budget is used for educational services. Missouri has an effective and efficient developmental disabilities service delivery and supportive system for the entire state; and, it is presently working to upgrade services to behaviorally disordered youth accordingly.

## DIFFERENT STROKES FOR DIFFERENT FOLKS

Missouri believes in the uniqueness of individuals and states. It is important to recognize that there are different strokes for different folks, because every state has its own set of laws, its own special education bill, and its own supportive units of government. Possibly, the error committed in Missouri is that educators do not utilize or coordinate with the services available through state agencies. There is no way that education or educators are going to succeed with handicapped people if the local district has to pay the total bill. Special education is costly, so there is a need to learn how to utilize the many resources which are available. There are very few superintendents or special education coordinators in Missouri who really have knowledge of Title XX to support their day school program, for example. They do not know how to address the problem of what happens when a child goes home in the evening, what happens to him on the weekend, and what happens with the lapse in the summer when lost ground must be made up in the fall. Title XIX, Title XX, vocational rehabilitation, and local school district funds are available, and these resources should somehow intermesh to end up with a comprehensive kind of service system which includes special education. Each regional center has the responsibility of advising school districts as to how they can integrate their programs with other community and statewide resources.

Educators must come out from behind closed doors and enter the arena of action. If special education lives unto itself, such parochial thinking will give birth to entropic isolationism. That is, they will so separate themselves from the varied resources of the community that they excuse themselves in the "I'd rather do it myself" vacuum. In so doing, the handicapped child once again becomes the loser.

Everything that one does or does not do is based upon one's experiences. The kids who are the

"hell-raisers" have learned that kind of behavior. Their so-called maladaptive behavior is a response set which has been reinforced at home, school, and in community activities. The teachers, on the other hand, have a variety of contingency mechanisms at work which makes them react to students as they do. Therefore, the public schools must learn how to work with psychiatrists, psychologists, social workers or any other resource in order that they may reinforce suitable behavior appropriately. In so doing, the school will find that it can better deal with the complex problems outside the school which seem to negate the accomplishments of the education staff.

#### FIT FOR BATTLE--THE PSST TEST

In Missouri, it was found that there were many people who did not have proper training. Special education teachers, school counselors, speech therapists, etc. had book knowledge, but they scored low on the teacher adaptive behavior scale. The students entering the Department of Mental Health programs were not all docile Down's syndrome children. They exhibited learning and behavior related problems seldom encountered in most college and university training regimes. Since college and university students are not receiving the proper training to know what to do with the really tough-to-handle handicapped kid who may have been kicked out of or excluded from several schools in the state, the Department of Mental Health says that they must pass the "PSST" test. This means they must be peed upon at least once, scratched at least twice, spat upon three times, and have one's clothes torn at least four times before they are ready for frontline action. If these things have happened, then these people are probably ready for Missouri's mental health program.

A person working with these special kids has to be more than a special educator. He/she must understand the total life situation of a child and

what he/she can do for that child to give him a more dignified existence. It is believed that there is a high correlation between dignity and the alternatives one has for being and developing to his fullest potential. How can one talk about kids having greater dignity and being recognized as real live human beings, unless there are alternatives for them, not only in the school system, but at home or at play. To aid Missouri's public school system in coordinating their efforts with Title XIX, Title XX, vocational rehabilitation agencies, recreation programs, HUD projects, etc., the Department of Mental Health utilizes its 11 regional center staffs (see Figure 1). Special education programs can be related to or intermingled with other social service programs. In order to comply with federal or state regulations, a school system often must have a special education program by objectives, social services has a state plan by objective, the community recreation program has objectives, etc. There ought to be some way of effecting these programs into a composite unit of service.

It has been found in Missouri that through coordination (especially in the rural areas), additional resources can be utilized and more viable programs developed. For the small school district which does not have the money to develop and/or devise their own services, special education programs must somehow be borne out of collective action. For example, when a kid learns a currency program, who follows up to see if he can spend his money correctly at a store? Title XX can buy a monitoring person to test what is taught, to assess his ability to function independently, but educators are slow to come around to see if their techniques of teaching are accountable outside the educational arena.

Supportive services are available to many children and adults under the Title XX program. These include day care services, genetic counseling, transportation, chore service, employment services, education of a particular type, and diagnostic work-ups. The rural school district can take advantage



1. Albany Regional Center
2. Kirksville Regional Center
3. Hannibal Regional Center
4. Kansas City Regional Center
5. Joplin Regional Center
6. Springfield Regional Center
7. Rolla Regional Center
8. Poplar Bluff Regional Center
9. Sikeston Regional Center
10. Marshall Regional Center
11. St. Louis Regional Center
- N. Nevada State School-Hospital
- M. Marshall State School-Hospital
- H. Higginsville State School-Hospital
- S. St. Louis State School-Hospital
- T. St. Louis Developmental Disabilities Treatment Center

Figure 1: Missouri's regional centers and their service areas.

of these by working with their county welfare people. In Missouri, where day care and transportation are the two biggest problems for the handicapped, they are purchasing these and other activities with Title XX and Developmental Disabilities Act funds. One must, of course, be careful not to supplant the efforts of the local educational agency.

The Department of Mental Health also operates special education programs for institutionalized juveniles. The Department of Mental Health either provides the program or else students are bused and transported to schools off campus. There are approximately 1,100 school-aged children in state institutions. The regional centers, however, have prevented institutionalization by generating community-based programs for several thousand children. The number residing in institutions has also been substantially reduced partly because of Missouri's new special education bill. The Department of Mental Health does not receive children because they are retarded or behaviorally disordered; they get them because there is nothing in their community for them. In order to identify and deal specifically with the individual problems of institutionalized children, special education people are often employed right out of college and university training programs. These people are baptized with fire and confirmed in the conflicts of the troubled or rejected youth residing in the state hospital. It seems that the ideal learning situation is where at the end of the day the handicapped child has progressed, the teacher has grown, and the educational assistant is a little wiser. If there is any one of the three who was somehow left out, there is something wrong with the system. Remember, there cannot be utilization of just professionals to really get the job done. There must be allowance for everyone to do his thing while putting it all together for the kid who is searching for order amid chaos.

Because there must be different strokes for different folks, it is important to briefly mention management by objective (MBO). Since the Department



of Mental Health has responsibility even in the rural areas for handicapped kids, it must put together a meaningful plan of action. The Department of Mental Health develops an MBO plan in each of the 11 regions for every person in the state of Missouri who is handicapped. Effective this fiscal period, the plan will address itself to the needs of and services for three distinct groups--children and youth, adult, and aged. The Departmental budget, including all of the services recommended for education, will come out of this plan. The end result will be a working plan of action designed for a few thousand students with annual presentation to the state legislature. This will show the legislature what the agency can and should not do, and how it will support but not duplicate other service systems. Once the mechanism is set up, it works quite well, and the agency is able to request and allocate funds via this client-centered budgeting approach. At the same time, the Department of Mental Health testifies in behalf of the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education and local school districts when school foundation and categorical aide funds are being considered.

#### A CLOSER LOOK AT THE REGIONAL CENTERS

There are many good things happening in the regional centers. Missouri's regional centers are in many ways different from those in other states. They are especially effective in rural sparsely populated areas. In each regional center, there is a director who may be a social worker, an educator, psychologist, etc., but every center has at least four special education type people. They each have three to four classrooms to perform diagnostic and evaluation services. Most regional centers have 40 beds. Bed space is especially useful in the rural areas because the children often must stay overnight. A school or parent may make a referral to a center, or an individual who is 16 years or older can walk into a center and ask for help. An evaluation is conducted, and the parent or guardian



is notified. Information is relayed back to the school in a variety of ways, and in-service training is often provided to the school. Money collected for such services does not follow the child in Missouri. It is deposited in the state treasury, and must be reappropriated the following year. This is a very great problem administratively and interferes with the timelines and effectiveness of the program.

No child gets into a state institution from a rural or metropolitan area unless he is referred through a regional center. Deinstitutionalization is the rule, not the exception. To Missourians, deinstitutionalization means the prevention of institutionalization as well as moving them back into the community, and one cannot move people back unless the schools have the kind of support they need from the state agencies. Missouri's regional centers provide this support.

#### MAKING IT HAPPEN

How does one get plugged into the system? First of all, there is treatment by objective. When the student arrives at the center, the presenting problem is identified and behavioral objectives developed through standard assessment instruments such as the Missouri-Minnesota Behavioral Scale and other supportive diagnostic tools. Remember, treatment and education are, in most instances, synonymous. However, the public school people are having a hard time understanding what to do with "an education plan." If one mentions achievement levels, making progress in educational terms, they feel they understand. Too many educators in Missouri are used to dealing with everything in general and nothing in particular. Thus, nothing in particular is accomplished purposefully. In all fairness, however, more and more requests are coming into the regional centers to assist in August staff development sessions for instructional and administrative personnel.

Figure 2 graphically displays how treatment-education by objective plans are developed. In the upper left hand column, there is a certain basic premise from which to operate and understand the treatment-education process. Here, one must look at the school day as being one part of the total life plan that is developed for handicapped people. There must be some treatment standards, individualized treatment plans which include education, and an appropriately trained staff to help relate to the objectives. One of the reasons the management by objectives (MBO) approach is desired is that when treatment objectives are stated, this means that systematic evaluation techniques must be built in.

The agency is able to handle some problems with a baseline developmental evaluation (Missouri-Minnesota Behavioral Scale); but, if there is an emotionally disturbed or behaviorally disordered child, then the Problem-oriented Record is often used. For example, suppose a kid is really causing trouble in school. A local regional center is contacted and asked what should be done. A special educator, social worker, or psychologist will go over to the school to review the situation. He/she may be able to help, or he/she may take the youngster in for a one-day evaluation, three-day evaluation, etc. The Problem-oriented Record is used because it identifies and systematizes a plan of action to alleviate the problem. One must look at what is causing the disturbance or problem. Assuming the youngster has average intelligence, his real problem is reacting appropriately to stressful situations, so the child is plugged into the system and a plan of action devised based upon both positive and negative aspects of his behavior. If he is mentally retarded, learning disabled, etc., then a developmental scale or other appropriate diagnostic device is used and supportive information is gathered. The developmental scale is often used as well with seriously emotionally disturbed children. There are few sick kids that require a real in-depth workup, psychoanalysis, or long-term hospital care. The bulk of the "problem kids" are those that may have some learning problems, but they came to the Depart-

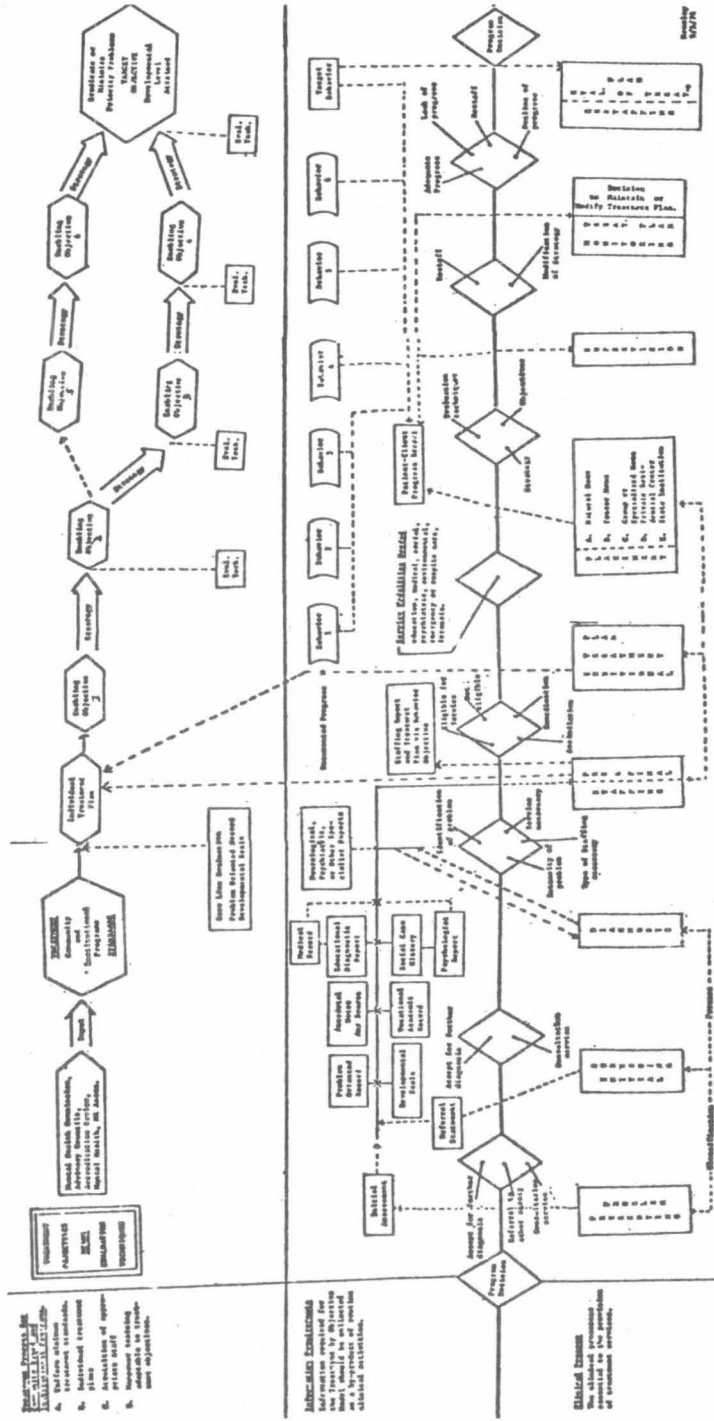


Figure 2: Treatment by objective model.

ment of Mental Health because they fit the system, raise hell, and reap the overt manifestations of a confused and anxious family, school, or judicial system.

