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# TOWARD BETTER SCHOOLS IN NEW JERSEY

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## A Need for Change

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**It** has been apparent for many years that striking inequalities exist among the various school districts of New Jersey. Some of the state's schools have done, and continue to do, a commendable job of meeting the educational needs of today's youth. Many do not.

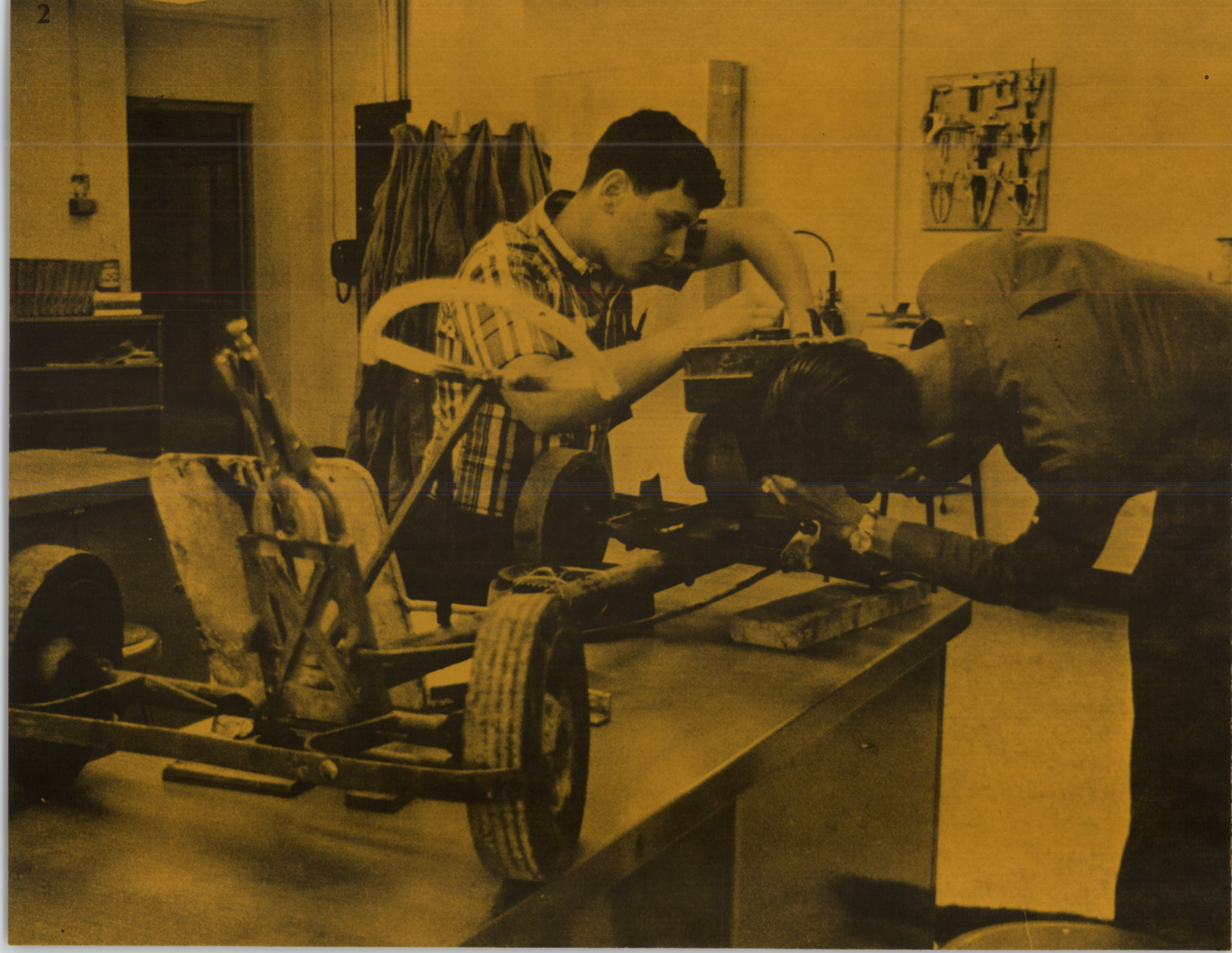
**Because** of these apparent inequities, the State Board of Education in 1967 charged a select committee of New Jersey educators to study the problem and recommend steps that could be taken to strengthen the state's weaker school systems and to guarantee equal educational opportunity for all children.

**That** study, known as the Report of the State Committee to Study the Next Steps of Regionalization and Consolidation in the School Districts of New Jersey, was completed on April 2, 1969, and submitted to the State Board. It recommends dramatic changes in the organizational structure of the state's school districts — changes that are of vital concern to all of the citizens of New Jersey.

**This** booklet has been designed to provide the public with answers to some basic questions concerning those proposed changes. The State Board of Education and the Department of Education earnestly invite the fullest possible participation of the public in deciding the extent to which such changes should be implemented.

Carl L. Marburger  
Commissioner of Education







# Why Regionalization?

**One** of New Jersey's greatest wastes occurs because many of the products of its public schools do not achieve a continuing, comprehensive education. Many of our high school graduates are handicapped upon entry into college or the job market because they have been denied such school services as adequate libraries, a broad and diversified curriculum including vocational education opportunities, proper guidance counseling and even adequate school health services.

**The** Regionalization Study Committee has found that many of New Jersey's school districts are too small to offer such broad educational services. The State now has 593 school districts, but only 198 of these offer complete kindergarten to 12th grade opportunities for their children. The remainder must send their children outside of established district boundaries to complete their education.

**This** system is generally wasteful. It results, in many cases, in duplication of services between the sending and receiving districts, and it tends to deny continuity of education to the children of the smaller districts. For instance, a child who receives his elementary education in one district and his secondary studies in another frequently has to cope with two different kinds of curricula and faculty and differing levels of school services.

**One** of the greatest disadvantages of small, non-comprehensive school systems is that they cannot afford many of the services considered essential to modern education. As an example, there are nearly 1,000 elementary schools in New Jersey which do not contain adequate libraries. There are also many schools without specialized guidance personnel, psychologists, provisions for feeding students, education programs for the handicapped, vocational training, art and music.

