1955

Trends in business curricula in Montana public high schools

Pam Simmons Boettcher
The University of Montana

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TRENDS IN BUSINESS CURRICULA
IN MONTANA PUBLIC HIGH SCHOOLS

by

PAM SIMMONS BOETTCHER

B. A. Mississippi State College for Women, 1938

Presented in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts

MONTANA STATE UNIVERSITY

1955

Approved by:

[Signatures of examiners]

Chairman, Board of Examiners

Dean, Graduate School

[Date]
FOREWORD

Divided usage of "percent"

In accordance with a growing tendency to link the words "per" and "cent" together as one word, throughout this study "percent" is written as one word. Authority for this usage is found in:


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CHAPTER I

THE PROBLEM OF CURRICULAR TRENDS IN BUSINESS EDUCATION

I. INTRODUCTION

In considering a situation, the educator, like most other people, tends to seek first the present, obvious facts. To supplement the story told by status, and to lend meaning to an examination of prevailing practices, a consideration of the factors conducive to modification of any phase of the educational program is also needed.

Possibly public education could move more efficiently in the direction of effective control of its affairs by giving analytic attention to the nature and worth of curricular changes, by studying the dynamics of such changes. Much attention has been given to curriculum study, and there is general agreement as to the vital importance of the curriculum, but most of this attention has been centered on the question: Are we offering what the students need and want? There are other questions which need to be asked, and answered, concerning the curriculum. Around these questions, dealing with the direction and evaluation of curricular change, the problem posed in this study centers.

There have been several descriptive survey studies made which reveal a cross-section of the commercial curriculum.
in Montana public high schools. There are other studies which throw some light on the development of the commercial curriculum in the high schools of the state since the early days of the common school system in Montana. These studies are described in the following chapter dealing with related research.

II. THE PROBLEM

Areas of Needed Study

What developments and significant changes can be observed by comparing the cross-sections revealed in previous status studies involving the commercial curriculum? What are the relationships which can be discerned by comparing the findings of these studies? What other status data are pertinent for comprehensive study to draw out comparisons and to find and evaluate the direction of change? How does the status pictured in previous studies compare with that currently reflected in the official Form A reports of the high schools?¹ How can previous studies, literature on commercial curricula, and current status best be related to each other in order to bring out the pattern implicit in them, to ascertain the trends?

¹A report which the high school administrator submits to the State Department of Public Instruction early in each school year, setting forth details such as courses offered, enrollment by classes, and teacher qualifications.
Statement of the problem. Existing studies and data concerning commercial curricula in Montana, as described in the following chapter on related research, needed to be tied together; the pattern implicit in them needed to be developed. There was need for a comprehensive study to be made, using the survey data already accumulated and on file, and drawing out comparisons, to find and evaluate the direction of change in business curricula in the state.

Significance of the problem. Data such as those gathered by surveys are most effectively utilized when relations are established and comparisons made between the findings of the separate surveys. These surveys can show the educator where he is; of even more value to him would be a knowledge and understanding of how he got there and where he is going.²

The value of such survey data as are already recorded in the literature might be enhanced by a trend study which would possibly point up causal relationships and associated factors and show the underlying tendencies affecting the commercial curriculum. The phenomenal growth of some courses and the gradual disappearance of others needed to be examined.

There has been relatively little research done in the field of business education curricula in Montana. No doubt this is partly because there is little business teacher training at the graduate level available in the state, and thus a source of research, the Master's thesis, is lost to the state. The threat of neglect for certain areas of the curriculum has developed.

III. THE PURPOSE OF THIS STUDY

General purpose. To fulfill the general purpose of portraying curricular trends in business education in Montana public high schools, this library study was guided by the specific, immediate aims described in the following paragraphs.

Specific purposes.
(1) To present a compilation of the findings pertinent to the business curriculum in Montana public high schools as revealed in related studies carried out at the Montana State University. These studies are described in the following chapter dealing with related research.

(2) To present a compilation of appropriate current data regarding business course offerings and factors affecting the business curricula at the present time, as revealed in the Form A reports of Montana public high schools on file in the State Department of Public Instruction.

(3) To compare the data described above and thus to reveal relationships which show the course of development followed by Montana's business curricula.

(4) To compare business course offerings in the high schools with recommendations made from time to time by the State Department of Public Instruction.

(5) To synthesize findings as to commercial curricula reported in professional papers on follow-up and community survey studies made within the past five years at the Montana State University. Twelve such papers which have implications significant to a study of curricular trends in business education were used.

(6) To compare the trends characteristic of commercial education in Montana to those in other states.

(7) To compare Montana's commercial curricular trends with those generally deemed good by competent authority in national business education organizations and research bodies. Reference was made to the opinions of a number of educators who have studied curriculum problems.
IV. DELIMITATIONS

Scope of this study

Since virtually all of the public high schools in Montana offer commercial subjects, all were included in this study. Consideration was limited to matters of the commercial curriculum, principally course offerings, insofar as these could be isolated.

Temporally, this study centered on the last three decades, because these encompass the period of greatest growth in commercial education. However, because trends in commercial education find their rise in the earliest educational enterprises, time limits included the period of educational beginnings which followed the earliest settlement of Montana.

Limitations of this Study

Certain limitations are inherent in the purposes of this study. Handicaps or inadequacies of the nature described below have affected the study.

Variance of purposes and procedures in basic studies. None of the studies, reports, or surveys upon which this library study was based were mainly concerned with the commercial curriculum. In most of the basic sources used, the information was gathered primarily with the general curriculum in mind. Hence, from a commercial education viewpoint,
the basic data left something of completeness to be desired; but the significant trends which were discernible were challenging; they needed "pointing" up. Comparison between findings in the different basic studies was somewhat complicated by the fact that the data were not gathered by parallel methods or for identical purposes.

Use of secondary sources. The possibility of error in interpreting data always increases when secondary sources are used, as was the case with this library study. The researcher who uses primary sources of information is naturally in a better position to assess the importance of any possible screening factor which may affect his questionnaire returns, for example. He is more sensitive to the nuances of meaning in his compiled data, because of his having constructed the instrument for collecting the data.

Use of Form A reports. The annual Form A reports sometimes carry ambiguous, conflicting, or unintelligible information, particularly as to course offerings. Because of the number of such cases, to enter into correspondence to clarify the data was impossible. Approximately fifty percent of the forms, by a rough estimate, were not specific as to the level at which some courses were offered, or as to the status of some other curricular matter. For example, courses were
entered simply as "Shorthand" or "Typing" with no indication as to whether it was first or second year level. This inadequacy in the data necessitated less emphasis on the level of course offerings than had originally been intended. The variety of course offerings, which is probably a more significant factor for the purposes of this study, was clear.

Division of curriculum into components. Isolating one subject matter field of the curriculum for separate study as to trends is fraught with dangers of fallacious thinking. The high school curriculum is so structured that no component subject field has a great degree of completeness in itself. Furthermore, the curriculum is inextricably tied in with teacher-training and administration, for example, as well as with the other more obviously related aspects of the school system. Intelligent analysis seems to require this separation of component elements in this case, however.4

Subjective nature of surveys and follow-up studies. The subjective nature of conclusions made in a school survey or follow-up study of graduates renders the assessment of their value somewhat risky. The opinion of a graduate of a high school as to the curriculum needs of that school are only as good as the judgment of the individual graduate; his needs

4 Good and Scates, op. cit., p. 538.
valid only to the extent that they are typical of those of his community. Even though such studies are subjective and thus impervious to scientific proof, the availability of twelve similar studies makes it possible for the findings to be synthesized and used to advantage in discerning trends.