Once a child is plugged into the system and given the initial workup, there is an individual treatment plan devised which includes recommendations to the school. On the far right of Figure 2, there is a target objective; so from the treatment plan to the target objective, there are all sorts of enabling objectives and strategies. That workup is hopefully put into a language that the teacher understands. To put it simply, a plan is developed, the needs are identified, the evaluation checks are implemented, and specific recommendations to the teacher are offered.

In the lower two-thirds part of Figure 2 is the system which the Department of Mental Health utilizes. For instance, whenever a referral comes into a unit of the Division of Mental Retardation-Developmental Disabilities, one already knows he is presenting a problem. However, what is wrong with him and how to handle him is not known. Information must be obtained from those who are in close proximity to the problem. Missouri is therefore expanding satellite units closer to the school districts in rural areas. It will not always be staffed by a professional person; it will be a person from the community who knows the local school districts and can talk their language. These people will secure information that will help assess the situation. Consequently, the Division of Mental Retardation-Developmental Disabilities sends the school districts a packet of recommendations which contain more than recommendations to the teacher. Other information which does not infringe the confidentiality of the family or client is included to enable the school to more fully assess the specific learning situations in school are related to the student's adaptive and survival skills elsewhere. If one takes the various points like the presenting problem, the initial screening, the diagnosis, one can see the various subsystems which interact in

constructively approaching a solution in the best interest of the child. This also aids as a checklist in identifying weaknesses in the process and improving services which will move the child through to the final reentry into the school system or into the community.

Figure 2 basically illustrates what is being done in Missouri. Missouri's regional centers cover the rural and sparsely populated areas very well and the metropolitan areas fairly well, but its school districts are a long way from really cranking out adequate programs.

Out of necessity, the Department of Mental Health in Missouri has assumed a role within its legal responsibility but beyond that which is often in the best interests of the child. Because the Department was doing so much, the public schools were often doing very little. Hopefully, this will be remedied following full implementation of a special education bill which states that no child who is on the mental health rolls can be denied educational services. A problem which is particularly bothersome to public schools is certain specialized workups which are foreign to most educators. When one talks about a youngster with a learning disability, the school does not know how to go to a neurologist or other specialist to get the needed workup and then translate the same into educational terms. Because of this, the Department of Mental Health provides a useful service by assisting the school with specialized diagnoses and follow-up.

There is no reason why a child in a rural Missouri area should go without educational services. There is no reason because the youngster has a state and regional advisory council and the Department of Mental Health who can and do serve as his advocate. In the larger cities, however, Missouri still has many problems. The biggest, of course, is just sheer numbers; but, in spite of the seemingly overwhelming numbers, the urban mental health centers have had significant impact.

## CONCLUSION

It is very exciting to see what has happened in Missouri. Nothing has happened overnight. It has been a long hard struggle, but we are getting there. I believe that if one starts doing things for kids and maintains them at the center of action, it will pay off personally and professionally. One must learn to look at the differences in people and to look at each person as a real live, exciting and challenging human being. The time is right for the special educator with broadening horizons and discarded blinders. The special educators must not be restricted to tunnel vision, but he/she must be receptive to all the resources which can benefit the child.





## Chapter Seven

# ESEA TITLE III AND ITS IMPLICATIONS FOR SERVING HANDICAPPED STUDENTS

*Dwight Maxa*

The purpose of this chapter is to discuss the development of an Elementary and Secondary Education Act, 1965 (*ESEA*) Title III funded program dealing with teaching independent living skills to a population of special needs youth in a rural and sparsely populated area in northwestern Minnesota.

### DESCRIPTION AND HISTORY OF THE PROJECT

To fully understand the history of the Home-Social Living Center program, it is necessary to go back to 1972, and recall the Home and Family Living Laboratory which was developed within the St. Paul school system through an ESEA Title III grant. This program was the first innovative, independent, living skill training program for trainable mentally retarded (*TMR*) and educable mentally retarded (*EMR*) youth within the state of Minnesota. Its concept was

centered around the idea that teaching these skills could be best done by removing all abstracts which were a hindrance to learning for mentally handicapped youth. To do this, a house was purchased next door to the Child Development Center, a school for K-12 handicapped youth. This location was easily accessible to the student population within that building. Teaching in this facility was designed to provide students with information that they needed to supplement academic skill building and vocational skill training. There was an opportunity for students to learn about skills that were necessary to maintain themselves independently or semi-independently after graduation from the school. The Home and Family Living Laboratory was a day-school program, and the students who were enrolled in this program were given an opportunity to work within this laboratory setting for one-half days either in the morning or in the afternoon. In addition to developing this model-teaching laboratory situation, a curriculum was developed which was divided into seven units with pre- and posttests for each unit, a task analysis sheet for each practical skill was taught, and a global curriculum test was given. The objectives of the Home-Laboratory program were twofold: first, to develop a model teaching laboratory; and secondly, to develop an instructional curriculum package which could be useful in teaching independent living skills. This program was funded through an ESEA Title III grant for a period of three years. As an offshoot of this program, another program was developed with a more sophisticated design and with even more realistic project objectives. The Home-Social Living Center program began in July, 1974, and the objectives of this program were:

- *To develop a day-school model facility to instruct special needs students in independent living skills and social adjustment skills. The day-school program is taught within the context of a house as a teaching laboratory. This house is a four bedroom rambler with an attached double garage, across the street from the Career Education Center, located in Audubon, Minnesota.*

- *To provide a realistic semi-independent living experience for mentally retarded youth in a social-family home environment.* This house, unlike the one in St. Paul, is used 24 hours a day. The staff changes at 3:00 p.m., and a group of six students, who normally would go home, use this facility as a classroom and evaluation training ground to learn semi-independent living skills under the direction of two married counselors. This second objective of the program was designed specifically with the needs of TMR and low incidence EMR in mind. This facility provides them with an opportunity to learn independent living skills not only during the daytime, but to be evaluated and to continue to add to that living experience through the evening. By doing this, it provides for many more opportunities for realistic experiences, i.e., making a bed, taking showers, and preparing meals. This objective also provides for maximum social development of students due to the nonschool atmosphere created in the evening.
- *To provide an independent living situation and social development program which will focus on behavior management requirements for community living skills for special needs youth.* The Apartment Center program is located in Detroit Lakes, Minnesota, and consists of four-unit apartments within a large apartment complex. This program is intended to meet the needs of emotionally disturbed students, predelinquent youth, and borderline retarded EMR youngsters. By putting these students into an apartment situation, there can be a prediction with almost 100 percent accuracy whether or not students will be able to function successfully within the community after leaving school. This is a truly unique opportunity for special needs youth to experience an independent living situation which provides an opportunity for learning to take place while under the direction of a counselor; and, actual conditions which would be encountered upon graduation are simulated daily. Each

student who is enrolled in the Apartment Center program is working on the job either full or part time.

#### THE CONCEPT OF TEACHING INDEPENDENT LIVING SKILLS

To answer the question, "What is meant by independent living skills?" one must look at the total developmental picture for a special needs student. Many students leave the Career Education Center with vocational skill training. In other words, a student can be trained to do a job whether it is entry level auto skills, building and grounds maintenance or dishwashing. Problems arise often when these students try to bridge the gap between school and the community. Even though they are trained to do a task, these handicapped youth need specialized, systematic instruction in personal management skills; and, they need training in how to get along in the community. Things that normal youngsters seem to know without any instruction, these special youth do not. These youngsters do not assimilate information about normal day-to-day living as would a normal youngster and need to be taught in a systematic step-by-step way how to do such things as using deodorant, preparing a simple meal, cleaning the bathroom, combing their hair, doing their laundry, balancing their checkbooks, and other assorted day-to-day tasks which all people face. When looking at the total educational development of special needs youth in three different areas of instruction, one sees the following:

- Vocational skill training is important, and these students must be taught in a single skill concept how to do vocational job tasks.
- They also need academic enrichment skills which can be taught in coordination with vocational education.
- Students need training in independent living skills which complement the other facets of total training. Vocational skill training cannot stand alone nor can training in independent living skills.

Another important concept in teaching independent living skills is the social development that takes place. Statistics show that 90 percent of people who are fired from their jobs were not fired because of their inability to master vocational skills. They were usually fired because of their inability to relate to fellow employees or the boss. In other words, it was a social problem, and there have been similar problems with handicapped youth. They have a very difficult time relating to their peer group and to solve this problem, independent living skills are used as a springboard for the development of social skill training. Students who are enrolled in the Apartment Center program and the Home Center program are encouraged to develop their social skills through a variety of different activities. For example, by living in an apartment building with other students their own ages with similar interests and similar ability levels, many students develop their ability to relate socially to their peer group and to all others. For many of these youth, this is the first opportunity they have had to develop friends and share social experiences outside of school with other youngsters their own age.

#### SETTING FOR THE HOME-SOCIAL LIVING CENTERS PROGRAM

This project is hosted by the Becker-Clay Special Education Cooperative which is located at Audubon, Minnesota. The Cooperative covers an area of over 2300 square miles and provides services directly to eight-member school districts. The Cooperative is divided into several components; the Home-Social Living Center is one of the components. Another component is the school which serves the eight-member school districts and other school districts in the area on a tuition paid per student basis. The Career Education Center is set up to provide services to those youth who cannot function in the mainstream of education. These students are classified as special needs youth, and there are approximately 130 full time students at the facility. Some other students are also members of the Career Education Center for

part of the day and may spend other hours at the Secondary Vocational Center, at the post-secondary vocational school, or at the local school. Eighty percent of these students are from small family farms and 20 percent of the total population of the Cooperative are native American. The result of this student population is a very strong, rural base with only a very small number of students living within city limits. The Home-Social Living Center program is directly coordinated with the Career Education Center. Students who attend the Career Education Center are bused from local school districts from as far away as an hour's ride on the bus one way.

Students who are participants in the live-in program ride the bus to school on Monday. After classes at the Career Education Center, they bring their change of clothes and other personal belongings across the street to the Home-Social Center or ride the school vehicle into Detroit Lakes to the Apartment Center. The length of stay varies; it can be three or four months in duration or as short as six weeks depending on the individual need of the student. On Friday afternoon after classes have ended at the Career Education Center, these live-in students return home for the weekend on the regular bus. Transportation from the school to the Apartment Center in Detroit Lakes and to other school activities is provided by means of a school vehicle. This vehicle is oftentimes used to transport students from the job to the apartments or to school each morning.

#### REFERRAL PROCEDURES

The Home-Social Living Center program is primarily aimed at special needs adolescent boys and girls ages 14-21 who exhibit the ability to live either semi-independently or independently. Specifically, students are referred from the following three groups:

- Rural handicapped youth needing a social-living program who may be characterized as mildly



retarded by any psychometric score and are lacking in coping skills for independently living or exhibiting significant behavior problems. These students attend the Career Education Center and are receiving job skills training, but for complex and other environmental reasons, needed additional training for social living within the community.

- Those students who attend schools in the Cooperatives served by the Career Education Center or nearby nonmember schools. They typically have peaked in academic skill attainment and are referred to the Career Education Center for training in vocational skills, behavior adjustment, and social living skills.
- Youth who are returning to the communities after having spent part of their lives in various institutional settings including state mental institutions and day-activity centers. This also includes youth who have been recommended for placement on a diversionary basis from crime correction programs. Actual referrals are made on the basis of student performance on a series of tests which measure social skill development, aptitude, and ability for independent living and a general picture vocabulary test.

#### FUNDING INFORMATION

The sources of funding for this program are many. First, seed money for this project was provided by ESEA Title III and hosted by the Becker-Clay County Special Education Cooperative with local tax dollar support. The first year grant was \$62,826, with approximately \$40,000 of matching funds from the Cooperative, mostly in the form of special education reimbursements. Another source of funding was the Hartz Foundation, a private foundation, which was utilized for the purchase of the house in Audubon which is called the Home Center. Another source of funding was the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation, which provides financial assistance to students for



on-the-job work experience, thus making it possible for each student in the Apartment Center program to become employable. Financial reimbursement is also available through the Welfare Department which will soon be providing a per diem allowance for students who attend the Home Center and Apartment Center. This reimbursement would be much the same as it is for students who are maintained in group home settings under the Welfare Rule 34 license.