**Adequacy** of such services is directly related to the size of the school district. Numerous studies of the subject have shown that the larger the school district, the more readily available such services become. This is true even in those districts that maintain high school programs. In New Jersey, there are high schools which offer fewer than 50 courses, while others offer as many as 120 — and the lower numbers of course offerings are in the smaller districts. Reliable research has shown that larger school districts generally have a higher number of better prepared teachers. It has also been demonstrated that student performance is usually higher in the larger schools.

**Why** such disparity of educational opportunity in New Jersey schools?

**The** answer lies in the fact that, on the average,

our smaller school districts are less able to afford the kinds of educational services so necessary in mid-20th Century America. But most of the larger districts, because they can spread costs over a larger tax base and because unit costs decrease as the number of units increases, can readily pay the price of quality education.

**The** inequalities in education and the means to eradicate them have been clearly and forcefully stated by the Regionalization Study Committee: "... It is obvious that many communities are unable to adequately educate their youngsters ... Investigation into the experiences in certain school districts in New Jersey and other states produced clear evidence that reorganization has led to more equalized, up-graded education and more efficient use of funds: Although there are some excellent small districts in the state, almost all evidence points to a correlation between enrollment, wealth, quality education and efficiency."

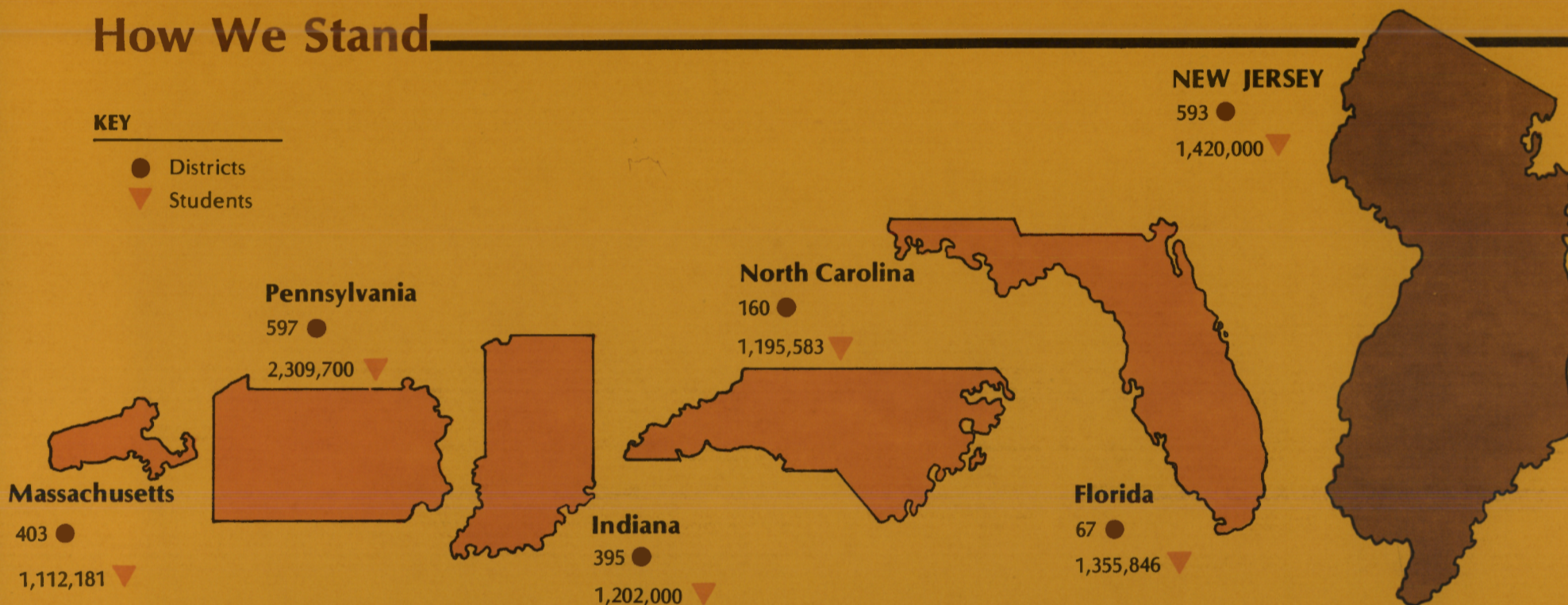




## How We Stand

### KEY

- Districts
- ▼ Students



**New Jersey** is not alone in recognizing that quality education is directly related to school district size and organization. Many of the state's school districts have already established voluntary regional systems to better serve the needs of their children. However, the State has not been keeping pace with the rest of the nation in developing new organizational patterns that are more in tune with the times.

As the maps above indicate, New Jersey has more school districts per capita than many other large states.