**Variation in the size of schools.** The wide variation in the size of Montana high schools tends to complicate consideration of statewide trends. The element of school size alone is a powerful force in molding the curriculum. Enrollment is recognized as a potent determinant of course offerings.

**Lack of similar studies in other states.** Not enough similar studies are available to permit adequate comparisons of the findings of this study with those in other states. Such comparisons, if possible, would provide a check as to the validity of methodology and findings.

V. DEFINITIONS OF TERMS USED

For the sake of a uniformity which makes more significant the pattern of research formed by this study and the several studies which are basic to it, the terminology used in the principal source studies was, in general, adapted for use in this study. The sense of the definitions used in the previous related studies is preserved, although the definitions are not identical in wording. Definitions making up
the terminology of this study are listed in the general order of their use.

Business education: that area of education which develops attitudes, understandings, and skills necessary for the successful direction of business relationships. The term is used synonymously with "commercial" education. In curriculum literature, the term "business" education seems to be in the process of supplanting the term "commercial" education. Nichols clarifies the situation as follows:

It is hoped that the clear issues of commercial education will not be confused by any attempt to distinguish between "business" education and "commercial" education. There is no authority for, nor is there any need of, a distinction between these two terms. They may be used interchangeably.

Basic business subjects: those which aim at development of skills and understandings needed by all individuals, rather than those required for job-competence in a business vocation. Synonymous terms are personal business subjects, social business subjects, and non-vocational business subjects. Such subjects provide for "the training of individuals

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for efficient participation in those business activities common to all youth and adults.\textsuperscript{7}

**Business education, consumer:** the elements of economics, finance, and business relationships as they affect the individual as a consumer; the basic elements of business education taught from the consumer viewpoint.\textsuperscript{8}

**Curriculum:** the prescribed course of study; a combination of subjects encompassing the educative experiences under school supervision, designed to provide the student with the best available training and experience to fit him for the society of which he is a part or to qualify him for a profession or trade.\textsuperscript{9}

**Subject field:** a body of knowledge organized as one of the twelve major divisions of the secondary school instructional program, such as English, history, mathematics, or business.

**Subject:** a sub-division of a subject field, such as English I, United States History, or Algebra I. In the subject matter field of business, such subjects as shorthand,


\textsuperscript{8}Good, *op. cit.*, p. 54.

\textsuperscript{9}Ibid., p. 113.
typewriting and bookkeeping are included.

Subject offering: the name of a subject, with no reference to its content. "Course offering" may be used synonymously.

High school, public: that part of the public school system which follows the usual elementary school system, composed of grades nine through twelve, or in the case of senior high schools, of grades ten through twelve. To explain "public" Good specifies: "Supported and controlled by the people, nonsectarian, open to all, and making no tuition charge."10

School size: Montana school laws classify districts according to population into first, second, and third class.11 In most of these districts there are high schools, and, in addition, there are seventeen county high schools of varying sizes. District categories are used in much educational research in the state. However, in matters pertaining to curricula, school enrollment rather than district size and


11 School Laws of the State of Montana, Chapter 18, Section 1021 (Helena, Montana: State Department of Public Instruction, 1953), p. 67.
population is the pertinent measure of school size. Among county high schools in 1951, Missoula County High School had an enrollment of 1,310 students, and Jefferson County High School had an enrollment of 61 students.\textsuperscript{12} For purposes of curriculum study, classifying both in the same category would be impractical. Hence in this study, schools were grouped according to enrollment, unless otherwise stated. These categories were used in some of the principal survey studies basic to this study. The high schools are grouped as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Enrollment Range</th>
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<tr>
<td>I</td>
<td>over 350 pupils</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II</td>
<td>151 through 350 pupils</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III</td>
<td>76 through 150 pupils</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IV</td>
<td>41 through 75 pupils</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V</td>
<td>under 41 pupils</td>
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</table>

\textbf{Administrator:} the official school superior, on the scene, who is legally vested with the right and responsibility of administration of the high school. The term may refer to either the superintendent or the principal, whichever is the superior official with his headquarters at the school.


\textsuperscript{13}Ibid.
VI. PROCEDURES

Sources of Data

General reading on the subject of business education in Montana made evident the need for research in curricular trends. Preliminary observations indicated that a considerable amount of data had been gathered in surveys and compiled and presented in status studies. As has been pointed out, such data could be better utilized if translated into terms of trends.

The best solution to the problem of determining curricular trends in Montana high school business education seemed to lie in a careful analysis of data already gathered and incorporated in pertinent status studies or recorded in the files of the State Department of Public Instruction and in other sources listed below. In other words, a library study seemed more likely to provide answers to the questions involved in the problem than did a questionnaire; a survey of library sources promised more information than any other type of survey or research.

Sources of data are catalogued in this section and are described in greater detail later.

Graduate research on Montana educational problems.

After the general exploratory reading in the business
education field, the next step in the study was to survey all available reports of research pertaining to Montana educational problems in order to locate all information therein regarding business curricula. This was facilitated by use of three useful works in the nature of digests. These three works supplement each other, and together form a fairly complete series of abstracts of theses and professional papers dealing with educational research in Montana, mostly at the State University but some elsewhere, during the period 1915-1952. The abstracts served the purpose of indicating studies which were related closely enough to the problem to merit minute examination.

To fill in any gaps in the bibliography thus compiled, a search was made of records of research papers in the card file in the Curriculum Library, School of Education, Montana State University; and other studies which seemed to bear on the problem were added to the group to be examined.

Official state educational publications and reports. A search of both regular and incidental publications and

reports of the State Department of Public Instruction was made, in order to ascertain what material could be drawn from these sources to make clear the underlying tendencies of the business curriculum in the state.

**Related research in business education in other states.**

Inter-library loans made possible the examination of several studies which had been made in states where the business curriculum problems are believed to be somewhat similar to those in Montana. The use of bibliographies in such periodicals as the *Review of Educational Research*, *The National Education Association Research Bulletin*, and annual research issues of the *National Business Education Quarterly* facilitated the location of the studies.

**General curriculum literature.** The search for sources of information at the level of the whole curriculum presented mainly a problem of selecting the best and most authoritative from a plethora of curriculum literature. The *Encyclopedia of Educational Research* was a ready source of leads indicating literature to establish a frame of reference, to indicate the relation between the whole curriculum and the business curriculum, and to lend significance to the aspect of the curriculum about which the problem centered. *Yearbooks of the National Society for the Study of Education* proved to be a valuable source of general curriculum information, as did the curriculum
study reports in the Bulletin of the National Association of Secondary-School Principals.\textsuperscript{15}

Business curriculum literature. The Evaluative Criteria developed by the Cooperative Study of Secondary School Standards provided guiding principles in determining what the business program should accomplish.

Several monographs were used to furnish findings and descriptions of good recent research in business education. While it is a fact that the publishers who brought out these monographs are greatly interested in selling business and economic textbooks, these educational monographs provide valuable reports of business education research which pass the tests of internal and external criticism. Even if a selective factor should influence the range of studies reported by the monographs, business teachers and educators could still make practical and beneficial use of the findings gleaned from these publications based on reliable research.

Form A high school reports. The Form A reports submitted by high school administrators for the years 1953-1954 and 1954-1955 were examined in the offices of the State

Department of Public Instruction, Helena. From these reports, information was compiled to present a current picture of the status, for comparison with status at other periods, as shown in the studies basic to this one.

The Form A reports were made available in the offices of Mr. William I. King, High School Supervisor. All courtesies, materials, and assistance requested were extended by Mrs. Pearl Armagost of Mr. King's office, during the two and a half days it took the writer, with the assistance of her husband, to compile the required data from the forms.