Other sources of additional funding are being investigated at this time with the idea that it is most important that financial arrangements be made to absorb the \$62,000 of Title III funding after the three year grant has ended in 1977.

#### REPLICATION SUMMARY

The Home-Social Living Center program is designed to provide services to special needs youth enrolled in a career education program who have adjustment or behavioral problems which interfere with their adjustment in the program or in the community. Two social living units have been established to serve youth with such problems who are in transition from the regular school to the Career Education Center, from the Center to the community, or from institutions to the community and Center. These social living units develop skills in home living and management of social behavior through a three phase program which is integrated with the ongoing program at the Center.

The overall goal of this project is to provide a community living setting for special needs from rural areas to acquire social living skills necessary for independent living, and this is made possible by an ESEA Title III grant from the Minnesota Department of Education and through the cooperation of the Becker-Clay County Special Education Cooperative.

In terms of exportability, this program is well suited to both urban and rural settings. Since most school districts own at least one house and oftentimes

many more, the program could become operational with a small dollar investment. To assist this process, a developmental program guide is available. A curriculum guide has been written and is available complete with task analysis sheets. A slide show depicting the first year of the Home-Social Center program is available for dissemination, and other developmental and dissemination materials are available upon request.

It is the opinion of this author that this program is truly innovative in its concept to disassociate from the conventional school classroom by providing an atmosphere which is totally relevant to students. Working with this program provides an opportunity to see tremendous improvement in students' self-concepts which have resulted from these success-oriented student activities. This program has a potential for adding a viable, new curriculum dimension to an already existing program in special education.



## Chapter Eight

# A MODEL FOR TRAINING LEADERSHIP PERSONS IN RURAL AND SPARSELY POPULATED AREAS

*Richard Weatherman*

The problems of educating handicapped children in the rural and sparsely populated areas parallel the difficulties of providing all human services outside of the larger population areas. In most rural and sparsely populated areas, the number of school-age persons is declining at a rate greater than that of the metropolitan centers. Consequently, children with unusual or very difficult educational problems then constitute a very small proportion of the total school population.

Another problem of providing specialized services to handicapped children in rural and sparsely populated areas is that programming for these children, finding the educational specialists equipped to work with them, and distances between special education centers contributes to the difficulty of providing these services. Frequently, the distances are so great that to use an itinerant model, or one where

the special educational resource person travels from one school to another to assist in the education of handicapped children, is not feasible. With the relatively small numbers of handicapped children and the large distances between special education centers, there becomes a greater increase of the cost of such services on a per pupil basis. As a result, other models for providing education must be developed.

While distance, numbers of children, and cost are important variables in the matrix of a service delivery system, the key factor for a successful program is leadership personnel to plan and direct a program. The model that is described below represents one such effort to attempt to alleviate the difficulty leadership persons in rural and sparsely populated areas have in obtaining training for the critical competencies they need.

#### SPECIAL EDUCATION ADMINISTRATION TRAINING PROGRAM

In September, 1973, the University of Minnesota began operating a new training program for special education administrators. Known as the Special Education Administration Training Program (SEATP), the project is a joint venture between two departments of the University: Departments of Special Education and Educational Administration. It is supported by a grant from the Bureau of Education for the Handicapped, United States Office of Education, and by funds from the University of Minnesota.

The program is designed simultaneously to meet a current, pressing need in Minnesota and also to serve as a model that can be replicated in training administrators and practitioners in other areas of human services (e.g., practitioners and administrators of day activity centers, group homes, nursing homes, etc.). In addition, the general model of this program may be applied to preparation programs for other types of positions.

SEATP is a (1) competency-based education program, (2) developed from a systems orientation model, and (3) used for continuing education of professional administrators. Each of these three features was adopted to promote educational effectiveness and efficiency.

A competency-based (or performance-based) preparation program is one in which

...performance goals are specified, and agreed to, in rigorous detail in advance of instruction. The student must either be able to demonstrate his abilities or perform job tasks. He is held accountable, not for passing grades, but for attaining a given level of competency...the training institution is itself held accountable for producing able practitioners. Emphasis is on demonstrated produce or output.

(Elam, 1971, pp. 1-2)

SEATP's adoption of a competency-based approach is an attempt to focus on education directly applicable to the special education administrator's actual job. As a consequence, the program (SEATP) should be better able to accommodate individual educational needs. In addition, the procedures developed to identify and validate competencies should promote prompt changes in the existing curriculum sequence to meet changing conditions and to facilitate replication of the model elsewhere.

The requirement that competency-based programs be able to demonstrate the proficiency of each trainee implies that they are data based. SEATP has used a systems approach to identify each component of the training development sequence and to attempt to assure sufficient information for making decisions at each point. The systems orientation should also contribute substantially to ease of program modification and replication.

SEATP is a continuing education program which can be pursued by the employed director of special education while he is on the job. It has incorporated procedures used successfully in other continuing education programs (including those currently being utilized by the Continuing Education Program in Hospital and Health Care Administration, School of Public Health, University of Minnesota, and the American Management Association Continuing Education Program). Continuing education has the advantage of enabling more directors of special education to participate than would be possible with traditional on-campus training programs. It is also expected to be more efficient, both in terms of time and in cost, especially after the initial program development phase has been completed. However, the program can readily be offered on either a preservice or inservice basis, because of the nature of the competencies toward which the program is directed (minimum essential on-the-job performances).

#### BACKGROUND

*The "Administrator of Special Education" Position.* Special education programs and services for handicapped children have expanded during the last decade at an unprecedented rate. This sharp acceleration in services is due to a number of factors, including philosophical acceptance of the right of all children to an education, advocacy from parents of exceptional children as well as school personnel for special services, litigation and legislation requiring public schools to provide special services, and increased state and federal funding for initiation and ongoing support of such programs.

This increase in the number of services appears to be progressing with expanding sophistication in the field. Research and demonstration programs have provided insights into the manner in which exceptional children learn, and appropriate instructional technology has been developed to cope with the problems. Many studies have also recommended new conceptuali-



zations of service models and organization patterns to facilitate pupil learning and efficient use of resources.

One of the most prominent of these trends is the philosophy referred to in its various guises as "mainstreaming," "normalization," or "the principle of least restrictive alternatives." It implies that the traditional methods of providing special education services need to be thoroughly reexamined. Meisgeier and King (1970), for example, comment that:

The main alternative to a regular class has been placement in a special self-contained class. However, new sequential arrangements of instructional alternatives suggest that only a small number of exceptional children will require self-contained settings. The greatest number may be able to remain in the profit from the main system if resource help is available and if that system makes use of concepts such as differentiated staffing and provides viable mechanisms for the individualization of instruction.

(p. ix)

As the school's capability to accommodate handicapped children in regular education programs increases, the organization of special education services must change accordingly.

In the past, general education focused on the "modal" or large group of typical children within the school population; special education was delegated the responsibility for educating those children who fell into disability categories defined by general educators as being children unsuited for the general educational program. But events in recent years indicate that these two quasi-distinct educational systems will converge, and the next decade may see all

children and teachers within the parameters of education.

(Weatherman, 1969, p. 17)

However, as these changes take place, a parallel trend has been establishment of separate administrative units for special education programs. The numbers of directors and other administrators of special education programs have been growing rapidly. A number of reasons account for this trend and these can best be examined within the content of the following broad rationale:

- *Purpose of special education.* A general purpose for which special education is organized is to provide interventions designed to remedy or ameliorate those conditions which thwart normal development. The responsible organizational unit must include not only special teachers, materials, etc., but also provisions for effective advocacy of exceptional children's rights and needs, expertise to plan and supervise special education interventions, and to ensure ongoing communications with all levels within the school system and with appropriate community agencies.
- *Population to be served.* Although many mildly handicapped children can be served in mainstream programs with appropriate support, schools are also being asked to provide intensive services for severely and multiply impaired children who were previously considered "uneducable," and who require intensive, expensive services. These services are often provided in conjunction with nonschool agencies, in cooperation with other school districts, or by intermediate districts, rather than by the district in which the child resides, but the local school district retains responsibilities for program monitoring and tuition payments.
- *Categorical legislation and funding sources.* Most states provide categorical state funding for special education services and increased federal support for special education has

become available. These factors have created needs for efficient planning, supervision, and accountability for these multiple funding sources.

Consequently, program development, organization, and supervision involve many complex responsibilities for the director of special education. He/she is expected to be a specialist in a variety of functions-- development of learning systems for the handicapped, administrative procedures, communications with many agencies and persons concerned with the handicapped, curriculum development, and contributions to the advancement of general education.

*Indicators of Training Needs.* In the past, little emphasis has been placed by colleges and universities on education of special education administrators or on research training these leadership personnel.

Milazzo and Blessing reported in 1964 that of 225 colleges and universities preparing special education personnel, only 40 offered programs in administration and supervision. Only eight programs offered a sequence of general administration courses, and Milazzo and Blessing reported a need for specific training and experience in administrative endeavors. Willenberg (1966) noted the "paucity of specific research on administration of special education" (p. 134) and described several obstacles which might account for this lack. Connor (1970) noted "an intermittent and slow rate of interest in specifying and upgrading standards of preparation" (p. 373).

More recently, Vance and Howe (1974), in a follow-up study of students who had received federal training grants, noted that most special education administrator training was provided at the doctoral level, and stated:

This is expensive, time consuming and ignores the need for training at the subdoctoral level for those individuals just beginning

a career at the management level in special education.

(p. 121)

Vance and Howe also indicated needs for competence in general administrative processes and practices as a result of the mainstreaming movement, skills in understanding the implications of due process, and internship opportunities.

In considering development of preparation programs for these directors, however, a further need becomes apparent: the lack of precise definition of the curriculum due to the frequent ambiguity of the special education administrator's role.

Unlike the role of a school principal or business agent for a school district, the role of the special education administrator has been determined by factors such as state laws and regulations, educational practices in the national, state, regional, or local programs for which he is responsible, and the philosophy toward handicapped children which exists in his organizational unit. A recent discussion (Kohl and Marro, 1971) commented:

It is difficult to define the typical duties of this leader since he is found in different administrative patterns and has a variety of titles with little relationship to specific functions.

(p. 9)

In addition to variations in job descriptions among directors, further ambiguity is created by the differing ways in which other staff in the school district and community perceive the director's role, creating discrepant expectations of the administrator of special education (Hensley, 1973).

Despite these variations in role definition, however, some studies have noted a convergence on typical or most pressing problems encountered by

special education directors in Minnesota, as perceived by the directors themselves (Bilyeu, 1973, Wedl, 1972).

*Minnesota Needs.* Inadequate educational opportunities, insufficient role definition, a lack of relevant research on administrator preparation, the need for education at the subdoctoral level, and the need for administrative competencies are all national factors of which SEATP planners were aware. However, several studies of special education administration in Minnesota indicated training needs specific to this state, as summarized below.

As in other emergent fields, growth in special education programs has meant that the demand for qualified personnel has exceeded the available supply. To staff expanding programs, persons with minimal experience and certification have been hired, creating needs for in-service or continuing education programs. A recent study (Spriggs, 1972) indicated that this is true for administrators as well as special education teachers. The majority of directors or administrators of special education programs had assumed their present positions recently; for most, their present positions are their first administrative ones.

The same study indicated a high degree of educational level for new special education administrators. As a group, entry level administrators usually have a masters degree in a particular special education disability area or teaching specialty. They tend to be young, with three to five years of teaching or related professional experience, but with limited administrative experience.

The educational background of these new special education administrators tends to be somewhat different from that of the typical administrator in education. Generally, education administrators assume their titles and positions only after completing a certification program in school administration, but the special education administrator typically

enters without a certification program in education or other administration or management training.

Directors of special education are often promoted by their employing school districts into administrative positions. New directors are probably selected for their positions because of demonstrated success as special education teachers or for a variety of other reasons. The disproportionate number of special education administrators in Minnesota who were formerly school psychologists or speech pathologists suggests that selection might be influenced by prior visibility and interactions with other administrators within the district. Demonstrated administrative competence does not appear to be the major selection criterion.

Districts with new special education administrators are frequently rural or small town interdistrict special education cooperatives located beyond commuting distance from the Twin Cities. The special education administrator is usually hired on a 12-month contract. Consequently, a new director is not in a position to leave his/her job and return to a university or college program for administrative preparation either during the school year or in the summer. Furthermore, new administrators are expected both by the organizations in which they work and by the State Department of Education to administer the program successfully, and, when necessary, to learn on the job.