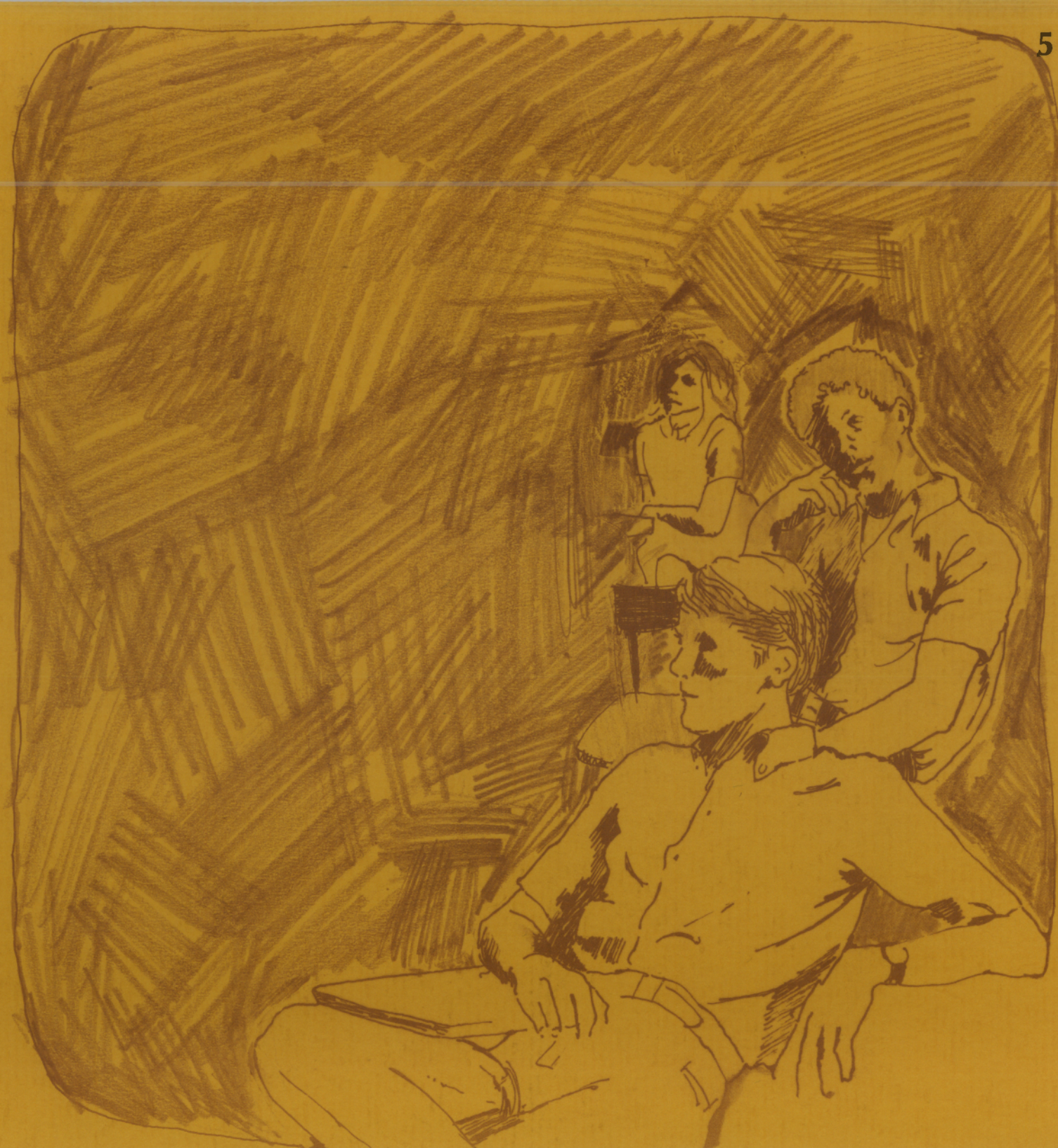
**While** the national trend has been toward fewer school districts, New Jersey has actually

been increasing the number of its districts in recent years. Since 1945, more than 25 states have reduced the numbers of their school districts by more than one half. Another strong indication of this pattern is the fact that in 1932 there were 127,649 school districts in the United States, but by 1966 there were only 23,390.

**The** national trend is clearly in the direction of larger, more efficient school districts that offer more complete programs of elementary and secondary schooling, coupled with comprehensive programs of special education, adult education, vocational education and summer school opportunities.

**Most** states have recognized that the frequently haphazard pattern of growth and organization that has been characteristic of New Jersey is unsound financially and educationally. They have also recognized that school district reorganization must be initiated at the state level, because most local districts do not have the resources necessary to undertake planned consolidation or regionalization.











## A Plan for Better Schools

**Basically**, the Regionalization Study Committee has recognized two key factors in its recommendations for change in the organizational structure of New Jersey school districts:

1. Many school districts are too small to operate either efficiently or as complete educational units.
2. Many local districts are unable, because of inadequate financial resources, to offer comprehensive services.

**The** study concludes that both of these deficiencies could be alleviated to a great extent if the state's small, incomplete districts would combine their resources.

**Consequently**, the committee has recommended that the New Jersey Legislature enact laws which would require all school districts to be organized on a K-12 (kindergarten to 12th grade) basis and that no such reorganized district have fewer than 3,500 pupils. The recommendations also urge that "the state share in educational costs be increased to provide incentive and equalization among districts."

**What** this means, in effect, is that each district in the state which does not now have a complete K-12 program (roughly two thirds of

New Jersey's 593 school districts) would be required to become part of a regional system in partnership with other adjacent districts.

**The** plan, however, provides certain exceptions: For instance, if the newly created district were so large as to require transportation greater than 45 minutes one way, or if the growth of the proposed district is projected to meet the minimum enrollment of 3,500 by 1973.

**The** plan also provides that each county should be the basic unit for planning school district reorganization. Each county would convene a convention of presidents of boards of education which would select a reorganization committee for the purpose of drafting a comprehensive plan for regionalization of existing school districts. The reorganization committee would also be empowered to arrange regional patterns across county lines, where such combinations were considered necessary.

**Membership** on the reorganization committee would be as broadly representative of the school districts within the county as possible. It would consist of members of existing boards of education, school administrators, and county and state legislators.

**When** the county reorganization committee has completed its plan, it would be forwarded to the Commissioner of Education for review and approval, after which it would be subject to public hearings within the county. Then it would be submitted to the voters for approval. If defeated in a referendum, the plan would be redrawn by the reorganization committee and again submitted to the Commissioner and voters. Should it be rejected a second time, the Department of Education would be charged with drafting an acceptable plan.

**Once** a final plan has been approved, a new board of education would be elected at-large from all sections of each new regional district.

**In** order to provide a stronger financial base for such newly regionalized school districts, the Regionalization Study Committee has recommended that a system of incentive state aid be established. Such a system would assure that no reorganized district would be penalized financially for joining with other school districts in a regional system.