The way had been paved for this work by a letter over the signature of Dean Linus J. Carleton of the School of Education, Montana State University, requesting that the writer be given access to the forms, if convenient, and giving the date she would begin the search.

The reports for two consecutive years were examined, to insure the recording of all course offerings, including those given on alternate years, as in smaller high schools.

Presentation of data

Organization. Because the underlying tendencies of the business curriculum are the product largely of the times, chronology is a powerful factor in the development of trends. Obviously, the social and business needs of the period affect the curriculum. However, organization in a strictly chronological order was found inadequate in the report of this study.
because adherence to the order of time did not allow proper comparison and relation of the facts and data determining the dynamics of curricular changes. A subject organization was found to give more meaning to the study of curricular trends. The chapters reporting findings in this study, therefore, are based primarily on a topical grouping of materials; and chronological order is followed within each topic. For example, trends in the basic business courses are traced from about 1860 to the present; and trends of other types are treated in a similar way.

This combination of subject and chronological organization was believed more effective in depicting the changes in the commercial curriculum and lending meaning to the data. Such factors as course offerings, pupil enrollment, and course objectives evolve as topics.

Manner of presentation. Presentation of the material by a predominantly discursive rather than a statistical method was found most meaningful. This method proved more effective in interpreting the data which gave foundation to the trends observed.
CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

The literature related to the problem of determining trends in business curricula in the Montana public high schools is also the source of data, largely, for this library study. As such, it has already been touched upon in the section dealing with procedures. For the purposes of a review of the literature, a brief summary of the works most used will here be given. Because the findings and conclusions in the related literature are in most cases used for purposes of comparison to discern trends, these findings are dealt with in the appropriate chapters or topical divisions of this report.

Material related to the problem may be divided into four broad categories: (1) reports of research and statistics pertaining to high school business curricula in Montana; (2) studies concerning business education in other states; (3) material concerning the business curriculum in general; and (4) material concerning the whole curriculum. As suggested by Good and Scates, the forming of categories was planned to provide an orderly sequence of analysis, proceeding from the specific aspect of the curriculum chosen for research through
successively broader areas to the whole curriculum.¹

High School Business Curricula in Montana

This literature is mostly composed of reports of graduate research. These reports supply data indicating the trends dealt with in this study. These findings, supplemented by data compiled from current Form A reports, form the basic framework from which the trends in business curricula in the state high schools are discernible.

Langenbach's thesis. In 1951, Robert G. Langenbach made a survey of the status of business education in Montana public high schools. He gathered his data (1) by means of a questionnaire, returned by 76 percent or 129 of the 169 high school administrators to whom it was sent, and (2) the Form A reports for 1949-1950 and 1950-1951 on file in the State Department of Public Instruction. Langenbach was primarily interested in studying the training and qualifications of commercial teachers in the state, but had abandoned the plan to limit his study to an analysis of these factors, after finding it impossible to get the information he needed. He then revised his plans and enlarged the scope of his thesis

to a survey of the entire field of business education in the state high schools. However, a large part of his study dealt with teacher training, qualifications and professional status.²

Langenbach's findings as to course offerings, pupil enrollment and other matters affecting the business curriculum are used for purposes of comparison in the appropriate sections of this report, and therefore are not given in detail in this review of the literature.

**Young's thesis.** As a part of the requirements for the Master of Arts degree at the Colorado State Teachers College, Della A. Young made a survey of commercial education in Montana secondary schools in 1929. Like Langenbach, Young gathered her data by means of a questionnaire supplemented by figures and facts from the files of the State Department of Public Instruction. Her questionnaire was completed and returned by 84.5 percent or 82 of the 97 school administrators to whom it was sent.³

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In purposes, procedures, and presentation of data, the studies made by Langenbach and Young are enough alike to make possible enlightening comparisons of findings. A considerable part of Young's research dealt with teacher personnel, like Langenbach's; and the research of both included a separate questionnaire for commercial teachers, dealing with training, qualifications, and professional status. However, both Langenbach and Young seemed more confident of the findings on other aspects of their studies than on teacher personnel.

Barnes' thesis. In a study of course offerings in the Montana high schools, Antrim E. Barnes, Jr., brought out information with a bearing on trends in business education. Barnes' study had as its purposes: (1) identifying major curriculum trends as revealed by course offerings in the school years 1945-1946 and 1946-1947 and in the school year 1939-1940; (2) determining the relationship between size of school and nature of subject offerings; (3) comparing offerings in Montana with those reported in other states; and (4) developing a technique for analyzing and reporting subject offerings to facilitate further studies dealing with the identification of basic trends in curricula in Montana.  

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Barnes gathered his material from the Form A reports. In its emphasis on trends and its cataloging of course offerings at two significant times—a typical pre-war school year as compared with a post-war school year—Barnes' study provided information valuable to a consideration of the business curriculum. As one of the major subject fields in the high school, business is naturally treated with some detail in Barnes' study.

Hutchinson's thesis. Douglas W. Hutchinson's history of the factors conducive to curricular changes lists twelve forces which he considers most significant in determining curricula. The events influencing the development of curricula in Montana schools, and the territorial and state records and periodicals cited, furnish some enlightening clues as to the commercial curriculum. Hutchinson's study is broad in scope, dealing with educational philosophies and curriculum matters from the dawn of educational history until the present time. The parts of the study which deal with curriculum construction in this state and which sum up recent changes in the curriculum are pertinent to this study of business curricular trends.

Sasek's thesis. A study of the development of public secondary education in Montana prior to 1920, made by John F. Sasek in 1938, is also related to the problem at hand. This historical study had as one of its purposes the tracing of secondary education offerings from the beginning educational efforts in the state, through about six decades, or up to the year 1920. Because of the part it has played in the secondary school curriculum, business education is dealt with to some extent in the study. The data, put together into a descriptive framework, indicate the varying importance of business education in the high schools.

Survey by United Business Education Association. To supplement the research of graduate students as described above, the findings of a survey made in 1949 by the Montana Research Committee of the United Business Education Association Research Foundation were used. This study dealt with Montana high schools with less than three hundred students; therefore, the study included most of the high schools in the state. The study was made for the purpose of determining the special problems of the small high school. Does the small high school suffer from limited curricular offerings,

incomplete preparation and inadequate experience of teachers, insufficient equipment and high instructional costs, as many believe to be the case? The Committee sent a questionnaire to the 210 business teachers listed in the office of the State Superintendent of Public Instruction for the year 1948-1949. Of these questionnaires, 108 were completed and returned. The data on status gathered in this survey bear directly on the problem, and the findings are brought out in the appropriate topical sections of this study.

School survey and follow-up studies. An important part of the graduate educational research with significant implications concerning the business curriculum is a series of recent school surveys and follow-up studies reported in the professional papers described below. Even though such a study deals with only one school, community, or county, the findings are significant for similar localities, and are particularly useful when a number of studies are available.

In 1950, Basil L. Helgeson made a study to determine how well the business curriculum at the Park City High School was meeting the needs of the community, and how well it

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measured up to the criteria established by authorities in the field of business education. By means of a questionnaire in the form of a checklist, supplemented by interviews with twelve of the respondents, Helgeson compiled data as to the skills and knowledges the graduates felt they should have gained from their high school training. Their opinions were not the only indication Helgeson had of the needs of the community; he prepared a chart showing the occupations found in the area. Of the fifty-two graduates for the five years preceding the study, forty-seven responded to the questionnaire. Twelve of these were interviewed to supplement the questionnaire data.