*Competency-Based Education.* Traditionally, preparation programs for teachers and administrators of educational programs consisted of a set of experiences which the prospective practitioner must undergo prior to receiving licensure or certification in his profession. Such programs tended not to specify in detail the tasks prospective educationists needed to be able to do or accomplish to qualify for licensure, nor was there any objective guarantee that graduates of such programs had been prepared to perform the tasks actually expected of them once they actually assumed teaching or administrative position.



Criticisms of traditional teacher preparation programs have been mounting since the 1960's, and the sources of discontent are varied. Some sources of dissatisfaction are general, including the increasing awareness in the last decade of lack of progress in meeting inadequacies in education and the implications that vastly improved preparation requirements are necessary both to meet changing conditions and to maintain the viability of public educational systems. In addition, demands for relevance of preparation programs have increased, resulting in demands for participation of present and prospective teachers in determining education goals and methods. Another source of demands for change in teacher preparation programs comes from advances made in the art and science of teaching. Technological development, experimental instructional models, and the increased availability of federal funds to support these research and development efforts have enhanced the possibility that improvements in fact could be made; and, undergirding all of these is the increasing pressure for accountability in educational programs.

The terms "competency-based" and "performance-based" education are often used to refer to the same movement. "Performance-based" terminology stresses the manner in which the learner demonstrates knowledge and skills and implies that knowledge gained must be employed in overt action. "Competency-based" terminology stresses the notion of a minimum standard for effective performance. Both identifiers connote educational programs that go beyond knowledge for its own sake, and emphasize performance and consequences of actions (Houston, 1974).

Despite the lack of many precedents for competency-based continuing education programs for administrators, educational needs seen by SEATP planners suggested that a competency-based approach might well be appropriate and profitable for this program. The emphasis on performance goals, systematically defined and derived from the performance of recognized practitioners, is relevant to the lack of



expected of him have all contributed to the emergence of competency-based training programs in teacher education.

Competency-based instructional programs assume that the competencies or performances which constitute an educational program can be identified and stated. Although some people will contend that this is a controversial point in competency-based teacher education, the results from needs assessment activities and review of literature in the field of special education administration strongly suggest that competencies in this area can be identified and stated.

*Empirical Derivation of Competencies.* Traditional training programs attempting to convert to the competency orientation have sometimes tended to rely on the judgments of university faculty as a means of deriving competencies. The second SEATP program characteristic is the method of derivation of competencies for this training program, which has been done by surveying the population at which the training program is directed. Although a consensus on competencies by experienced special education administrators at local, regional, and state levels, and college and university faculty has been obtained, a study of the role and function of the director of special education and observation of Minnesota special education directors has also been used to empirically derive those tasks and those performances which constitute the special education administrator's job. Competencies for this training program have been derived from these needs assessment activities.

Although this basis for establishing educational program criteria may appear to assume a certain amount of stability in position description, it is recognized that any position is a dynamic and changing one and that preparation programs will require concomitant revision. Regulations, increases in knowledge in the field, and changes in accepted practices will all influence the knowledge, attitudes, skills, and task capability necessary for minimum performance in a generalized position. Consequently, instructional

content and performance criteria will change over time, as the job changes. The program design provides for regular periodic reassessment of competencies essential for performance of the special education administrative position. Some adjustments will be made on an ongoing basis; overall reassessments of specific competencies will be made every three years and at any time when changes in education organization, operations, legal constraints, and external forces (e.g., medical progress) suggest that the position has undergone substantial change.

*Core Competencies.* The program asserts that there exists an identifiable core of minimal essential competencies for all special education directors, that they can be agreed upon, and that those competencies will form the content or curriculum of the preparation program. SEATP personnel are well aware of the variations which occur among specific positions in Minnesota, some of which vary systematically according to location (i.e., urban, suburban, or rural; single district or interdistrict cooperative; or size of program); others according to range of responsibilities and amount of authority given a specific director. Additional sources of variation are idiosyncratic to the needs and desires of a particular school district. Consequently, employers recruiting prospective special education administrators may desire performances and skills not included in this training program. However, these tend to be in addition to the minimum core skills which have been identified repeatedly through studies conducted under this training program and elsewhere. SEATP assumes that persons who have attained these core skills can function in an entry level position and can adapt to the variations which occur among districts.

*Individualized Instruction.* Competency-based preparation programs make it possible to pinpoint individual needs. This program assumes that, despite a common lack of experience on the job and little prior formal preparation in education administration, new special education administrators will vary in the extent to which they have already attained the

minimal essential competencies. Initial performance on domain-referenced tests of content and on performance in simulations will determine specific preparation objectives for each participant; therefore, the amount and content of instructional experiences will vary among participants. Continuing assessment throughout the course of the preparation program will also enable the program to adjust to various rates of participant learning. This accommodation to individual needs applies both for instruction conducted in a group and on an individual basis.

*Field-Centered Instruction.* A prominent feature of this program is the location of instruction. Special education administrators tend to be scattered throughout the state. Because of their 11- and 12-month contracts, they are generally unable to attend classes held on the University of Minnesota campus in the Twin Cities. Instruction under this preparation program is therefore field centered. A number of program objectives can be met through individual study. Ongoing monthly group and individual meetings with field consultants (experts in specific content areas--e.g., fiscal) are scheduled in locations close to the participants' residences and places of work. The program assumes not only that field-centered instruction will increase the possible number of participants who are willing to take further preparation, but also that the field setting is appropriate to the instruction to be offered.

*Curriculum.* The content of instruction offered through the program is also distinctive; it attempts to teach basic facts (e.g., knowledge of special education laws), concepts (e.g., program budgeting) and skills (e.g., ability to develop a child study subsystem). Methods of evaluation of the program are consistent with these kinds of instruction, consisting of demonstrated retention of the facts, concepts and skills presented and performance or application (actual or simulated) of skills taught. The assumption is made that a person can be successful on the job if he can demonstrate those skills and that knowledge. In many cases, application of

skills taught to actual problems encountered in the administrator's ongoing cycle of activities will be required.

As indicated earlier, participants are trained at the master's level prior to entry into the program; thus, philosophical considerations are not stressed, nor are there extended direct attempts to influence attitudes. However, newly appointed novice special education administrators can profit from interactions with experienced school administrators and with their peers (other special education directors). It is expected that field consultants will serve as role models for the new directors. At the same time, use of field consultants represents deployment of valuable training resources often overlooked in traditional administrator preparation programs.

*Performance Evaluation.* The basis for evaluation of the Special Education Administration Training Program is the student's (special education administrator) learning and performance. As indicated above, there is a direct relationship between training offered and methods of evaluation. No attempt is made to show effects of this preparation program on student (child) learning. One reason for this is that effects of staff development on children's progress is still not quite clear, thus, that topic generates considerable controversy within competency-based teacher education. Besides, there is little reason to believe that a *direct* result of administrator preparation will be seen from improvement in child learning, even though pupil growth and development is the purpose of all school-related activities.

Essential program characteristics, corollary characteristics, and assumptions on which these features are based are summarized in Table 1.

## CONCLUSION

SEATP has been developed as an attempt to meet critical continuing education needs of special edu-

Table 1

## Special Education Administration Training Program Characteristics

<u>Characteristics</u>	<u>Corollaries</u>	<u>Assumptions</u>
1. Goals of the training program are stated as competencies or performances		Relevant goals can be identified and so stated
2. Performances are derived empirically from job	Training content and performance criteria will change over time as does job	This is a reasonable preparation base
3. Core of minimum essential competencies will be taught	Other performances may be desired for specific positions	Those skills can be agreed upon. Persons with these core skills can function in entry level positions
4. Instruction is based on individual needs	Amount and content will vary. Rate of progress will vary	Varying levels of prior training, experience, and ability
5. Instruction is field-centered		Continuing education for employed persons. Location is appropriate to the training to be offered.
6. Kinds of instruction taught--facts, concepts and skills	Evaluate by demonstrated retention of information and performance (Actual or simulated) of skills	Person can be successful in job if he/she has those skills and that knowledge.
7. Evaluate training program by student (director) learning and performance		There is that direct relationship. Can't show effects on student (child) learning.

cation administrators. At this point the program and model are still regarded as tentative and subject to revision from experience. While it is recognized that a new system with some differing requirements might cause some discomfort or disequilibrium in those trained by other methods, SEATP planners believe that both the methodology and procedure used in the program are defensible.

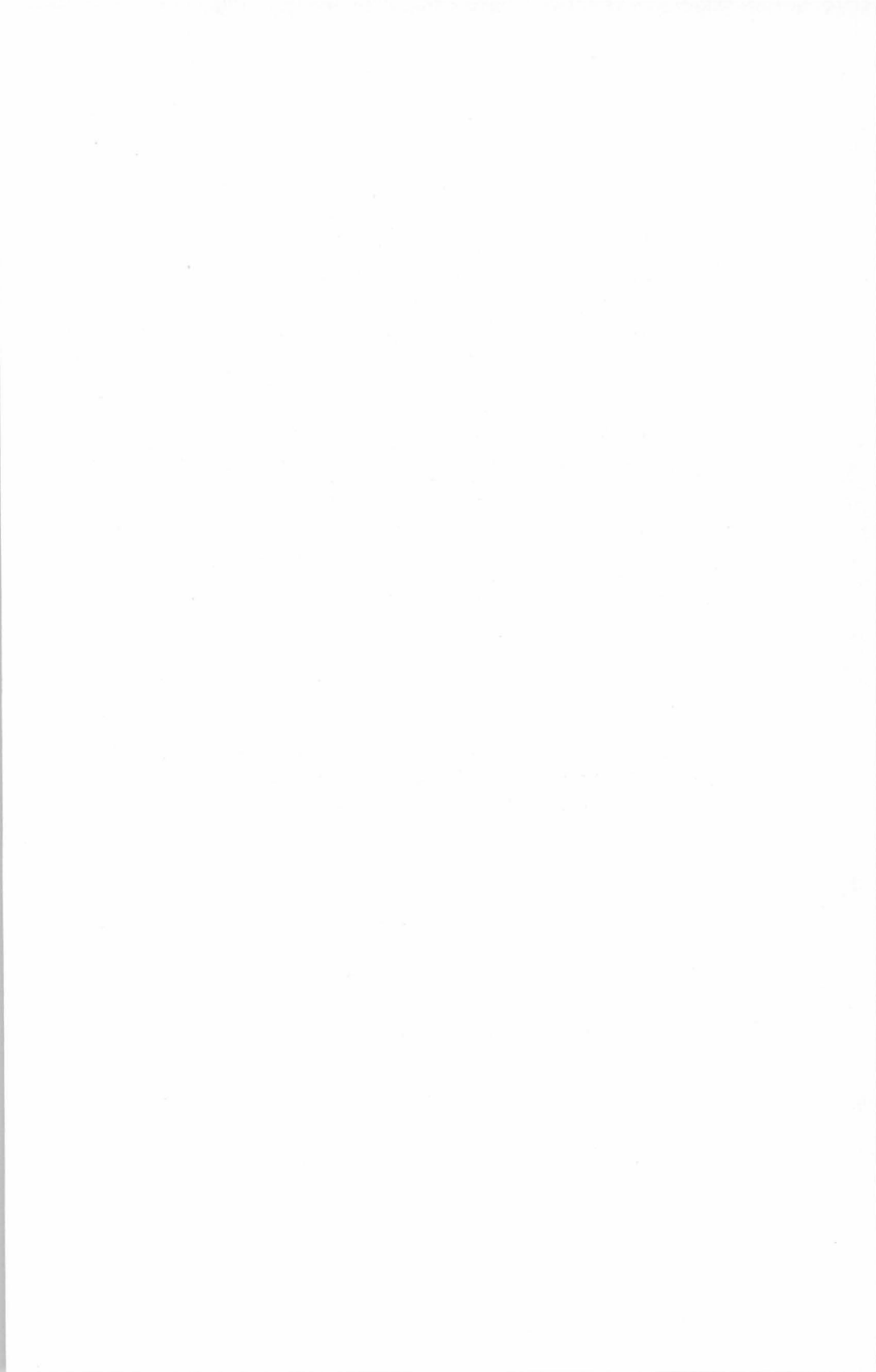
The application of this model to the training needs of special educators in rural sparsely populated areas has been initiated, and preliminary results suggest that this approach has great promise.

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## Chapter Nine

### TRENDS IN SCHOOL FINANCE AND BUDGETING

*Van D. Mueller*

The purpose of this chapter is twofold: to review the leading court cases in which state schemes for financing public education were challenged in either federal or state courts, and to explore the implications of planning-programming-budgeting systems for improved internal school management. Ultimately, an understanding of the interrelationships between internal and external resource allocation systems should enable an accurate comprehension of the important challenges and opportunities in ensuring adequate finance for public schools.