*(As a guide to further study, the full recommendations of the Regionalization Study Committee have been included in the back cover flap of this booklet.)*



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## A Question of





# SIZE

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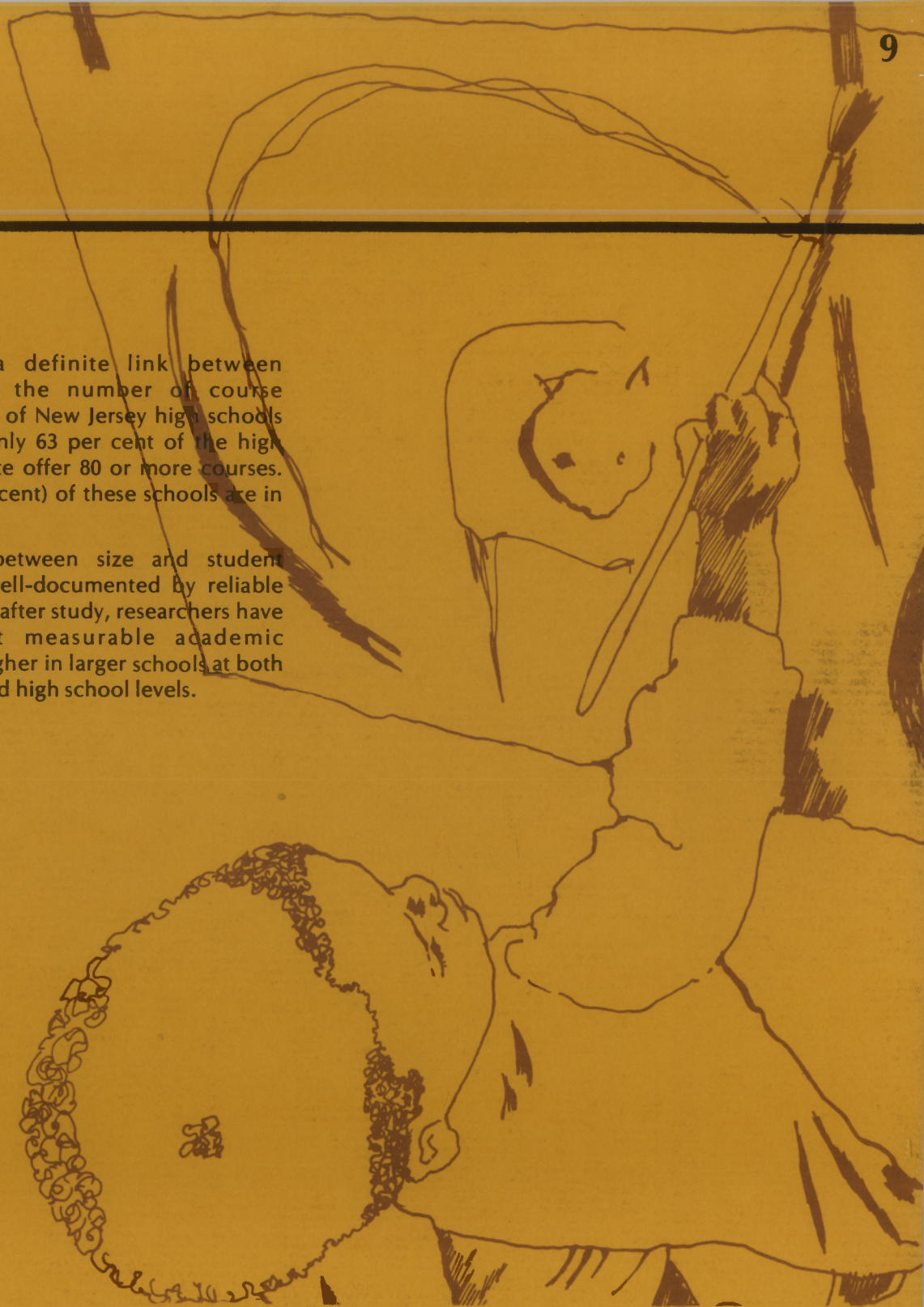
**Size** in itself does not guarantee quality education. But it does provide a broader financial and professional foundation upon which schools can build improved programs.

**Research** has shown that, generally, the larger the school the better prepared the teachers, the more extensive are school services (such as course offerings) and the greater the achievement of the students.

It is generally acknowledged that the quality of education is determined largely by the competence of the staff, and numerous studies have demonstrated that teaching experience and the amount of professional training both increase with the size of enrollment — especially at the high school level. New Jersey's own study reports that school districts with fewer than 1,500 students tend to have the smallest percentage of teachers with master's degrees. It has been found that the larger districts attract better prepared teachers largely because they offer a wider range of teaching experiences and better incentives in the form of modern facilities, opportunities for in-service training and greater educational resources.

**There** is also a definite link between enrollment and the number of course offerings. A study of New Jersey high schools has shown that only 63 per cent of the high schools in the state offer 80 or more courses. Nearly all (87 per cent) of these schools are in larger districts.

**An** association between size and student achievement is well-documented by reliable research. In study after study, researchers have concluded that measurable academic achievement is higher in larger schools at both the elementary and high school levels.





## More School for the School Dollar

- A single, unified school administration.
- More efficient use of public funds.
- Greater flexibility in grade organization and personnel policies.
- More School services.
- A logical sequence of learning experiences.

**These** are benefits that most educators attribute to school regionalization. But they don't tell the whole story.

**There** are other tangible benefits that you, as a parent, a student or a concerned citizen, can extract from a unified, state-supported system of school regionalization.

**To** the student, attendance in a K-12 regional system can mean better prepared teachers, greater course offerings, and more auxiliary services such as vocational training, complete libraries, and improved guidance. It can mean a better preparation for the future of the student. Under present conditions, many New Jersey youngsters are required, at the end of six or eight grades, to transfer out of their home system, resulting in abrupt changes in the learning process.

**To** the community at large, regionalization can spell a better coordinated educational effort that should result in greater efficiency in the use of public funds. By pooling their resources, regional systems are better able to widen school services without entailing great additional expense.

**To** the parent, broader, more efficient school services will be the happiest result. Parents will be assured that their children will receive a complete education in a system that is large enough to provide all of the special school requirements demanded of modern schools. Such essential services as special education for the mentally and physically handicapped, remedial reading, laboratory experiences, health services and specialists in various academic disciplines can be provided where they would not be possible in smaller, less comprehensive districts.

**The** community also will benefit through greater participation in total school affairs. Communities that now send children outside of the home district to complete their

education have little, if any, say in how the receiving district operates. In a regional system, however, *all* citizens would have an equal voice.