Helgeson reports that clerical jobs—selling and general office work—claimed three times as many graduates as did any other field of work. His job analyses revealed a high correlation between the skills needed on the jobs which most of the graduates took and those taught in their high school courses. Among the graduates who became housewives and farmers, consumer buying was the skill most desired. Most of the farmers wished that they had had more training in matters concerning installment buying, bills of sale, contracts, deeds, and leases. All of the graduates except one shared a high opinion of the value of bookkeeping in the high school curriculum. Nearly all found the general business training they had taken very valuable, as well as the typing.
Helgeson concluded that non-vocational aims should be the first consideration in the Park City High School, and in all small rural high schools. His findings suggested a need for basic business courses, and he recommended that consumer education and business law be included in the curriculum of such high schools as Park City. A course in general business training should be required of all students, according to Helgeson.⁸

In a survey of the subjects taught in Lake County high schools, made with the purpose of indicating curriculum revisions needed, Harland D. Seljak found a situation much like that reflected in Helgeson's report. Like Helgeson, Seljak concluded that the greatest need revealed by his survey was for basic business courses—for general business education. Seljak implied that the five high schools in Lake County shared many common needs, although they varied in size of enrollment from about three hundred at Polson to about twenty at Arlee.

After compiling much material indicating the economic, geographic, and sociological circumstances in Lake County, Seljak drew conclusions as to what the curricular aims should be if the needs of the communities were to be met.

Since about 73 percent of the graduates do not go on to institutions of higher education, according to Seljak, emphasis in Lake County high schools should be on general courses, particularly general business education. Most of the objectives he suggested for the business courses are general and non-vocational in nature. In bookkeeping, for example, only three of the eleven suggested objectives are mainly vocational. The study emphasized the importance of bookkeeping, and pointed out a need among the students for a course in consumer mathematics, including budgeting, investments and thrift, taxation, buying, and credit.

In their emphasis on the need for non-vocational business subjects in the curriculum of the small high school, both Helgeson and Seljak seem to believe that vocational business subjects have been given over-emphasis, in some cases, among courses in the curriculum. Seljak seems to imply that advanced courses in typing, shorthand, and bookkeeping should be given last preference among courses in the Lake County high school curricula when he recommends that such courses be given only for college preparation. A one-semester personal typing course is recommended.9

9Harland D. Seljak, "A Survey of the Subjects Taught in Lake County High Schools with Recommendations for Curriculum Revision" (unpublished professional paper, Montana State University, Missoula, 1950).
A survey of the eighty-one Hot Springs High School graduates who finished in the years 1946 - 1950 inclusive showed the prominence of business subjects in the curriculum. In this survey, Earl Fisher had a 65 percent return of his checklist questionnaire, representing 53 of the 81 graduates. With an enrollment ranging from seventy to ninety students, the high school had two commercial classrooms, twenty typewriters, two mimeograph machines, a Ditto machine, and two adding machines for use in the business subjects. Two years each of typewriting, shorthand, and bookkeeping were offered, by alternating some of the courses. Fisher discovered that 34 percent of the girls believed that typing and bookkeeping had helped them toward making a living more than had any other subjects. To a question as to what courses should be emphasized or added to the high school curriculum, 15, or 25 percent of the 53 who responded, [sic] replied that consumer education should be added. On-the-job training should be added, according to 23 percent of the respondents. A considerable number of the graduates were found to have gone into clerical and sales occupations.

According to Fisher, the Hot Springs High School

Community probably has a wider range of occupational interests than average; irrigated farming and dairying in the Lonepine area; dryland farming and beef-raising on Camas Prairie; sawmills near Hot Springs; and resort mineral baths at Hot Springs. This diversity no doubt has a direct influence on the curriculum needs of the school, and may explain in part the emphasis put on business courses in the school curriculum.

Stuart E. Fitschen, in his follow-up study of Ronan High School graduates of 1942-1951, found similar opinions as to the value of commercial training. Fitschen sent a questionnaire to 350 of the 367 graduates of the ten year period preceding the study. He had a 61 percent return, representing 224 of the graduates. Jobs most commonly held by the graduates were in the clerical and sales field. Among the high school courses, typing was considered the most valuable in making a living by most of the girls, with shorthand and bookkeeping also considered valuable in this respect. The boys rated bookkeeping among the six subjects every boy should take in high school. The girls included typing and bookkeeping among the top four subjects they considered most essential in high school. In answer to a question as to what courses they had missed but wished they

11 Ibid., pp. 3-5.
had taken, bookkeeping was listed most often by the graduates. Shorthand and typing were also prominent in the list of courses graduates wished they had taken.

Fitschen believed that all students should be encouraged to take typing. He stated that a two-year course in typing would be desirable. He also recommended that a general business course be given in high school—a course which would include some bookkeeping. ¹²

In a study made at the same high school and reported the next year, Russell W. Wasley found that secretarial work was eighth on a list which pupils made of the skills and knowledges they thought they should be gaining, but which were not being taught. This was an incidental finding, however, in the sense that Wasley's study did not deal primarily with curriculum. ¹³

In a community evaluation of the Cascade Public School reported by Hazen R. Lawson in 1954, comments of the public concerning the adequacy of the curriculum were invited. Some residents of the community believed that business subjects


¹³Russel1 W, Wasley, "A Survey of the Opinions of Pupils and Teachers Concerning Their High School at Ronan, Montana" (unpublished professional paper, Montana State University, Missoula, 1953).
were being neglected, but the commercial curriculum was listed as being neglected no more often than were six other major subject fields. One patron put in a rather impassioned plea for bookkeeping: "Where is bookkeeping? Even a home and personal finances need this subject." 14

An extensive follow-up study of the graduates of Grass Range High School made by George C. Gaynor in 1953 included all graduates since the first class, which consisted of one member who graduated in 1920. Gaynor was concerned with the curriculum problems of the small school, where "college preparatory subjects must be weighed against terminal education subjects and general background courses against vocational courses . . ." 15

Since the study dealt with graduates over a thirty-three year period, naturally many of the 244 could not be located; and from some who were located there was no response. However, Gaynor had a 63 percent return, representing 137 of those to whom he sent a questionnaire. The average size of a graduating class had been seven or eight students. Grass


Range is located in an agricultural area, and 51 percent of the respondents were housewives. Next to home-making came farming as an occupation.

Gaynor reports that Grass Range has held to the college preparatory pattern in curriculum, but has offered the following commercial curriculum: two years of typing, one year of shorthand, one year of bookkeeping, one year of general business training, one-half year of business mathematics, business English, and commercial law.

In the opinion of twenty-three respondents to the questionnaire, typing was highly valuable, but nine considered it of least value among the high school courses. Among the subjects respondents wished they had taken in high school, commercial subjects ranked in the top two fields. When asked to list subjects they believed all high school boys should take, graduates ranked bookkeeping and typing among the top eight. For girls, they considered typing, shorthand, and bookkeeping among the six most essential subjects.

One of Gaynor's recommendations was that the school curriculum be broadened to include more vocational courses.16

A similar study of graduates of the Bainville High School from 1948 through 1953 revealed that typewriting and

16Ibid., p. 37.
bookkeeping were considered by many to be among the four most important and valuable courses. Commercial law ranked low in value in the opinion of graduates. Eugene Lagerquist, who made the survey, reported opinions similar to those cited already in several of the foregoing studies.