#### THE COURTS AND SCHOOL FINANCE

There is an old saying that "the rich get richer and the poor get poorer." Nowhere is there a better example of this old cliché than in the manner in which most states have financed their educational systems. The first successful challenge to a state's educational finance system came out of the California Supreme Court in August, 1971, in the now famous

*Serrano v. Priest*<sup>1</sup> case. To legal scholars across the nation, *Serrano* was the "most significant court decision in recent decades affecting a state's program of funding the operation of its public schools" (Shannon, 1973, p. 1). The key principle enunciated in *Serrano* briefly put says that a child's education may not be a function of wealth other than the wealth of the state as a whole. *Serrano* did not provide that per pupil expenditures be equalized or the quality of educational offerings be substantially equalized. Neither did it require full state funding of public schools, eliminate local autonomy or outlaw the use of the property tax as a revenue source. Implementation of the "fiscal neutrality" principle only requires that the state school finance system provide each school district with relatively equal financial capacity.

Wynkoop (1974) has reviewed and summarized the major criteria or guidelines that evolved from the six court decisions made within one year after *Serrano*. Six criteria or guidelines were identified and are shown in Table 1. The three criteria most heavily emphasized by the different courts were:

- Fiscal neutrality; that is, education may not be a function of wealth other than the wealth of the state as a whole. (Each of the six decisions indicated that the school finance system must make taxable resources equally available to each child.)
- The state must equalize any local revenue that is utilized in the model. (Three of the court decisions required local revenue equalization; one court did not discuss it; another court said this criterion is not applicable because all local revenue must be eliminated.)
- Variations in expenditure per pupil are permissible. None of the courts said variations must exist, but they were not requested to make a decision on variations.

(Wynkoop, 1975, p. 543)

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TABLE 1. CRITERIA ENDORSED BY THE COURTS\*

Court Decisions	Criteria from the Courts					
	Fiscal neutrality	Equalization if local revenue is permitted	Permissible to have variations in expenditures per pupil	Full state funding	Elimination or great reduction in local initiative	Elimination of flat grants
Serrano v. Priest	X	X	X			
Van Dusartz v. Hatfield	X		X			
Rodriguez v. San Antonio Independent School District	X	X				
Robinson V. Cahill	X		X	X	X	X
Sweetwater County Planning Committee v. Hinkle	X		X	X	X	
Hollins v. Shofstall	X	X				

\*Robert J. Wynkoop, "Emerging Constitutional Models for School Finance," Educational Development Journal, Winter, 1974, p. 39.

These criteria drawn from significant court decisions may provide a useful check on the trends in school finance reform in any home state.

Since the *Serrano* decision four years ago and the subsequent litigation in scores of other states, much study of individual school finance systems has been initiated. Commissions, committees and task forces have studied the school finance systems of all of the 50 states. A comparative analysis of the study reports indicates some agreement for a set of criteria for a state's school finance structure. Five general guidelines for new school finance models have emerged and are summarized in Table 2 (Wynkoop, 1973).

The first guideline presented in the model requires the development of a more fiscally neutral school finance system.

Many states have or are in the process of implementing this guideline by increasing the state's share of the cost of the total school program. The state's share of the current operating costs of education in Minnesota rose from approximately 35 percent in 1971, to between 65 percent and 70 percent in 1974. As the state's share of educational expenditures increases, greater equalization results, regardless of the specific method used to allocate the aid. A more fiscal neutral school finance system is thus created.

The second guideline deals with the maintenance of variations in expenditures per pupil. The courts and commission reports have not said that "one scholar, one dollar" is the appropriate standard. This part of the model is of considerable interest to individuals whose primary professional assignment is concerned with administering programs for pupils with special needs. Recognition is given to the possibility of differing educational needs and the differing educational costs associated with meeting those needs. This guideline is particularly important in recognizing program cost differentials that exist and, in

TABLE 2. A MODEL THROUGH WHICH TO VIEW SCHOOL FINANCE REFORMS

<u>Guideline</u>	<u>Clarification of Guideline</u>	<u>Origin of Support</u>
New school finance law should be fiscally neutral.	There should be an equal availability of taxable resources per pupil.	This guideline received the unanimous endorsement of the commission reports and the courts.
New school finance law should provide for variations to exist in the expenditure per pupil.	The state in its subventions and the local district in its expenditures should provide different resources to meet different needs of children.	This guideline received unanimous support from the commission reports and a heavy emphasis from the courts.
New school finance law should eliminate or greatly reduce local initiative required or permitted.	The amount of revenue raised by the local referendum to enable the school district to increase its expenditure should be curtailed or eliminated.	This guideline received heavy emphasis from the commission reports, but is loosely related to guidelines four and five, which both received heavy emphasis from the courts.
New school finance law should provide for the equalization of local revenue.	Equal tax efforts among districts should permit equal expenditures per pupil.	This guideline received heavy emphasis from both the commission reports and the courts.
New school finance law should fully fund the school finance model enacted by the state.	All revenue for the support of the schools should be raised by the legislature and not by the local school district.	This guideline received heavy emphasis from the commission reports and moderate support from the courts.



addition, cost differentials attributable to demographic and geographic factors, i.e., sparsity and density and economic factors (differing costs of living and salary levels).

The third and fourth guidelines are inter-related and focus on the equalization of local revenue and the elimination or reduction in local initiative. Until the finance reforms of the early 1970's, the relationship between school district wealth and expenditure levels per pupil was both positive and consistent from state to state. Those school districts with fiscal ability usually measured in terms of property wealth were spending three to four times as much per pupil to buy educational goods and services as their less wealthy neighboring school districts. This disparity in expenditure level normally was achievable in the wealthy districts with a lower tax rate. Numerous states have implemented new laws to restrict the fiscal initiative of local school districts. The dilemma here results from an apparent conflict between the goals of "equalization" and "local control or initiative." The battleground between the egalitarian and the libertarian is part of the school finance reform struggle. Is it possible to design school finance systems that provide equal measures of equity and control? In a state constitution, where is the responsibility placed for the operation of the educational systems? What is the appropriate relationship between the state and local educational delivery system?

The fifth and final guideline suggests full funding as a method of achieving significant school finance reform. While some of the states have taken major steps in the direction of full state funding and full state funding has been recommended by some major study reports (Fleischmann, 1973), this guideline apparently has much less support from educators, political leaders, and the courts than the other four. However, it is important to note the growing interest in the full state funding of certain categorical program areas such as special education and vocational education.

## SOURCES OF REVENUE--TAXES

Historically, educators have preferred to focus their attention on the allocation dimension of school finance, assuming that the responsibility for the design and implementation of revenue systems could and should be left to the economists and politicians. With the school finance reform activity of the 1970's has come an increasing awareness of the need for educator concern with sources of revenue--tax systems. The criteria and guidelines for reform issued by the courts and various study reports have emphasized fiscal neutrality, equalization of revenue, reform of the property tax, and increased infusions of state revenue.

Since the local portion of school district revenues is almost exclusively borne by property taxes, the need for property tax reform has become an integral part of the general concerns for school finance reform. The Advisory Commission on Intergovernmental Relations, an organization made up of representatives of state government, county and municipal governments, Congress and the Executive Branch has studied the financing of schools and property tax relief in great depth. The major findings (Advisory Commission, 1973) of the Commission report are:

- The property tax is by far the most unpopular of all major revenue producers.
- The clear public preference for state sales or income taxes over the property tax is further manifested in the fact that the combined state-local income and sales tax burden borne by the average family has grown during the past 20 years at a decidedly faster rate than the residential property tax burden.
- Despite its obvious defects, the property tax has significant political and fiscal virtues.
- In spite of growing more slowly than state sales and income taxes, the residential property tax has grown faster than the value of the average residence or the income of the average household.

- When compared to the property tax burden borne by the average family, the property tax load carried by poor householders must be characterized as excessive.
- The states are beginning to take action to relieve extreme property tax burdens, especially the overburdens of the elderly.
- Property taxation is used unevenly by the various states.
- Any property tax reduction achieved through the reduction or elimination of the school property tax threatens to be offset by increases in the expenditures of other units of government.
- Substantial reduction in property taxes, if achieved, will result in windfall gains to owners of land and buildings.
- Any nationwide plan to exempt residential property from school property taxes would encounter obstacles from the various state constitutions.
- The federal government, through its income tax code, is already providing partial property tax relief for homeowners, but the relief helps the high-income homeowner far more than the middle- and low-income person.
- There is a growing difference of opinion among the specialists in the field of taxation as to whether the property tax is paid primarily by renters and other users of housing through higher rents or by investors through lower interest and profits.
- In spite of the widespread feeling that the property tax is detrimental to urban development, there is no strong indication that the property tax is a primary factor retarding urban economic and industrial development.
- Reform proposals such as more uniform assessment, statewide property taxation, and site-value taxation do not hold forth much promise of property tax relief.

(pp. 12-14)

There are only three major sources of tax revenue available to support public services at the

local, state and federal levels. Taxes can be levied on property, sales and income. The results of public opinion surveys indicate that the property tax is very unpopular. However, the property tax is an enormous producer of revenue in every state. To eliminate the property tax entirely in Minnesota would require state sales tax that is five times as great as the current tax--an increase from 4 percent to 20 percent. That alternative is unreasonable. Currently in Minnesota, there is a relatively high income tax; and, if this tax on property were eliminated entirely, the state would have to quadruple the state income tax--another unreasonable alternative.

The solution then is clearly not the elimination of the property tax as a source of revenue to support education but an improvement in its use and administration. A major concern in property tax administration has to do with assessment practices. How do you achieve uniformity and equity in a highly decentralized system with over 1,800 taxing jurisdictions in Minnesota alone--440 of them representing school districts? What is the role of state government in assuring equity in the locally administered property tax?

Another concern for educators is the growing competition with other public services for a share of the tax dollar. In most states sources of school revenues are not earmarked on dedicated taxes. Funds to finance education come from local, state and federal tax systems which impact on the taxpayer in differential ways.

Figure 1 illustrates the relative impact of federal taxes (expressed as a percentage of total income). The graduated federal income tax clearly bears most heavily on those most able to pay and thus is generally defined as a progressive tax. Other federal tax sources such as payroll and social security taxes are regressive in nature bearing most heavily on those of lower income levels.

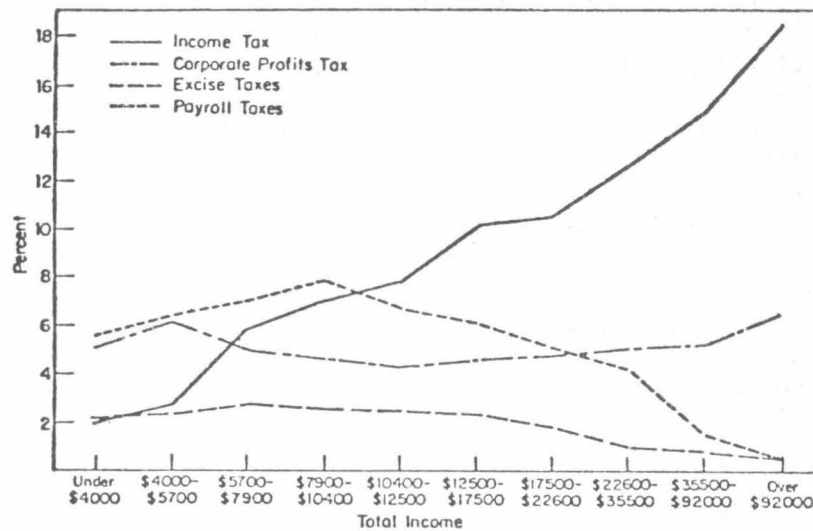


Figure 1: FEDERAL TAXES AS A PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL INCOME (Benchmark Assumptions)

The data in Figures 2 and 3 indicate that the combined effect of state and local taxes is regressive. The impact of state sales taxes and the local property taxes--the source of over 90 percent of school financing revenues nationwide--does not meet acceptable standards of equity. The challenge for educators then is to assist in the redesign of the total revenue system in order that the share of the resources allocated to the financing of public schools can collect in a fair and equitable manner and distributed in a way in which all children will have equal access to educational services--not conditioned by accident of birth, geography, or parental economic status.