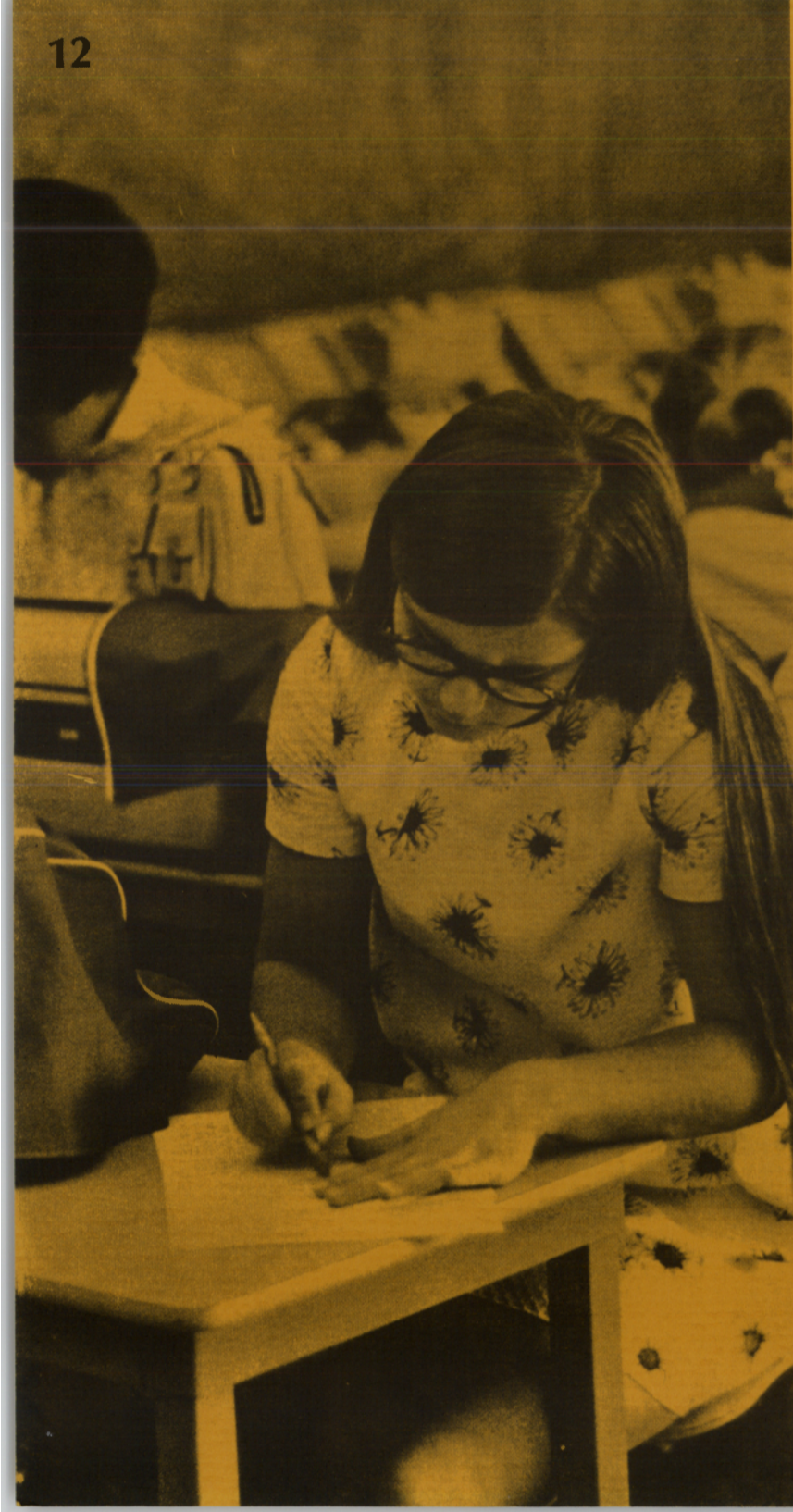
**This** is what a regional plan really means to you: Better equipped, better administered schools, better educated children and a greater voice in the future of your children.











## Quality, YES

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### Some Questions and Answers About Regionalization

**Q. Does regionalization mean that children will be bused long distances to school?**

**A.** *No. In all probability children will continue to attend their same neighborhood schools.*

**Q. Will regionalization increase the cost of education?**

**A.** *Diversification of education is a matter of size, not cost. Per-pupil costs are generally no higher in the large school districts than in the small ones.*

**Q. Will the rich districts have to shoulder a larger financial burden to support the poor ones?**

**A.** *Not necessarily. The proposed changes in state school aid provide for equalized aid for those districts with low assessed valuations.*

**Q. Does regionalization mean the end of local control of schools?**

**A.** *No. A reorganized school board would be elected by all voters of the district. This would actually give some citizens a greater voice in the operation of the schools because it would give them voting control over the secondary schools which they do not now have.*



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**K-12**



## SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The New Jersey State Committee to Study the Next Steps of Regionalization and Consolidation in the School Districts of New Jersey was appointed on January 20, 1967 by Acting Commissioner of Education Joseph E. Clayton, pursuant to a resolution of the State Board of Education. Its establishment grew out of a commitment to quality education in the State and its relationship to school district organization. Although the national trend is toward consolidation and decreasing the number of school districts, the number of districts in New Jersey is growing. In some areas services are duplicated or overlapping while in others needed services are not offered.

Therefore, the Study Committee was charged with, but not limited to, the following:

1. "The collection of data on school district organization in this State and in the Nation. Emphasis should be given to educational opportunities, services, pupil distribution, and financing, as well as State, County, and Local relationships.
2. "The evaluation of these data in terms of providing the best possible educational opportunities for the people of New Jersey.
3. "The determination of whether or not a reduction in the number of school districts in New Jersey would provide a better educational program for all the young people in the state.
4. "The development, if necessary, of a proposed plan to provide comprehensive, equal educational opportunities to meet the needs of youth and society. The Committee should not be limited by organizational patterns under present statutes but feel free to recommend necessary changes. Legislative changes needed to implement such a plan should be explored."

Under the chairmanship of Mrs. Ruth Mancuso, former president of the National School Boards Asso-

ciation, the committee was divided into three subcommittees:

1. The Qualitative and Quantitative Factors Required to Provide Quality Educational Opportunity
2. Current and Feasible Patterns of School District Organization
3. Legislation and Finance in School District Organization

The Committee is indebted to many who have provided materials and statements helpful in its deliberations. It expresses its appreciation to those who have assisted it directly in its efforts: Mr. Louis Dughi and Mr. William Warner who have served as State Department staff for the committee; Mr. Edward W. Kilpatrick, Assistant Commissioner of Education, who gave of his time and counsel; Educational Consultants Engelhardt, Engelhardt and Leggett for the "Pilot Study of School District Reorganization"; Mrs. Nida Thomas, director of the State Department of Education's Office of Equal Educational Opportunity; Dr. Paul Ylvisaker, Commissioner of Community Affairs; Dr. Ercel Watson, Superintendent of Schools, Trenton; Dr. Alexander Plante, Connecticut State Department of Education, and Mr. Theron Johnson, USOE, for their counsel on urban education; and to Dr. William Bryan, Pennsylvania State Department of Education, for his counsel on reorganization practices and problems.