In answer to a question as to what subjects every boy should take in high school, the graduates frequently listed bookkeeping and typing among the top six. For the girls, typing, bookkeeping, and shorthand were listed among the top seven. Most frequently mentioned among the subjects which had not been available to them but which the graduates thought would have been of value were shorthand and bookkeeping, in that order. On a list of subjects which had been offered by the school, but which some of the respondents had not taken, second and third places were given bookkeeping and typing, as courses graduates said they believed would have been of value to them. Among volunteered suggestions for improvement in certain areas, there were more suggestions for "more commercial offerings" than for any other improvement except in the area of communication skill. In this area there was an equal number of suggestions for improvement.

Lagerquist had as one of his purposes bringing out information or opinions which would indicate any needed curriculum revisions. Questionnaires were sent to fifty-four
graduates for the six year period ending with 1953. There were 37 responses, making a 68.5 percent return. Occupations most commonly found in the survey were housewife, farmer, teacher, and clerk-typist. Several of the graduates believed that the lack of commercial training had hindered them in securing employment.

One of Lagerquist's recommendations was: "More commercial subjects should be taught even at the expense of adding another teacher." He stated that employing a commercial teacher would also allow expansion of the curriculum in other departments by freeing the teachers of duties they have had in connection with the commercial subjects that have been offered. During the five year period preceding Lagerquist's study, the superintendent and the home economics instructor had had charge of the commercial subjects taught. Two years of typewriting had been the main offering, and bookkeeping and general business had been taught once in a six year period.

A follow-up study of the graduates of the Victor High School for the seven years ending with 1953 was made by John F. Munson, who hoped to find the strengths and weaknesses of the high school curriculum and to secure suggestions for

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the improvement of the school. All but one of the ninety-nine who had graduated from the school during the period covered by the survey were located and sent a questionnaire. There were 76, or 76.8 percent, who responded.

Munson reported that the high school enrollment had averaged more than sixty for the ten years preceding his study. A fairly complete commercial course was offered, including typing, shorthand, and bookkeeping, with advanced shorthand being offered when there was enough demand for it, according to Munson.

Of the graduates for the period, twenty-seven had gone on to institutions of higher learning, and sixteen more planned to continue their education as soon as possible. This rather high percentage is probably due to the fact that Victor is located near Missoula and the State University.

Bookkeeping was prominent among the courses graduates considered valuable. The course had been taken by twenty-seven; twenty-four wished they had taken it; and eleven wished they had worked harder at it. Office practice and shorthand were also highly esteemed, ranking among the seven most essential courses.

Most students believed that commercial courses had helped them more than any others toward making a living; but considered these courses of little or no value in getting along with people, enjoying life, playing a part in the
affairs of the community, or fulfilling their obligations as citizens. 18

In a study to determine the adequacy of the high school curriculum at Libby, Raymond Hokanson sent questionnaires to 162 recent graduates. Graduates in the classes of 1946 through 1950 were polled, and 102 responded, making a return of 62.3 percent for the study. The fact that 45.1 percent of the respondents were residents of Libby would seem to indicate a higher than average holding power for the community. The existence of two lively industries in the area—mining and lumbering—partly insures the availability of well-paid jobs near home for most of the boys as they graduate. However, no conclusions can be drawn as to the holding power of the community on the basis of this study, because (1) men in the armed forces, although occupied elsewhere, usually give their old home address, and (2) graduates still living in their home town would be more likely to respond to the questionnaire than would more distant graduates.

Hokanson reports that forty-nine of the graduates who responded have gone on to institutions of higher learning.

At least half of these got part of their higher education at colleges outside the state.

Among high school courses which the graduates listed as sources for the knowledge and training used in present occupations, commercial courses were listed more often than any others. On the list of courses rated as very helpful, bookkeeping and typing were first and second, respectively, and advanced shorthand was fourth. Elementary shorthand and consumer economics were rated very helpful by almost half of the respondents. In summary, Hokanson stated that all of the business courses offered at Libby High School were rated as being very helpful. Graduates believed that business courses should be an integral part of the high school curriculum; and among the volunteered suggestions as to how the high school could have served them better, this one was given more often than any other: "By requiring students to take more business courses."

On the basis of his findings, Hokanson recommended that a course in consumer education involving income tax, installment buying, and household bookkeeping be added to the curriculum.

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20Ibid., p. 37.
That graduates of the Fairfield High School hold a high opinion of the value of commercial courses was shown in a survey reported in 1953 by Roger W. Christianson. Among Christianson's purposes in making the survey, a follow-up study of the 387 students who had graduated since the school's first year of operation in 1939-1940, were these: (1) finding where the graduates were and what jobs they had taken; (2) getting graduates' opinions concerning the usefulness of their high school training in their present occupations; and (3) getting their suggestions as to ways in which the educational offerings of the Fairfield High School might be improved.

Christianson's findings are based on the replies of 206 respondents, or 53 percent of the 387 graduates—not, it should be noted, 53 percent of those to whom the questionnaire was sent. Christianson does not mention the actual number of questionnaires he sent, but explains that many of the graduates could not be located.

The large number of graduates engaged in clerical and sales occupations—thirty-three—emphasizes the importance of a good commercial department, according to Christianson. There were twenty-three graduates who went into professional and managerial occupations, which presumably would also be partly dependent upon good business training.
When asked to list subjects taken in high school which benefitted them most in their present occupations, graduates mentioned commercial courses much more often than any other type. The specific subject which ranked first in usefulness was typing.

Among comments and suggestions for improvement in specific areas of the curriculum, there were thirteen concerning the commercial department. Comments made by more than one graduate are as follows:

"The commercial department was very good."
"More emphasis is needed on the commercial department."
"More emphasis on bookkeeping is needed."
"A course in office machines would be very helpful."

In a study of business education facilities in large high schools, Maurice F. Egan brought together some information which has a bearing on the problem at hand. Egan's study had a broader scope than the other studies in the foregoing group, dealing with plant facilities and equipment recommended for business education in high schools with fifteen hundred to two thousand students. The study was primarily a survey of the literature on the subject.

In his recommendations, Egan emphasized the necessity of first setting up the aims and objectives of the business.

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curriculum, tailored to meet the needs of the school and community, and then making course offerings fill these needs. Egan points out the effects of increased enrollment in business courses, increased financial outlay for equipment and facilities, and a new faith in and emphasis on research. All these factors have a bearing on curricular trends.

Also commented on in Egan's report is the tendency of administrators to depend upon the business education department for office services.

The attention devoted to facilities for basic business courses reveals the importance attached to such courses in large high schools, and indicates that basic business training is not limited in usefulness to the small high schools.  

Studies Concerning Business Education in Other States

The studies included in this section provide data and tentatively indicate trends in other states, making possible the comparison of status and trends in Montana with those in other states which have some tendencies and problems in common with Montana. In some ways the methodology and purposes of these studies, particularly the first two, are related to the study at hand. The third provides knowledge of the needs of

22Maurice F. Egan, "Business Education Facilities in Large High Schools" (unpublished professional paper, Montana State University, Missoula, 1953).
high school pupils. Since there is some similarity in the needs of high school pupils in different localities, these findings are valuable to a consideration of curricular trends in this state.

Survey in the State of Washington. Ralph Vernon Thomas found in the state of Washington many problems and trends similar to those common to business education in Montana. In his survey of the public high school commercial departments in Washington, he proposed, among other things, to learn (1) what commercial subjects were offered, (2) how many semesters of each were offered, (3) the grade level at which they were usually given, and (4) what commercial courses were considered most valuable.

A questionnaire was sent to the 248 principals of accredited high schools, of whom 232, or 93.5 percent, responded. Since eight of the questionnaires returned were not usable, Thomas' report was based on 224 high schools.