#### PROGRAM-PLANNING-BUDGETING SYSTEMS

What is PPBS? The basic PPBS idea is to decide very clearly what is to be accomplished and how to plan it before action is taken. Alternative ways

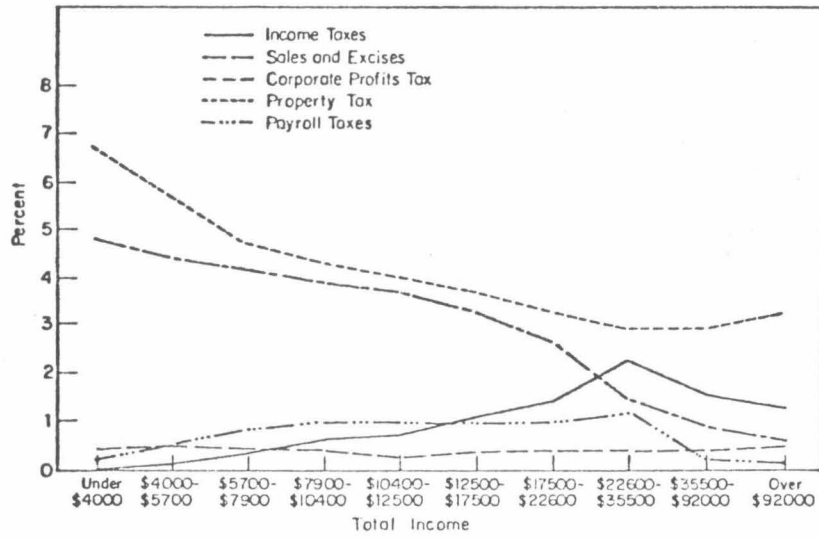


Figure 2: STATE AND LOCAL TAXES AS A PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL INCOME (Benchmark Assumptions)

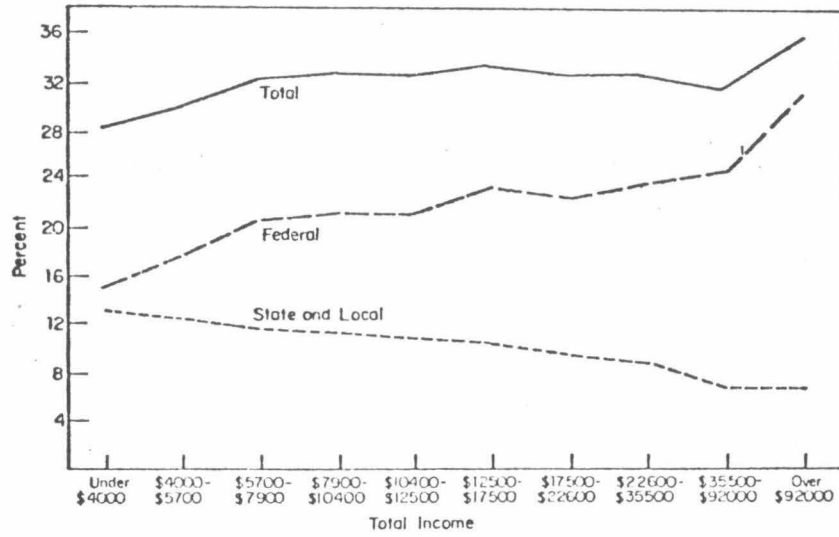


Figure 3: TOTAL TAXES AT ALL LEVELS AS A PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL INCOME (Benchmark Assumptions)

the task might be done is studied; costs and other requirements of each way are considered; the plan believed to be most suitable is selected; then, progress measurement can be decided in advance.

Several forces have combined to encourage the use of PPBS in school districts. One of the prime reasons has been the increased cost of education. While education has always been a significant cost, particularly at the local and state level, increased costs have caused a corresponding concern with "educational accountability." Legislators faced with requests for more money understandably want to know what will be accomplished with the money. School board members and parents have the same questions and concerns as they review school budget requests.

PPBS is an analytical planning or "systems approach" to school district management. It focuses on the "outputs" or "results" of the educational process rather than the "inputs" or traditional means of describing educational programs in terms of numbers of teachers, classrooms, books, etc.

Gorham (1967) described the activities involved in the PPBS process in the following statement:

The Planning-Programming-Budgeting System is a framework for planning-- a way of organizing information and analysis in a systematic fashion so that the consequences of particular choices can be seen as clearly as possible. It attempts to do three things:

1. To display information about the functioning of actual governmental programs so that it is possible to see easily what portion of federal resources is being allocated to particular purposes, what is being accomplished by the programs, and how much they cost;



2. To analyze the cost of alternative methods of achieving particular objectives so that it is possible to rank the alternatives in terms of their relative costs; and
3. To evaluate the benefits of achieving objectives as comprehensively and quantitatively as possible in order to facilitate the setting of priorities among objectives.

(pp. 4-5)

Gorham's statement supports the premise that PPBS is more than a method of budgeting by program. Many educators have erred in believing that program budgeting was essentially a financial procedure. While it is true that the school budget does get involved and the school business official is an essential contributor, the primary focus relates to educational goals and objectives, programming, and evaluation of results. Program budgeting can refine the data used to explain what is being done with public funds.

Haggart (1972) describes PPBS in terms of four major process components. All are essential in the complete system. The first component is the *structural aspect*. This involves the setting of objectives and the development of a program structure. There is already a breakdown of educational activity by program area. At a minimum, there are elementary and secondary programs in most districts; and, in addition, there are special needs programs, vocational programs and library and support service programs. Programs are also defined by geographic location (building), target populations (Title I), etc. A key point in consideration of program structure should be categorization of activities according to their relationship to organizational objectives.

The second major component of program budgeting is the *analytical aspect*. It is within this area that cost-effectiveness analyses and trade-offs are

made. It is in this area that generation or identification of alternative ways to meet objectives most often takes place. The emphasis here focuses on alternative packaging of "inputs" to meet the desired "output."

The third major component of program budgeting is the *control aspect*. Basically, this involves the monitoring of how well a program is being implemented and recording any modification or changes in the process, in other words, progress reporting.

The fourth component of the program budgeting system is its *data and information* aspect. The *structural* and *analytic* components influence the choice of data. What were the objectives of the program? What level of resource allocation was committed to the implementation?

The implementation of a "results-oriented" program-planning-budgeting system requires the widespread participation and involvement by staff, students, and the public. This aspect may not be as easy to achieve as it may appear to be.

In the past, there has been communication with staff and public in terms of the "inputs" utilized in the educational process. The traditional function (administration, instruction, etc.) and object (salaries, books, heat, etc.) budgeting coding structures have not been terribly meaningful to either internal or external school constituencies. To the parent who is concerned about the level or quality of reading instruction in the third grade or what the district's priorities are in the senior high school, or how much activity the district is funding in programs for the handicapped traditional budgeting and program structures are not at all helpful. If program objectives cannot be specified precisely and the level of resources allocated to a program not known, how can there be a change in the delivery system, a modification of the resource level, a change in program objectives, or elimination of an

activity with any assurance that the decision will provide improvement in educational services?

Program-planning-budgeting systems are not a panacea. The educational profession is woefully lacking in evaluation skills and techniques. PPBS does present potential of securing sound and valid participation by staff and citizens in the management of school affairs and provides a systematic process for clearly describing the contributions of the school system.

#### CONCLUDING COMMENT

The purposes of this discussion were twofold: to review the trends in state/local school support, and to describe briefly the potential of PPBS as a means for improving the internal management of school districts. The primary focus was concerned with the allocation of resources to school districts and the sources of tax revenue available to meet the financial needs of schools. In the past four years, since *Serrano*, the reforms in school finance have been substantial. The effects on this reform movement in the United States will need to be evaluated carefully in light of widely held expectations by educators and the public for movement away from the inherent inequities of the old finance systems.

While the changes of the early 1970's have suggested an evolutionary mode of reform rather than revolutionary changes, it appears clear that both external and internal factors affecting school financial management have had an effect on the local, state and national level. These changes and others currently underway should be of great interest to special education administrators and to all educators and citizens.

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## Chapter Ten

# PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT IN RURAL/SPARSELY POPULATED AREAS

*Thomas Stark*<sup>1</sup>

### THE HUMAN TOUCH

When considering the problems of the administration of rural schools, I recall a previous position in Lake County schools, Two Harbors, Minnesota, a district where the whole northern half of the county is roadless by law. The size of the district exceeds the size of several Minnesota cities. Airplanes must fly over 5,000 feet when in that area, and the territory is limited in terms of motorized vehicle use--bikes, motorboats, snowmobiles, and canoe by summer. That is rural!

After leaving Lake County schools for Grand Rapids (which is in the north central part of Minnesota) I encountered another large district geographically--a school district over 2,000 square miles, a district larger than the state of Rhode Island, yet with only 5,700 students.

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1. Transcribed and excerpted from a dialogue on July 7, 1975.

There are some unique administrative problems to face when one administers a school district that has diverse interests, an unusual geography and sparse population. An obvious problem is transportation. In a place such as the Lake County School District, and in earlier times, portable school buildings were moved into logging camp areas to serve the "shackers" who came with their families to log the area.

Certainly, there is a problem in providing special education services when there is one youngster in one area who is visually impaired, another youngster 90 miles away who has a hearing problem, and yet another trainable mentally retarded (TMR) student somewhere else. In sparsely populated areas such as these, it is terribly difficult to provide good services, yet one must work out ways to take care of these needs.

Special education is terribly important school business because of the young people whose lives are different and in need of special help and because special educators have an opportunity to do something good for them. It was Horace Mann who once said, "Let not your life end until you've won some significant victory for mankind." A dedicated educator--whether it is an educable mentally retarded (EMR) teacher, first grade teacher, superintendent or a principal--certainly carries many victories for mankind. In fact, there are few professions that really have the impact upon society than does the profession of being an educator. That says a lot about the whole business of personnel administration and the importance of hiring able people.

Beautiful buildings can be built, and there are many in Minnesota, but a beautiful building does not make a good school. For example, there were five elementary schools in one town in which our family once lived. The area which housed my family contained an old school building, a school built in 1894 which was about ready to fall down. Before enrolling my children into the old school building, however, the other four beautiful buildings were examined. It



was apparent that the newer schools were much more attractive and that they were even programmed for newer educational methodologies. It was not long after the start of school, however, that I realized that the older school was indeed an outstanding school. It contained dedicated teachers who cared immensely about the children under their care. My children could not have received better educational services than they did in that old dilapidated school with old traditional programs. This observation magnified for me the fact that it is not the methodology that is used, the materials or equipment, the school building or the finances that make the real difference in quality of education, it is the teacher. It is the teacher who delivers the service. For example, a teacher may have a choice of two procedures for a particular lesson: procedure X versus procedure Y. From a carefully considered point of view, procedure X might be better, but if the teacher does not think that procedure X is better, then that teacher should use procedure Y because the teacher is the one who must deliver that service. Until the teacher can successfully be convinced that procedure X is better, theory Y is the better choice. Machiavelli once wrote, "A poor battle plan vigorously carried forward has more chance of success than an excellent one supported half-heartedly." That is true of teaching also. If an administrator feels that the options are somewhat equal but likes one better than the other which is the reverse of the teacher's opinion, the teacher should be allowed to use his/her choice because he/she will think it is good, will work at it, and will generally make it work.

In terms of personnel administration the most important thing that a special director or leader in the field of special education can do is to recruit and select good people. Technical competencies are important, but human qualities are even more important. A good person who is motivated--and if he/she also has basic background in a speciality--will become a good teacher because that teacher will not be satisfied with anything but good performance. Having all the



academic credentials in the world does not necessarily make a good teacher. It is the human quality which is the most important.

#### PPBS

Planning, Programming, Budgeting System (PPBS) is a system that started during World War II when England was faced with the problem of dealing with the bombing of London and some of the surrounding industrial cities. They had to figure out ways that they could put all of their resources, all of their power, all of their best thinking together to meet the objective of thwarting the imminent invasion of England. Somewhat later, the Secretary of Defense for the United States, Robert MacNamara, organized all of the Pentagon operations into a system whereby goals were laid out for the various divisions within the defense organization. These division goals were tied to organizational goals and were justified in terms of how successfully they contributed to the larger organization reaching its goals from a cost/benefit point of view. One innovative feature of PPBS has been the move from a line item budget to a program budget. A line item budget, for example, is like being in a school system where the administration knows that for all of its teachers, it has 3 million dollars to spend. With program budgeting, however, a system is developed whereby the operational programs of the school district are determined by way of systems analysis. Whatever programs are determined, those programs are monitored to determine the extent to which goals are met, and financial investments are required.

One system of PPBS identifies five components of the system: cost accounting, systems analysis, goal setting, program planning, and evaluation. A fundamental tenant of the system is that schools belong to the people, and the people within a community should decide what schools should be working toward. Educational leaders should, however, provide leadership in helping the public decide what kind of

programs they want. In the final analysis the people must decide what the schools should be doing.

In Mankato the school system has gone through a system of involving the public in a goal setting exercise. The public has established a listing of goals in priority order--as to what are the most important things that their school system should be doing for their community. Then, the public has been involved with an evaluation activity. It has taken each of the goals which were identified and has answered the question: to what extent do the present school programs meet these goals? (The highest ranked goal established for the Mankato Public Schools was gaining skills in reading, writing, and listening.) The community could respond along a continuum of response options varying between "doing a poor job" to "doing too much in this area." By going through this exercise, Mankato has been able to match the ranking of the goals with the public's perception of how well the district is reaching those goals. Highly ranked goals with low performance evaluations are receiving top attention for time, energy and budget allocation. This procedure is part of what PPBS is about. The decision as to where those dollars should be allocated becomes quite clear. People really believe school systems belong to them, and they can determine the direction the school system should be going. The system is helping to improve our school system.