Dr. Warren Davis, superintendent of Schools, Springfield Regional School District, who prepared the first draft of this study, and Mrs. Gloria Cook, who prepared the final draft, are commended by an appreciative committee.

The Committee is indebted to Mr. Clyde E. Leib, Special Assistant to the Commissioner of Education, for the preparation of the printed report.



## COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP

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Superintendent of Schools  
Morristown

Dr. John Worrall  
Superintendent  
Eastern Camden Regional High School  
Box 38, Gibbsboro



## SUMMARY

State Responsibility for education is a clearly established principle. Although in the United States local school boards have been given authority to operate districts, it is delegated authority. The ultimate responsibility and authority remains with the state.

All states, New Jersey included, have acknowledged this responsibility by generally overseeing the activities of school districts, establishing standards, providing state aid and, in some instances, operating schools to satisfy educational needs which local districts cannot meet.

There is a long history of state initiative in areas affecting education. In New Jersey the Beadleston Act, the Vocational Education Act of 1965, and recent advances in educational aid to local districts, represent examples of enlightened leadership at the state level. None would have been possible without the support of the legislature.

Since 1945, rapid social change has produced change in educational organization. Historically, the unit of operation was the one-teacher rural or village school, administered by a board of directors selected from among the citizens of the community. In some instances, growth from the one-room, one-teacher school to the school of today occurred largely by the process of accretion as communities grew within the boundaries of the existing one-room district.

More frequently, however, school districts have expanded through a process of reorganization or consolidation of pre-existing separate school districts. As early as 1837, Horace Mann was advocating the reorganization of school districts as an important step toward improving education in Massachusetts. In 1839, Missouri enacted a law making the congressional township the school district unit. There has never been any protracted period in our history since these early days when some attempt has not been made legislatively to consolidate school districts for improved educational opportunity.

Even after the wave of consolidation of one-room, one teacher schools which occurred between the 1830's and 1930's, the year 1932 found the United States with some 127,649 school districts. Since that time the number has been reduced to a total of 28,814 in 1965 and to 23,390 in October 1966.

Redistricting has been widespread. Since 1945 only six states (Florida, Hawaii, Louisiana, Maryland, Utah and West Virginia) have not made changes in school district organization. Six others (Alabama, Connecticut, Massachusetts, New Jersey, Rhode Island and Virginia) had more districts in 1966 than they had in 1945. Twenty-eight states had reductions; 26 reduced the numbers of their districts by more than one-

half, 16 by more than three-fourths, and six by more than 90 per cent.

The trend has been toward larger school districts offering a complete program of elementary and secondary schooling, and a fairly comprehensive program of special education, adult education, vocational education and summer school opportunities.

The trend has also been toward the states' assumption of a more active role in educational reorganization than in the past. Historically, especially in New Jersey, school district reorganization typically was a proliferation of districts to meet immediate, pressing needs. Local boards tried as well as they could to cope with social, economic and financial pressures over which they had little control.

Most states have recognized that this pattern of growth and organization is unsound financially and educationally. Many initiated reorganization programs at the state level when it was apparent that comprehensive, planned reorganization to meet all educational needs was not or could not be undertaken by most local districts.

Methods of reorganization vary and are considered in a following chapter. Most of the effective reorganization programs have had one element in common: The state, as the legally responsible agent, initiated the changes and devised the machinery to bring them about.

In many instances this took great courage on the part of educators and legislators alike. Their willingness to act in the interest of the citizenry as a whole as well as in the local interest contributed greatly to the success of reorganization. It is in this spirit that this committee undertook and presents its report.

As this committee studied New Jersey's educational system, it became apparent that disparities, differences and inequalities exist throughout the system and are reflected in unequal educational opportunities.

There are disparities in the ability of school districts to pay for quality education. The equalized valuation behind each pupil is more than ten thousand times as great in New Jersey's *wealthiest* district as it is in the poorest. Teterboro, which operates no school, has a valuation of over \$70,000,000 behind its two pupils while Winfield, operating a K-8 system, has less than \$3,488 behind each pupil.

There are vast differences in enrollment and geographic size. New Jersey has 20 non-operating districts and, at the other extreme, a system as large as Newark's. The Greater Egg Harbor Regional High School district covers 339 square miles, while Victory Gardens in Morris County is 0.13 square miles and operates only a kindergarten.



Organizationally, there is great diversity. Three main types of school districts exist: local, consolidated and regional. There are three types of regional systems and several kinds of sending districts. Finally, the districts are legally classified as Type I or II with different finance and budget procedures. Each has many different sources of local, state and federal funds.

This pattern of increasing fragmentation and complexity results in unequal educational opportunities. There are high schools which offer fewer than fifty courses while others offer 120 or more. Some systems offer early childhood opportunities, while others lack a true kindergarten program.

In elementary schools, there are 432 "centralized library collections" with no librarian and 512 schools with only classroom collections. At the other end of the scale are elementary schools with over ten thousand volumes and a full-time librarian. Of 1,816 elementary schools reporting in 1966-67, only sixty-four met the American Library Association standards of at least 6,000 volumes.

There are abundant examples of other inequities. There are schools without specialized guidance personnel, psychologists, provisions for feeding students, special education, vocational training, art and music. There are sending elementary districts unable to offer their students a coordinated, continuous educational experience.

If the situation is serious, now, in some schools, the situation approaches crisis proportions when the state's future education needs and obligations are contemplated.

Finally, as the committee proceeded, it became apparent that the urgent problems of cities are reflected in the unique problems of their schools. Certain urban areas, unable to satisfy minimal human requirements, are equally unable to offer their young people an education relevant to their needs. The damage done by raising children in a substandard environment that frustrates rather than satisfies their basic needs is compounded by the inability to equip them in their educational environment to improve their situation.