As in Montana, small school size seemed to pose a problem in the business curriculum; and 68.3 percent of the schools reporting enrolled fewer than three hundred students each, according to Thomas.

Among the schools reporting, 98 percent offered typing regularly, 97 percent offered bookkeeping, and 85 percent offered shorthand. These were the top three courses
in popularity in the commercial subject field. Office training was given in 58 percent of the schools. Although specific inquiry into this offering was not made, the implication is made that in many schools this is an informal course given to one or two students in the school office under the direction of the principal or other administrative personnel, and that the course has as an important objective the conduct of the school office work.

As to the grade level at which the subjects were given, Thomas reports that 49 percent of the classes in commercial subjects admitted seniors, 33 percent admitted juniors, 14 percent admitted sophomores, and only 4 percent of the classes were open to freshmen. (To be fully understandable, these statistics would need more interpretation than Thomas gave.)

Many schools reported that they wished to add certain commercial subjects to their curriculum and intended to do so as soon as availability of money, teachers, and time would permit. Most frequently mentioned among the courses desired were office machines, business arithmetic, business English, business law, office practice, general business, and shorthand.

In answer to a question as to what courses they believed were least valuable in the commercial field, principals listed shorthand most often. However, their reasons
were often based on the scheduling problems which small schools find in trying to give two years of shorthand. The question as to courses of least value was answered by only a few of the respondents; and, after compiling the questionnaire returns, Thomas seemed to doubt the effectiveness and validity of the question. Apparently it was considered a "loaded" question. Since it is only in relation to other courses labeled "preferred" that those listed were labeled "less valuable," principals implied that they would drop them only to make room in the program for courses they considered more essential.

Thomas recommended that commercial subjects be made available to ninth and tenth grade students more often. Another recommendation was that one year of typing be required for graduation in the state. He believed that the high schools offering only the popular three business subjects--typing, bookkeeping, and shorthand--were not fully meeting the needs of their students, and stated that he recommended increased emphasis on commercial subjects for personal use, because the "majority of the students will use their commercial education for personal use and not vocationally."23

History of business education in Wisconsin. The history by Joseph F. Korpal of business education in the public high schools of Wisconsin is related to the problem of trends in Montana business curricula in purpose and also because it allows for comparison of findings. Korpal's main purposes were (1) tracing the development of business education in the public high schools of Wisconsin, (2) indicating the status of business education in Wisconsin public high schools as of 1952, and (3) making recommendations for the improvement of business education in the Wisconsin high schools. His historical data came from library research, and most of his status data were based on "opinionnaires" completed by high school principals.24

Korpal's thesis is organized primarily in chronological order. He reports a growth from three to nineteen in the number of business course offerings found in Wisconsin high schools between 1860 and 1949. He also reports an increase in pupil enrollment in business education courses as follows: from 8,141 in 1918 (17 percent of all the pupils enrolled in high school) to 79,394 in 1949 (74 percent of all the pupils enrolled in high school).

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24 The "opinionnaire" was a questionnaire designed to secure the opinions of the respondent rather than factual data.
In Wisconsin, the trend has been away from strictly vocational aims toward general business training since about 1918, reports Korpal. He recommends that basic business education be required of all Wisconsin high school graduates.

Study at the University of Cincinnati. A pertinent article is the report by Harold Leith of a study of the personal-economic problems of 925 ninth grade pupils in the Cincinnati public schools. The study, a cooperative venture of the Business Education Department of the Cincinnati Public Schools and the business education faculty of the University of Cincinnati, had as its main purposes discovering and classifying the personal-economic problems of ninth grade pupils and comparing the relative frequency with which certain types of problems were presented by pupils differing in socio-economic status, academic ability, and sex. The aspects of the findings which are of concern to administrators and teachers of business subjects are reported in the article. There is no reason to believe that the results of the study are peculiar only to ninth grade pupils, or only to the pupils in Cincinnati. There are implications for all educators interested in basic business training.

Leith summarizes the background and procedures of the study, describing instruments, devices and techniques which were, after careful testing and evaluation, adopted for the study. The five problem areas in which pupils reported interest were selecting goods, planning, the price system, the business system, and values.

Pupils of low socio-economic status were found to be more interested in all of the problem areas than were pupils of high socio-economic status. Pupils of both groups were much concerned with the problem of selecting goods—getting their money's worth when they purchased goods. Pupils of high socio-economic status were not as curious as to the workings of the price and business systems as were pupils of low socio-economic status, however. Both groups manifested a high degree of interest in all of the problem areas.

In comparisons by academic ability, findings showed that pupils of average ability consistently raised fewest problems. Pupils of low ability expressed a greater interest in personal-economic problems than either the average or high ability pupils.

Differences found in comparisons by sex were not significant. The fact that boys are as much interested as are girls in personal-economic competency should be an argument against relegating such education to home economics.
classes or to courses taken almost exclusively by girls. Problems in the areas of transportation and communications are of practically no concern to pupils, but the majority of courses designed to improve personal-economic competency include units on these topics.

Leith's study indicated that it may be unwise to place great confidence in pupil statements of their interests and concerns made in class discussion; it was discovered that pupils in the high school age group do not usually voice really fundamental or extremely personal problems before classmates.

Material on the Business Curriculum and the Whole Curriculum

The last two categories of material related to the problem—that concerning the business curriculum in general and that concerning the whole curriculum—have been described in the section on sources of data. However, there are among the monographs most used as sources for criteria and informed opinion regarding business curricula two which are based on research for doctoral dissertations. These deserve a special note of review.

The monograph entitled Trends of Thought in Business Education is based on a study completed by H. G. Enterline

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In partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy at the New York University, in 1947.

In the preface is found a description of the contents:

The original research embodies the thinking of 373 business educators appearing in 1,031 books, magazine articles, yearbooks, leaflets, and bulletins... As a result of this investigation 290 generalizations pertaining to secondary school business education were prepared. The most significant generalizations are presented in this monograph. These relate to eight areas of secondary school business education.27

Part of a study made by Clifford B. Shipley in partial fulfillment of the requirements for his doctorate at Columbia University in 1947 is included in A Handbook for Business Education in the Small High School.28

Mention of the findings incorporated in these two monographs, as well as in the other related literature on the business curriculum and the whole curriculum, is made as deemed appropriate in the forthcoming chapters.

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CHAPTER III

CURRICULAR CONSIDERATIONS

The opinions of curriculum specialists are thought-provoking and sometimes sharply conflicting. Even so, they serve to establish a frame of reference. In this chapter, the relation between the whole curriculum and the business curriculum will be dealt with and criteria for judging curriculum planning tentatively established, mostly through reference to authoritative opinion.

I. INTRODUCTION

The curriculum should be the first consideration in any high school program, all administrative services being directed to improve the situation where pupil works with teacher in the learning process.¹

The educator finds that giving first consideration to the curriculum as advised by Pierce still leaves him with a wide choice of factors to consider. Which part of the curriculum merits first consideration?

The forces that affect the curriculum are so many and diverse that any intelligent consideration of curricular trends requires specialization on a particular area of the

curriculum—a particular subject-field—lest a human tendency to "go off in all directions" should immediately prevail. Yet no one area of the curriculum is independent of the others; no one follows its own course of development alone. Effective analysis demands that the educator first consider the whole of the educational program, which includes not only the curriculum, but also "all of the content, activities, and experiences that are organized and directed by the school to promote effective learning."^2

The importance of a guiding over-all philosophy—a common purpose and plan—becomes obvious immediately. As Spears points out, the whole school program must move ahead as a unit. In spite of general agreement among educators upon the necessity of a common purpose and plan, there invariably emerges the age-old dichotomy: academic courses, or vocational courses? What educational philosophy promises best service to the needs of youth—that concerned primarily with the "good life," or that which first considers the "good living"?