After goals are set by the public, it is the responsibility of professional educators to determine how the goals can be reached. Performance objectives for each program should be established. If a program has 10 performance objectives, those objectives are related to the community established goals. If there is a performance objective that does not relate to the goals that the community has established, it is either cut out or the public should be consulted to determine whether or not a goal should be added to the overall list of goals. On the other hand, one may find that one of the goals that the public indicated as very important is not addressed by a

performance objective(s). This circumstance tells the district that it had better gear up, design, and modify some programs so that they meet the district objectives. It would be a management error for a school district not to have some kind of plan for moving the system in the direction of its established goals.

#### THE IMPORTANCE OF MANAGEMENT PERFORMANCE EVALUATION

One of the most important steps in managerial evaluation is to clarify who is responsible for what. For example, one plan is to have an administrator draft a job description of his/her own assignment. Then selected subordinates review the job description and suggest modifications. The administrator's superior next reviews what the incumbent (the subordinates) say the job should be. After dialogue with the incumbent, the superior finalizes the job description. This plan is being followed in Mankato for all administrators. Job descriptions and evaluation instruments all follow the same format.

This system was sold on a positive note emphasizing that most people do satisfactory work and should have the opportunity to know that their subordinates feel that that is the case. The final activity is to develop performance improvement objectives or targets for the following year.

#### QUALITY EDUCATION IN THE FACE OF DECREASING ENROLLMENTS

Today, decreasing enrollment is a problem in terms of staffing and still maintaining quality education for a number of Minnesota school districts. The Mankato district has been successful in negotiating an unrequested leave policy (the procedures to be followed in placing tenured teachers on leave of absence for possible future recall due to staff reductions). The system is based strictly on certification and seniority. For example, if 20 positions in a school district must be cut for its school year, the

first to be released would be probationary teachers who are the least needed by the district. Probationary teachers in Minnesota are those teachers in their first two years of teaching or in the first year of teaching in a district following a move from another district. Staff reductions based solely on seniority cause severe management problems. Often a highly valued teacher must be placed on unrequested leave merely because he/she is a junior staff member. Being able to consider competitive in determining which teachers positions should be terminated would strengthen the present system.

Because of tenure laws, school boards and administrators must develop extremely effective recruitment and selection procedures. When a teacher is hired, he/she has for all practical purpose been given a life contract. Approximately .5 million dollars of the community's resources are in that person's career (with the average salary at 12,500 dollars, times 40 years). That amount should be the best investment the community ever made if the person is a good teacher or money wasted if the person is a poor teacher.

On the whole, school systems have been doing a much better job than they have in the past in improving their recruitment selection procedures.



Chapter Eleven

EVALUATING NEED FOR SPECIAL EDUCATION SERVICES  
IN SPARSELY POPULATED AREAS

*Robert H. Bruininks*  
*Virginia L. Bruininks*

There is generally widespread recognition among educators and social planners that needs assessment is an important part of program planning, although the concept and methodologies of needs assessment may not be well understood. Needs assessment is an activity planned to estimate the present and future population in need of service and describe the needs of that target population, determine present services and the nature of services required to meet identified needs, locate available and potential resources, and suggest a realistic and effective way to organize resources to deliver appropriate services. A common misconception is that needs assessment is a "one-shot" effort used only at the initial stage of program planning. On the contrary, an effective needs assessment program is a continuous process, yielding objective information for planning, evaluating, and revising programs.

The purpose of this chapter is to apply principles and examples of needs assessment activities to developing

special education services in sparsely populated areas, where factors of distance, population concentrations and mobility, and availability of economic and personnel resources complicate the task of providing appropriate services. Special emphasis is placed on methodology of needs assessment with stress given to two of the more common problems in sparsely populated areas: case finding and personnel training.

#### PLANNING THE NEEDS ASSESSMENT

An essential step in designing effective needs assessment is to constitute a Planning Committee of consumers and decision-makers who might have reason to relate to the issue of special education services in the broad geographical region under consideration. Gaining active participation of such persons at the planning stage maximizes the potential of translating information obtained into innovative, effective, and appropriate services.

The Planning Committee should address itself to questions such as the following suggested by Warheit, Bell, and Schwab (1974):

- What do we need to know?
- Why do we need to know it?
- How will the information be used?
- How can information be obtained to answer our questions?
- How can we most effectively compile, analyze, and present the information?
- What other agencies should be included in the effort?
- What will the effort cost?
- What schedule will be followed for the project?
- What approach(es) will be used to gather and present the information?
- How can we insure that the effort will be taken seriously?

The Planning Committee, after considering these questions, should agree on the following:



- a statement of philosophy and beliefs about good special education services;
- objectives for the needs assessment activity;
- methods to be used in collecting information; and
- strategies for organizing data and presenting findings to have maximum impact on the scope and quality of services available for handicapped persons.

It should be noted that arriving at consensus on beliefs about special education services and objectives of the needs assessment are two issues resolved by the local Planning Committee. The resolution of these issues by this group at the outset of the needs assessment effort increases the probability that the study will result in changes in the scope and organization of services. As Lewin (1953) and others have demonstrated, more dramatic and permanent changes occur when people participate actively in the solution of problems than when solutions are presented to them by individuals as a *fiat accompli*. Needs assessment is not simply an investment in data gathering. Instead, effective needs assessment is part of an overall strategy to improve the access, scope, and effectiveness of services, and it is important to secure involvement of those people who would likely be affected by the changes in services suggested by the needs assessment.

The needs assessment effort, therefore, should not be viewed as existing in a vacuum. It takes place within a sociopolitical context in which decision-makers consider the implications of results from the vantage of personal roles and responsibilities. To maximize the impact of needs assessment efforts, it is also important that recognition be given to creating within the Planning Committee the proper environment for constructive problem-solving. Appropriate change is most likely to occur when the Planning Committee is sensitive to the following principles of collaborative relationships described by Bennis, Benne, and Chin (1969):

- a joint effort that involves mutual determination of goals;
- a spirit of inquiry--a reliance of determinations based on data, publicly shared;
- a relationship growing out of a concrete, here-and-now encounter;
- a voluntary relationship between change agent and client with either party free to terminate the relationship after joint consultation;
- a power distribution in which the client and change agent have equal or almost equal opportunity to influence one another;
- an emphasis on methodological, rather than specific, substantive goals.

(p. 147)

Providing a comprehensive discussion of all the factors that determine the ultimate impact of needs assessment and other evaluation efforts in special education programs is beyond the scope of this chapter. It is important to note, however, the interesting and often overlooked idea from Bennis *et al.* (1969) that "emphasis on methodological, rather than specific, substantive goals" is more likely to create an atmosphere conducive to effective change in organizations and programs. Attention to methodology is also a major task of the Planning Committee, which underscores the importance of the Planning Committee's role in the needs assessment effort.

The following materials discuss several methodologies used in needs assessment. Specific examples of recent applications of these methods to the areas of case finding and personnel training are included.

#### APPROACHES TO NEEDS ASSESSMENT

Approaches to conducting needs assessment vary greatly in terms of the questions to be answered, precision, information produced, and costs. Warheit, Bell, and Schwab (1974) have described five commonly used approaches to needs assessment in the field of

mental health which are applicable to planning special education services. They are the key informant approach, the community forum approach, the rates-under-treatment approach, the social indicators approach, and the field survey approach. Each of these approaches presents advantages and disadvantages, and this information is summarized in Table 1.

All of the approaches summarized in Table 1 represent viable methods of conducting needs assessment. Each approach presents advantages and disadvantages, especially in sparsely populated areas. The direct survey method is generally the preferred approach to follow, but the costs involved make it impractical in many community studies. Such surveys are best conducted on a larger geographic scale.

In sparsely populated areas it may be necessary, therefore, to rely upon statewide and national surveys to predict needs for service. Extrapolation of findings from such surveys in different geographic areas should be done with caution, preferably in combination with locally generated data. For reasons of costs and resources, the *key informant*, *community forum*, and *rates-under-treatment* methods of needs assessment are most applicable to surveys in sparsely populated areas.

Two of the most vexing problems in planning special education services in sparsely populated areas are finding persons in need of service and recruitment of personnel. The next sections provide discussion of practical methods of conducting needs assessment in these two important areas.

*Case Finding in Sparsely Populated Areas.* The application of national prevalence estimates to school populations is a commonly used technique to predict the number of handicapped children in need of special education services. Typically, under this procedure service needs are assessed through multiplying the United States Office of Education prevalence estimates for various handicapping conditions

Table 1  
Needs Assessment Approaches

APPROACH	SOURCE OF INFORMATION	SELECTED ADVANTAGES	SELECTED DISADVANTAGES
1. Key Informant	1. Secured from persons with knowledge of community's needs and prevailing patterns of service.	1. a) Low cost b) Broad participation c) Improvement of communication	1. d) Potential bias: personal and agency b) May inaccurately estimate needs.
2. Community Forum	2. Secured from individuals in a public meeting	2. a) Easy to arrange b) low costs c) May increase community support and participation	2. Logistics
3. Rates-under-treatment	3. Description of persons using services in a community--location, SES characteristics, age, etc.	3. a) Low cost b) Increases awareness of service impact.	3. Assuring confidentiality
4. Social Indicators	4. Analysis of factors found to be associated with persons in need through statistics in public records and reports. <u>Example:</u> Indices of poverty related to proportion of children in special classes by social status levels.	4. a) Useful predictors of need b) Useful in combination with other approaches. c) Identify factors associated with service need and utilization.	4. a) Provide an incomplete picture of needs. b) Lead to incorrect and premature conclusions regarding causes of need. c) Incomplete assessment of need.
5. Direct Survey	5. Persons in need of service are assessed directly, using standardized methods.	5. a) Most accurate - possible to assess extent of error in survey. b) Assessment is direct, not indirect. c) Likely to produce more reliable and valid information than other methods.	5. a) Costs can be very high. b) Requires more sophisticated approaches than other methods. c) Logistics.

by the number of school children residing in a specified geographic area. (For example, if the prevalence of severely retarded children is approximately 0.3 percent, the number of school-age children in an area is 10,000, the expected number of severely retarded children in need of service would be 30.) While this technique is widely used by special educators, it also possesses a number of built-in deficiencies, including:

1. The U.S. Office of Educational Estimates in many cases are not based upon empirically derived findings. For example, the prevalence estimates of mental retardation are based upon projections from the normal, theoretical distribution of intelligence test scores (Mackie, 1965).
2. These estimates are derived and reported at a single point in time and thereby ignore cyclical trends in the incidence of exceptionality resulting from major changes in medical practice and social philosophy (e.g., epidemics such as rubella).
3. Application of reported nationwide estimates to particular geographic areas is frequently inappropriate, since the importance of local characteristics which could influence the prevalence of handicapping conditions are ignored (e.g., per capita wealth, adequacy of health care, etc.).

Surveys of community agencies are another popular means of assessing demands for special education services. As with the previously discussed method, this voluntary reporting or key informant procedure also contains a number of limitations. Projections of service need based on this method are limited by the

peculiarities of agency intake policies, difficulties in developing consensus on definitions of handicaps and the extent to which they present educational problems, the problem of achieving comprehensive survey coverage among agencies with conflicting and overlapping jurisdictions in large geographical areas, and questions related to the confidentiality of agency records. Even with these limitations, Wishik (1956) reported a 63.4 percent agreement between case findings obtained through voluntary reports from agencies and a diagnostic sampling study in two different communities in Georgia. On the basis of these results, he concluded "that voluntary reporting, even lay reporting, is an important case finding device that should be given serious consideration..." (p. 199). The reports of Wishik and others (Lemkau and Imre, 1969) indicate, however, that a major shortcoming of this approach is that it tends to yield conservative estimates of the actual number of handicapped persons represented in the population.

Another common approach to determining prevalence is the diagnostic survey method. This procedure entails the construction of random samples of school children and comprehensive diagnostic workups on each child by an interdisciplinary team of specialists. It is the most rigorous and reliable case finding approach of the various survey methods, but also the most expensive. Few school districts and public agencies can financially afford the luxury of conducting comprehensive diagnostic surveys of school populations.

What, then, represents an acceptable method of establishing the need for special education services in sparsely populated areas? Perhaps the most feasible and reliable approach is a combined method using nationwide prevalence estimates and voluntary reporting procedures. By combining the two methods, both nationwide and regional factors may be entered into the determination of student program needs.

This combined needs assessment has been used in a survey of handicapped pupils in Northeast Minnesota



(Weatherman and Bruininks, 1970). That is, both nationwide statistics and a community survey were used in predicting the proportion of the school population in need of special education assistance. Northeastern Minnesota for the most part is a sparsely populated area with many of the general characteristics of other rural areas.

In designing the community survey study, attempts were made to control some of the problems of using voluntary reporting procedures. To avoid some of the methodological pitfalls of the agency survey method, the investigators developed a Special Education Survey Form and employed two trained field workers to canvass the northeast section of the state.