If it is obvious that many communities are unable to adequately educate their youngsters, it is equally clear that many others are eminently successful. Investigation into the experiences in certain school districts in New Jersey and other states produced evidence of school organization which led to more equalized, up-graded education and more efficient use of funds. Although there are some excellent small districts in the state, almost all evidence points to a correlation between enrollment, wealth, quality education and efficiency.

On the basis of these observations and the data presented in the following report, the Committee concludes that:

1. quality educational opportunities to meet their individual needs are not equally available to all young people in New Jersey.
2. although education inequities are due, in large part, to socio-economic factors, particularly in cities, school district organization has a profound effect on the quality of education.
3. New Jersey will more successfully meet its educational obligations if the existing number of school districts is reduced by reorganization based on districts encompassing a total K-12 program, and eventually an N-12 program.
4. the state share in educational costs must be increased to provide incentive and equalization among districts to provide a comprehensive quality educational program.

The committee is convinced that reorganization and increased state sharing of educational costs are necessary for eliminating educational deficiencies in New Jersey. Such steps can provide an organizational framework and financial base flexible and responsive enough to meet future challenges in a coordinated, comprehensive, rational way. It would have the following results:

1. a logical sequential development of learning experiences.
2. more equal educational opportunities.
3. greater ease and economy of operation.
4. more efficient use of public funds.
5. greater flexibility in grade organization, personnel policies and procedures and simplification of fiscal procedures.
6. more auxiliary services.
7. simplified legislation.
8. more logical initiative, responsibility and participation.

New Jersey's progress toward educational quality both at the state and local level is commendable. It is the view of this committee, however, that New Jersey's educational programs would best be served by the recommended reorganization of school districts. It would provide the framework and machinery for most effectively and efficiently implementing the far-seeing programs already enacted.

The committee therefore proposes the following recommendations:



## RECOMMENDATIONS

The committee, after careful study and in fulfilling its basic charge to develop recommendations that will facilitate the responsibility of the State of New Jersey and local school districts for providing quality educational opportunities for the youth and adults of the State, submits the following recommendations:

### I. CRITERIA FOR REORGANIZATION

The committee recommends that:

#### A. School District

1. All school districts be organized on a K-12 (N-12) basis to provide a comprehensive, quality education for all pupils.
2. Constituent districts of regionals or districts with sending-receiving relationships be reorganized in a K-12 district.
  - a. Exception: When such reorganization mitigates against an effective county reorganization plan.
3. Districts which have not maintained nor operated a school for the preceding two years shall become a part of a reorganized district.

#### B. Enrollment

4. The comprehensive K-12 district enroll a minimum of 3,500 pupils.
  - a. Exceptions to the minimum may be allowed when:
    - (1) the proposed district is so extensive as to require transportation greater than 45 minutes one way.
    - (2) the growth of the proposed district is projected to be sufficient to meet the minimum enrollment by 1973.

#### C. Boundaries

5. School district boundaries to be primarily within county lines, but when feasible and contributory to effective reorganization, they shall cross county lines.
6. Each newly created district shall respect, as nearly as practicable, a natural geographic, social and economic community providing equalization of opportunity for all students, to avoid the creation or perpetuation of racial imbalance.

#### D. Master Plan

7. In the development of the county master

plan, all school districts be part of the study and included in the final master plan.

8. The master plan for reorganization contain recommendations for the alleviation of concentrations of pupils with educational and learning problems.

### II. COUNTY REORGANIZATION COMMISSION

The Committee recommends that:

#### A. Commission

1. The county be the basic unit for planning school district reorganization.
2. Legislation be enacted to authorize the establishment of a county convention of Presidents of boards of education within each county or combined counties for the purpose of selecting a Reorganization Commission which shall develop a comprehensive reorganization plan for the county or combined counties.
3. The county superintendent of schools convene the convention of presidents of boards of education within the counties or combined counties who shall select the following members of the Reorganization Commission:

##### a. Membership

- (1) Three board of education members--who shall be broadly representative of the types of organization of school districts within the county.
- (2) Three chief school administrators--who shall be broadly representative of the types of organization of school districts within the county.
- (3) One freeholder
- (4) One state senator
- (5) One state assemblyman
- (6) The county superintendent of schools, who shall act as a non-voting secretary.

##### b. Alternates and Vacancies

The convention select an alternate delegate in the same classification for each Commission member, such alternate to fill vacancies which may occur. Further vacancies beyond the alternates selected shall be filled by a majority vote of the members of the Commission.



c. *Chairman*

- (1) The Reorganization Commission select its chairman from among the members of boards of education.
- (2) The Reorganization Commission select its vice-chairman from among its members.

d. *Meetings*

- (1) The Reorganization Commission meet within one month following its selection and continue to meet at regular intervals until its work is completed.

e. *Expenses*

- (1) The operating expenses of the Commission and the expenses of Commission members incurred while on Commission business shall be funded and reimbursed by the State Department of Education.
4. The Reorganization Commission develop a comprehensive master plan for the reorganization of school districts in the county or combined counties in accordance with the criteria for reorganization. Such plan shall be completed by January 1, 1971.
5. The county comprehensive master plan for reorganization be submitted, upon its completion, to the Commissioner of Education for review and approval. If not approved, the Commissioner's recommendations shall be reviewed and an alternate plan or plans shall be submitted to the Commissioner for approval.
6. Public hearings on the approved master plan for reorganization be held within the proposed reorganized areas of the county or counties.
7. The Reorganization Commission, after consultation with boards of education in the proposed reorganized districts, set the dates for referenda to be held in the districts. A majority vote in the total proposed reorganized district shall determine approval or disapproval.
8. A defeated reorganization proposal be reconsidered by the Commission and the same or an alternate plan which meets the criteria for reorganization and is approved by the Commissioner be submitted to the voters in the same manner as in recommendation 7.

9. The State Commission of School District Reorganization review proposals not approved in the second referendum and recommend a reorganization plan for the affected districts for review and implementation by the Commissioner and the State Board of Education.

10. Reorganization of school districts under the comprehensive county master plan be completed by July 1, 1973. The County Reorganization Commission be dissolved upon such completion.