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Because secondary education is terminal for many young people, the task confronting the schools becomes more complex with the increasing heterogeneity of their population and the shifting social and economic forces which involve their students.  

The schools face the problem of finding a curriculum that meets the needs of all youth—those who prepare for further study in colleges and professional schools, and those who prepare for jobs.

Concerning nation-wide curricular trends which have influenced educators, Spears has the following somewhat wry comments:

Curriculum revision has for some time now dominated the center of the school stage... Teachers... awoke with a headache to the new philosophy that revision to be effective must never cease...

... Out of all this confusion there has come fusion...

Summary. The curriculum is the most important part of the educational program. Continual curriculum evolution to keep pace with the times is necessary. In order that the school program may operate as a unit, the evolution must follow a purpose and plan.

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4 Brink, op. cit., p. 1.
5 Spears, op. cit., p. vii.
II. THE WHOLE CURRICULUM

The story of secondary education in the United States is one of continuing efforts to discern the needs of youth and to make the curriculum meet the needs. The statement of guiding principles used in evaluating the program of studies in high schools throughout the nation emphasizes the importance of the continuing process of curriculum examination and improvement in relation to the changing needs and interests of pupils.  

Probably the most extensive recent attempt to discern the needs of youth was the formulation of the ten "imperative needs of youth" by the National Association of Secondary-School Principals. The next step was an attempt to bring the curriculum into line with the needs of youth—specifically, the effort to offer training which would meet the needs revealed. The subsequent national survey of curriculum provisions and needs made by the Association's Committee on Curriculum Planning and Development summarizes and synthesizes the best curricular provisions and procedures in effect as reported by hundreds of participating schools. Ellicker states

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that "all schools would profit by checking themselves against the findings of this curriculum study." 

In an apparent attempt to warn against blind reliance upon any tabulation made by adults of the needs of youth, Featherstone points out that

A great deal of the recent literature on youth education reflects the belief that far too much emphasis is placed upon preparation for life and too little upon living—that the curriculum is too much concerned with adult problems and perplexities and too little concerned with the problems and perplexities of youth. 

Featherstone goes on to discuss the relative isolation from adult society in which youth tends to live and the conflict between adolescent interests and pursuits and community life generally. The effect of this subtle isolation and conflict upon adult consideration of the needs of youth is obvious. 

Concerning the determination of curriculum objectives on the basis of youth needs, Brink emphasizes that the discovery of the needs of youth can best be made at the local community level, and in relation to particular groups of learners, because the needs of youth in one community may

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10 Ibid., p. 69.
differ significantly from those in another. The Evaluative Criteria of the Cooperative Study of Secondary-School Standards, Brink points out, is a challenge to teachers and administrators to focus their attention upon the needs of their students as a basis for evaluating their programs and determining needed improvements.  

Youth must learn to meet its own needs, say Eiserer and Corey, who recommend an effort at "understanding how the world looks to high school pupils as they learn whatever they believe they must learn to meet their needs."  

That the student must be considered in curriculum planning is clear. How about the community? Cherry says:

Since the schools are a social institution there is a cultural relationship between the school and the community. Therefore, judicious curriculum planning will recognize the necessity for promoting community understanding of desirable curriculum revisions through community participation in the engineering of the changes to be instituted.  

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11 Brink, op. cit., pp. 18-19.  


Cherry believes that effective curriculum development can take place only after the problems, attitudes, and dynamics of the community have been explored and identified.\textsuperscript{14}

There is general agreement on the need for a closer integration of the curriculum with the community, for it is recognized that no uniform program could be good for every high school. Ways must be found for the community to have a part in planning for its needs. Current trends reflect renewed striving toward this integration.

**Summary.** The curriculum of any school must be whatever the students of the particular school most need. The needs can best be determined through cooperative and informed efforts of the school staff, the community, and the students.

The emphasis on needs as the basis for curriculum planning is not new. In the seventeenth century, Comenius said:

> Whatever is taught should be taught as being of practical application in everyday life and of some definite use. That is to say, the pupil should understand that what he learns is... one of the facts which surround us, and that a fitting acquaintance with it will be of great value in life.\textsuperscript{15}

\textsuperscript{14}Ibid., p. 89.

III. THE BUSINESS CURRICULUM

In theory and to some extent in practice, many of the course offerings formerly classified as business subjects have been lost in the dust and haze of fusion. Core courses, common-learnings courses, and the like, have swallowed up much of the course content formerly a part of the business subjects. Featherstone points out that the first function of the curriculum is the integration function, which he describes as

... the cultivation in the growing individual of those skills, knowledges, traits, attitudes, loyalties, and dispositions which are minimally necessary for preserving the common culture and promoting the general welfare. 16

Functions of Business Education

The guiding principles of business education, as stated in the Evaluative Criteria, are to meet (1) the common needs in the area of business of all pupils, and (2) the vocational business needs of pupils who desire to prepare for employment in business occupations. Thus the ideal program is twofold. The first of the two aims is reflected

16 Featherstone, op. cit., p. 134.
in the general program, which gives orientation for the vocational program and provides

. . . the basic knowledges, skills, habits, attitudes, ideals, and appreciations for successful living in the business aspects of one's environment. 17

The vocational business program, ideally, is based on careful study of the available employment opportunities in the service area. Its primary concern is the promotion of successful beginning and advancement in business. 18

Youth needs in the business area. Among the ten imperative needs of youth, two in particular challenge business educators. Imperative Need Number 1 and Number 5 are quoted, respectively:

All youth need to develop saleable skills and those understandings and attitudes that make the worker an intelligent and productive participant in economic life. To this end, most youth need supervised work experience as well as education in the skills and knowledge of their occupations.

All youth need to know how to purchase and use goods and services intelligently, understanding both the values received by the consumer and the economic consequences of their acts. 19


18Ibid.

Aims in business education. A glance at the categories into which Walters groups the aims of the business education program indicates the extent to which experts in the field have reconciled the objectives of the program to the needs of youth. Walters includes the following aims:

1. Vocational competency
2. Adaptability to occupational changes
3. Personal use of business subjects
4. Development of sound social and economic viewpoints
5. Protection of the consumer.

A composite report of twenty-eight business educators throughout the United States, presented as part of a report to the National Commission on Cooperative Curriculum Planning, explains the two major purposes of business education as being (1) training in business relationships through the basic business education program, and (2) vocational training.

The report deals with the following areas in which business education contributes to the objectives of general education:

1. The objectives of self-realization
2. The objectives of human relationship
3. The objectives of economic efficiency
4. The objectives of civic responsibility.

In conclusion, the report points out:

(1) that the woeful ignorance of the rank and file of people with regard to business activities can be

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Business Education in the Small Rural High School

Because 88.5 percent of the high schools in Montana enroll fewer than three hundred pupils each, as is shown in Table I, page 69, the state is concerned most with the problems of the small rural high school. Many of the schools are in sparsely settled areas and are surrounded by farms. Many others are in small towns or villages, or in rural industrial areas such as sawmill or mining settlements.