The survey form was developed by identifying readily observable attributes of handicapped children as described in various professional publications in special education. Several introductory texts on exceptional children, standard behavior checklists, as well as other pertinent professional literature were consulted in formulating the initial list of descriptors (Balow, 1968; Cruikshank and Johnson, 1967; Darling, 1966; Dunn, 1963; Garrison and Force, 1965; Kirk, 1962; Peterson and Quay, 1967; Telford and Sawrey, 1967). Moreover, every attempt was made to describe the selected characteristics in educational rather than medical or psychiatric language. Following the development of the initial list, several persons with professional competence in various handicapping areas were requested to rate the importance of the characteristics as descriptors of each type of handicap, suggest any other characteristics which would improve the definition of handicap(s), and critique the general instructions of the form.

An additional feature of the form was that it asked respondents to estimate the extent of service the student required along a four-point scale (complete, extensive, supplementary, and none). This question was prompted by a suspicion that



previously reported prevalence figures were inflated for some handicaps because investigators had failed to determine whether the child's handicap was sufficient to warrant the intervention of special education services. Perhaps the best illustration of this problem is in the reporting of prevalence estimates for physically handicapped children, wherein children with mild orthopedic impairments may be reported as handicapped even though their limitations present no special educational problems.

The final version of the form was subdivided into two sections. One section, entitled "Descriptions of Handicapped Children," contained an extensive listing of characteristics to define each major handicap. A second form, entitled the "Special Education Survey Form," was used to elicit from various agencies as well as professional and lay persons the names of handicapped children with intellectual, physical, emotional and social handicaps of educational significance.

The Special Education Survey Form was administered to key informants in public and private agencies by two specially trained field representatives who were employed for approximately two months to canvass the communities included in the northeast region of the state. This survey also included a special sampling study to derive prevalence estimates of students with special learning difficulties, using standardized intelligence and achievement test scores.

The information in Table 2 summarizes the prevalence of handicapped children in this area using the two estimation techniques. The data from this survey suggest that estimates agree reasonably well in the case of severe impairments, but differ markedly in the case of milder handicaps. Several reasons can be posited as explanations for these differences. Regional and cultural variations in such areas as values, varying sensitivity of schools and other agencies to handicapping conditions, lack of services in some areas, per capita wealth, and quality of

TABLE 2  
 Estimated Prevalence of Handicapped Children  
 Using  
 USOE Projections and the Voluntary Reporting Method

Handicap	Total School Population <sup>a</sup>	Number Identified	USOE Estimated Prevalence <sup>b</sup>	Voluntary Reporting Method <sup>c</sup>
Mentally Retarded - Total	87,483	1117	2.3 X	1.27%
Trainable Mentally Retarded <sup>d</sup>	87,483	249	.3	.28
Educable Mentally Retarded	87,483	868	2.0	.99
Physically Handicapped - Total <sup>d</sup>	87,483	322	2.0	.37
Orthopedically Handicapped	87,483	245	1.0	.28
Health Impaired	87,483	77	1.0	.09
Speech Handicapped <sup>e</sup>	87,483	3061	3.5	3.5
Hearing Impaired - Total	87,483	115	.6	.13
Deaf	87,483	41	.1	.05
Hard of Hearing	87,483	74	.5	.08
Visually Impaired - Total	87,483	290	.09	.33
Blind	87,483	63	.03	.07
Partially Sighted	87,483	227	.06	.26
Emotionally Disturbed/ Socially Maladjusted	87,483	153	2.0	.17
Total Handicapped	87,483	5054	10.49%	5.77%

<sup>a</sup>Based on K through 12 enrollment figures.

<sup>b</sup>U.S. Office of Education projections, reported in L.M. Dunn, *Exceptional Children in the Schools* (New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston, 1963).

<sup>c</sup>Voluntary reporting estimates are lower in some areas due to inaccurate estimates of persons residing in statewide institutional programs.

<sup>d</sup>Includes some multiply handicapped children.

<sup>e</sup>Data not available. The U.S. Office of Education figure was used in making projections.

educational programming are likely to have a marked impact on estimates of the numbers of mildly retarded and emotionally handicapped pupils. Ambiguities involved in certifying the special educational needs of many physically handicapped pupils doubtless account for the wide differences reported for this handicap by the two methods. For whatever reason, it is clear that the two approaches *do not* yield the same estimates of service need. It seems reasonable to conclude from these findings that regional factors do influence both the *ascertained* and *true* prevalence rates of handicapping conditions.

An added aspect of this study was the use of a standard method for projecting school enrollments to predict future needs for special education services. The projections of handicapped children in this study for the period of 1970 to 1980 were derived by a technique which uses survival ratios of enrollment data as well as growth ratios of census data (cf. Leu, 1965; Chapter II). A survival ratio is determined by dividing the enrollment of children in a particular grade or age group during a given year by the enrollment of children and preceding year in one lower grade or age group. For example, to establish a survival ratio for the year 1971 for sixth graders, one would divide the number of sixth graders in 1971 by the number of fifth graders in 1970.

A weighting system was devised that gave the most recent survival ratios a heavier weight. This practice rests on the belief that the most recent data are probably better predictors of the future. Assuming a 10-year history which was used in these calculations, the most recent ratio, 1969-1970, was assigned a weight of 9.0 and the least recent, 1960-1961, a weight of 1.0.

Inspection of Table 3 reveals the effect of a declining school population on the expected number of handicapped children. Assuming the incidence of handicapping conditions remains stable during the next 10 years, school personnel could expect a

TABLE 3  
 Future Estimated Numbers of Handicapped Pupils  
 in Northeast Minnesota  
 1974-75 and 1979-80 School Years

	<u>USOE Prevalence</u> <u>Estimates</u>		<u>Voluntary Reporting</u> <u>Method</u>	
	1974-75	1979-80	1974-75	1979-80
Mentally Retarded - Total	1,735	1,543	958	852
Trainable Mentally Retarded	226	201	211	188
Educable Mentally Retarded	1,509	1,342	747	664
Physically Handicapped - Total	1,509	1,342	279	248
Orthopedically Handicapped	755	671	211	188
Health Impaired	754	671	68	60
Speech Handicapped	2,641	2,349	2,641	2,349
Hearing Handicapped - Total	452	403	98	87
Deaf	75	67	38	33
Hard of Hearing	377	336	60	54
Visually Impaired - Total	68	60	249	221
Blind	23	20	53	47
Partially Sighted	45	40	196	174
Emotionally Disturbed/ Socially Maladjusted	1,509	1,342	189	168
Special Learning Disabilities	2,264	2,013	4,528	4,026
Total Handicapped	10,178	9,052	8,942	7,951

proportionate reduction in the numbers of handicapped children in this area. It is obvious that few independent school districts in this region could afford to provide an adequate continuum of services for all types of handicapped children, particularly for those conditions of low frequency. The report concluded that the "factors of declining enrollment and reduced numbers of handicapped children make consideration of a regional approach to planning special education services...imperative" (Weatherman and Bruininks, 1970, p. 85).

There are a number of potential problems in the use of any population projection technique. It is important to consider that projections of pupil populations may be affected by atypical (past) historical trends and often fail to take into account certain economic and social factors which exert influence on the rates of population growth and decline. Moreover, employing current prevalence figures to predict the future incidence of handicapped children may involve considerable risk of error. Situation factors such as disease conditions, medical advances, changing trends in populations, changes in the philosophy and structure of regular education, and numerous other considerations can all affect the incidence rates of handicapped children. However, the essential value of making population projections in special education is to facilitate the planning and organization of future patterns of service. If incidence rates of handicapped children remain reasonably constant over the next decade, such estimates are of value in projecting minimal special education service needs.

*Personnel Training in Sparsely Populated Areas.* People who live in a sparsely populated area have chosen that locale for economic, social, or personal reasons and are likely to remain there. Effective utilization of these people in planning and in providing service programs leads to continuity and permanence in services for handicapped persons in sparsely populated areas.

A survey by special education programs at the University of Minnesota exemplifies a systematic approach to evaluating the training needs of practicing teachers (Bruininks, Rynders and Gordon, 1973). The approach followed in this survey is based ostensibly on a model developed by the UCLA Center for the Study of Evaluation (Klein, 1971). It is designed to yield data to assist in the selection of content in training activities, and possible approaches which might be used to develop skills among persons engaged in the education and training of severely retarded persons. The procedures, however, could be adapted to fit any personnel training problem.

A four part strategy was employed, including:

- listing of possible training goals or objectives (competencies) to prepare teachers for work with severely retarded persons;
- determining the importance of the objectives;
- assessing the degree to which competencies are present in the repertoires of teachers--i.e., to identify discrepancies between idealized and actual competency levels; and
- using evaluations of goals and data on discrepancies to select training program *content* and *strategies* for preparing teachers to effectively serve severely retarded persons.

This approach to needs assessment uses the *key informant* or *self report* method. Following the development of a comprehensive list of possible goals, faculty and a sample of teachers and program directors rate the relative importance of each goal (skill) and the extent to which they believe teachers generally possess the skill through a systematic procedure. An example objective appears below:

Demonstrate skill in administering both formal and informal diagnostic and assessment instruments (e.g., perceptual motor).

All persons rating the goals use the same five point scale of importance: 5 = very important, 4 = above average, 3 = average, 2 = below average, and 1 = unimportant. After the ratings are completed, the rankings are averaged for each goal and type of rater (cf. Klein, 1971). Thus, raters rank program objectives according to their perceived importance and the extent to which they feel such skills (goals) are present in the repertoires of teachers working with severely retarded persons.

The procedures followed in the survey require that each rater first rank program objectives for importance, ranging along a scale of very important to unimportant. Raters are next asked to rate the extent to which they feel practitioners in programs for severely retarded persons possess such skills. Both sets of rankings yield valuable information to develop the content and the strategies for a training program.

This approach can be combined with forecasting techniques to predict future personnel training needs. A systematic approach for predicting future educational trends is available in the Delphi Forecasting Technique. The procedure is described by Weaver (1971) as follows:

Typically, the procedure includes a questionnaire, mailed to respondents who remain anonymous to one another. Respondents first generate several rather concise statements of events, and in the second round give estimates as to the probability of each even occurring at a given date in the future. Once the respondents have given their answers, the responses are collated and returned to each respondent who then is invited to revise his estimates. The third round responses are made with the knowledge of how others felt regarding the occurrence of each event. Again, the responses are assembled and reported back



to the participants. If a respondent's estimate does not fall within the interquartile range of all conjectures, he is asked to justify his position, whether or not he wishes to change his position.

(p. 267)

The Delphi forecasting method is designed to achieve consensus in predictions by maximizing the participation of all respondents in a survey, while minimizing the undue influence typically exerted by persuasive panel members. Weaver presents an excellent discussion of the strengths and limitations of this approach to forecasting educational trends and events.

#### SUMMARY

This chapter has emphasized the importance of needs assessment in planning special education services in sparsely populated areas. Selected methods for conducting such surveys were developed for two programmatic areas: in determining the numbers, proportions, and types of children in need of specialized educational assistance; and in assessing the in-service training needs of special and regular education teachers.

Recommended was that school systems and agencies employ two methods for ascertaining the need for special education services in a community: the application of nationwide projections to school enrollment figures, and the use of key informants through surveys of agencies, community organizations, professionals, lay persons, and community leaders. When sufficient financial resources are available, diagnostic sampling studies should be conducted. The value of data from such surveys can be enhanced by pupil projection figures obtained through one of the standard enrollment estimation methods (cf. Leu, 1965; Chapter II).

The purpose of a prevalence study is to identify the number of pupils in need of special

education assistance. Unfortunately, it is not possible in this type of study to determine precisely the type and pattern of special education services required. In other words, a prevalence survey is not a diagnostic study--i.e., it is not within its purview to identify the precise nature of service needs for individual pupils or even for pupils who have been identified as exhibiting certain handicaps. It is quite conceivable, for example, that a child with a particular handicap (e.g., an orthopedic impairment) might need a pattern of services quite different from that indicated for other children with a similar categorical designation. Thus, it is necessary in survey studies of this kind to classify children into gross categories which may represent at best only crude approximations of their actual educational and/or training needs.

A formal survey method was also discussed for identifying in-service training needs of special education teachers. Important to note is that this technique and others can be adapted to surveying needs in a variety of areas, including the need for selected services and organizational models, management functions, definition of staffing functions and relationships, and as a general approach for assessing the performance skills of personnel. The technique only requires that a careful specification of goals (or skills) be made, and that a group of raters assess the importance of these goals and the degree to which they are being successfully achieved (Klein, 1971).

While a variety of needs assessment survey methods exist, it is important to stress again that the successful development of special education programs in sparsely populated areas rests largely upon meticulous and informed planning. It makes little sense to begin establishing services until a community clearly specifies the nature and extent of handicapping conditions among its school-age population and the extent of its available resources.

If service needs are carefully evaluated, subsequent stages of program development should proceed planfully, rather than in a haphazard manner.

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