### III. STATE COMMISSION ON SCHOOL DISTRICT REORGANIZATION

The committee recommends that:

A. *Appointment*

1. The Governor appoint, with the approval of the Senate, seven members broadly representative of the public schools and citizenry to serve for term on the State Commission on School District Reorganization.
2. The State Commission on School District Reorganization serve within the State Department of Education as an initiating, review and recommending body on reorganizations or decentralizations that may be desirable or advisable after the completion of county reorganizations.
3. The State Commission on School District Reorganization serve as recommending body on reorganization proposals not approved in two referenda.
4. The State Commission on School District Reorganization shall make its recommendations to the Commissioner and the State Board of Education. If approved by the Commissioner and in accord with the aforementioned criteria, and after a public hearing, such plan may be implemented by the State Board of Education.

### IV. STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

The committee recommends that:

A. *Bureau of School District Organization*

1. A Bureau of School District Organization be established within the State Department of Education. The responsibilities of the Bureau shall be:
  - a. To provide necessary data, consultants, and specialists to aid County Reorganization Commissions in the development of master plans.



- b. To review and make recommendations on master plans.
- c. To provide a continuing service in advising local school districts on organization of and within school districts.

#### B. State Evaluation Service

1. Procedures and materials be developed for the cooperative self-study of the total school district; and that evaluation and approval of the total school district be undertaken by the State Department of Education.

### V. INTERMEDIATE SERVICE UNITS

The Committee recommends that:

1. Intermediate Service Units be established on a county or multi-county basis (determined by pupil base necessary to provide desired services) to offer such special services as are needed by local districts and are beyond the capability of the local district to provide.
2. The Intermediate Service Unit be operated under a policy board elected by the participating boards of education.
3. The Intermediate Service Unit be financed by the State Department of Education and by contract services with local school districts.

### VI. BOARDS OF EDUCATION – REORGANIZED DISTRICTS

The Committee recommends that:

#### A. Board of Education

1. The board of education of a reorganized district consist of seven members elected for a period of five years. In the original organization, number and terms shall be varied to provide for an annual election. Such reorganized district shall be a Type III district.

#### B. Fiscal Responsibility

1. The Board of Education of the newly created district shall adopt a budget ordinance after (1) approval as to form by the county superintendent of schools, (2) review with the appropriate combined municipal bodies, and (3) public hearing.
2. The Board of Education in a reorganized district adopt a bond ordinance for needed capital construction after (1) approval of the Commissioner of Education, and (2) public hearing. The extension of credit procedures be followed as present requirements under Type II district statutes.

3. Present Type I and Type II districts which are not affected by reorganization shall have the legal right upon petition of the people to become a Type III school district.

### VII. DISSOLUTION OF SCHOOL DISTRICTS

The Committee recommends that:

1. Legislation be enacted to permit the dissolution of existing regional school districts. (County reorganization master plans may necessitate such dissolution and reorganization for an effective county plan.)
2. Legislation be enacted to permit the dissolution of reorganized districts. Such dissolution and reorganization may be advisable because of growth or for a more effective school district.

### VIII. PERSONNEL

The Committee recommends that:

1. The present New Jersey law covering tenure personnel be applicable in reorganized districts.

### IX. STATE AID-CURRENT EXPENSE

The Committee recommends that:

#### A. Equalization Aid

1. State Aid for current expenses be an equalized program incorporating a guaranteed financial base equal to at least the state average equalized property value per pupil.

#### B. Minimum Aid

2. All districts receive increased minimum aid, such aid related to equalized property values and quality of program.

#### C. Weighting of Pupils

3. Pupils be weighted for current expense aid based on grade levels and additional weight assigned for AFDC, public housing, vocational education, and for the educationally disadvantaged. Weighted aid should be provided for approved pre-school and summer school programs.

#### D. Relate to Costs

4. The equalization program automatically adjust to increased costs and state average equalized value per pupil.

#### E. Pupil Count

5. The pupil count for equalization purposes be taken twice a year for current funding.



#### F. *Special Education*

6. Chapter 46 aid for handicapped children be 50 per cent in addition to equalization aid. Further study for full funding should be undertaken.

#### G. *Vocational Education*

7. Additional state support for vocational education in county or comprehensive high schools be provided on a weighted pupil basis.

#### H. *Transportation*

8. Transportation aid be retained at 75 per cent of approved costs. A comprehensive study of pupil transportation regulations be undertaken.

### X. BUILDING AID

The Committee recommends that:

#### A. *Minimum Level*

1. School building aid be increased to a minimum level of 40 per cent of the school debt service appropriation.

#### B. *Pupil Count*

2. The pupil count for building aid be taken twice a year for current funding.

#### C. *Special Education*

3. Full funding by the state of construction for special education programs.

#### D. *Equalization*

4. Building aid provide for the weighting of pupils on the same basis as current expense aid provisions.

#### E. *Urban-Suburban Cooperation*

5. The state fully support locally developed and state approved construction plans which will assist in urban-suburban cooperation in satisfying educational needs.

### XI. INCENTIVE AID

The Committee recommends that:

1. The current expense aid program include a state guaranteed financial base related to

educational criteria to support a quality level educational program.

2. A reorganized district qualify for placement at the highest guaranteed financial base for a period of three years and then be evaluated for placement at the appropriate level for state aid for current expense.

3. A special fund be available to the Commissioner to fully fund innovative and promising programs in urban-suburban cooperation.

### XII. IMPLEMENTATION OF AID PROGRAMS

The Committee recommends that:

1. The financial recommendations be fully implemented to support the incentive recommendation for reorganized districts and to provide needed aid for all districts.

### XIII. STATE SCHOOL BONDING AUTHORITY

The Committee recommends that:

1. The establishment of a state school bonding authority to issue all schools bonds and pledge the full faith and credit of the state behind such issues. The school district reimburse the authority for principal amortization and interest costs.

### XIV. MORATORIUM

The Committee recommends that:

1. The State Board of Education place a moratorium on the reorganization of school districts or the dissolution of sending and receiving relationships until the passage of implementing legislation and the development of the master plan by the County Reorganization Commission.
  - a. Exception: When a proposed reorganization is certified by the county superintendent as meeting the criteria for reorganization and is approved by the Commissioner an exception to the moratorium shall be granted.