Citing the 1948 report of the National Commission on School District Reorganization of the National Education Association, Wofford stresses the advantages of a high school enrollment of at least three hundred pupils, with a minimum of twelve full-time teachers. In the many Montana schools which are below the recommended minimum size, the pattern


of course offerings must vary from that of larger high schools. However, the guiding principles of curriculum construction should be the same. Cooper sums them up:

The curriculum of the rural school, whether in the open country or town, should be based on the individual and group needs of the pupils, should grow out of the life of the community, and should look to the future welfare of society as a whole...23

Wofford sounds the same note when she says of rural education: "It meets the needs of the boys and girls as they deal with their daily local problems."24

How to offer a broad enough course of studies to meet the variety of recognized needs of their small group of pupils is probably the most serious problem which faces the small rural high school in Montana. The vital question of meeting standards of accrediting is involved, and probably the regulations concerning preparation of teachers is most crucial to the small schools.25 The kind of teachers available has a direct influence on the curriculum, and teachers with the necessary qualifications for teaching commercial

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24 Wofford, op. cit., p. 179.

subjects are not easily found by small schools. Even when a qualified teacher is found, he is often able and willing to teach only commercial subjects. This creates a problem for the small school where there is only a complement of the three full-time teachers and superintendent, as required in schools accredited by the state. 

Summary

The business education program has two main purposes: (1) training in business relationships through the basic business education program, and (2) vocational training. The objectives of business education are designed to carry out these two main purposes in the light of the needs of the students served by the program.

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26 Ibid., Item 20.
CHAPTER IV

BUSINESS EDUCATION IN MONTANA

I. TRENDS INDICATED BY SCHOOL SURVEYS AND FOLLOW-UP STUDIES

The thirteen schools involved within the past five years in surveys which have some bearing on the commercial curriculum are shown on Figure 1. Their students come from farms, from small towns, and from rural industrial areas. The schools vary in size of enrollment from 33 to 327. About 90 percent of the schools in Montana are in this size range, and in other ways are somewhat like the thirteen schools dealt with in these studies. Findings pertinent to the business curricula have been set forth in some detail in Chapter II. The variety of needs which these schools strive to meet is suggested by Cooper:

A school should be judged by its success in satisfactorily meeting the needs of all its pupils, those who remain in the country, those who migrate to the cities, those who continue their education in college or other schools, and those who go to work or get married soon after leaving public school.¹

The school and community studies previously summarized reflect the efforts being made to determine the needs of the

Figure 1. Public high schools involved in recent studies having a bearing on the business curriculum.
pupils. An awareness of the fact that the community "provides the context from which the students' problems and educational needs arise" apparently prompted many of the educators who made surveys at the schools shown on Figure 1. ²

The 1954 biennial report of the Superintendent of Public Instruction of Montana states:

Outside of required courses, the curriculum of any high school . . . is determined on the local level. To secure a curriculum acceptable to all people is sometimes difficult . . . ³

Some of the questions posed in the report are given attention in the surveys. It is pointed out that:

The curricula of practically every high school in Montana contain courses in shorthand, typing, and to a lesser extent, bookkeeping, business English and business arithmetic.

There are many questions needing answers in regard to these subjects. Should typing be taught to everyone who desires it, or to those who take it for vocational use? . . . Should there be more emphasis on general business for everyday living? Are shorthand and typing and other office and business courses offered in the average high school of the kind to adequately prepare students for positions . . . ?⁴


⁴Ibid., pp. 39-40.
Concerning the business curricula, the synthesized findings of the school surveys dealt with herein indicate:

1. Graduates of every school involved consider bookkeeping and typing among the most valuable of their high school subjects, if not the most valuable.

2. Most of the educators conducting the surveys concluded that there should be more emphasis on basic business courses and more attention to non-vocational aims in the business curricula. For seven of the schools involved, a definite need was expressed for more basic business training.

3. Although the commercial course offerings were a proportionately large part of the curriculum in all of the schools involved, in two cases a need for broadening the commercial curriculum was reported.

4. In three schools, a need for consumer education was reported; and, in two schools, both situated in an agricultural area, graduates felt a need for training in such matters as mortgages, contracts, and bills of sale.

There was almost unanimous agreement among the graduates as to the great value of bookkeeping, although relatively few graduates had taken positions requiring a knowledge of bookkeeping at the level of vocational competence. The esteem in which bookkeeping is held by the graduates may be an indication of its value for personal use.
Summary

Business courses have come to play an important part in the program of all the schools where surveys involving curricula have been made recently. A general tendency toward broadening the business curriculum was found. Administrators tend to feel that the business curriculum most needs attention in the non-vocational business areas—that more basic business courses are needed. Graduates consider typing and bookkeeping among the most valuable high school subjects.

II. FINDINGS, COMPARISONS, AND TRENDS

Significance of school size

Small high schools are often considered the ones most plagued by the problem of limited curricular offerings. The business education curriculum is particularly involved in this problem, since many of its offerings are peripheral rather than core material.

The high school with fewer than three hundred pupils enrolled is usually classified a small high school. As is shown in Table 1, most of the 175 three- and four-year high schools in Montana—155 or 88.6 percent—are in that

TABLE I

FREQUENCIES AND PERCENTAGES OF ENROLLMENTS IN THE 175 MONTANA PUBLIC THREE- AND FOUR-YEAR HIGH SCHOOLS 1954 - 1955

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Range of enrollment</th>
<th>Number of schools in group</th>
<th>Percent of schools in group</th>
<th>Total enrollment</th>
<th>Average enrollment</th>
<th>Percent of enrollment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Group I over 350</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>8.6</td>
<td>12,676</td>
<td>845</td>
<td>45.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group II 151-350</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>17.7</td>
<td>7,031</td>
<td>227</td>
<td>25.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group III 76-150</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>24.0</td>
<td>4,570</td>
<td>109</td>
<td>16.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group IV 41-75</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>25.7</td>
<td>2,601</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>9.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group V under 41</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>24.0</td>
<td>1,114</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>4.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Totals</td>
<td>175</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>27,992</td>
<td>160</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Small schools under 300 155 88.6 13,725 88.5 49.0

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category. The number of small schools has gradually decreased since 1928-1929, when about 94 percent of the schools enrolled fewer than three hundred pupils each.\(^6\) Langenbach reports that about 90 percent of the schools had fewer than three hundred pupils each in 1950-1951.\(^7\)

Table I shows that, according to the Form A reports submitted in October, 1954, there were 15 schools, or 8.6 percent, which had enrollments larger than 350 pupils. The average enrollment in this group of schools was 845 each, representing a total of 12,676 pupils, or 45.3 percent of the pupils enrolled in the state's three- and four-year high schools. Of the schools in the state, 31, or 17.7 percent, enrolled from 151 through 350 pupils each, or a total of 7,031 pupils. This represents 25.1 percent of the total enrollment, and an average enrollment per school of 227 pupils. Group III, the schools enrolling from 76 through 150 pupils, numbered 42, or 24 percent of all the schools in the state. A total of 4,570 pupils were enrolled in this group--an average of 109 per school. In Group IV, average enrollment


dropped to 58 pupils per school, with a total of 2,601 pupils enrolled in the 45 schools found in this group. Group V, the schools with fewer than 41 pupils, numbered 42, with an average enrollment of 27 pupils per school, or a total of 1,114 pupils.

The 175 public three- and four-year high schools in the state enrolled a total of 27,992 pupils, or an average of 160 pupils each. As is shown in Table II, there was an increase of 19 pupils over the average enrollment of the school year 1950-1951, and an increase of 47 pupils over the average enrollment in 1928-1929. In 1928-1929, there were 22,090 pupils enrolled; in 1950-1951, there were 24,794; and in 1954-1955, there were 27,992. Along with the increase in number of pupils enrolled, there was a decrease in number of schools, with the number dropping from 195 in 1928-1929 to 176 in 1950-1951, and then to 175 in 1954-1955, as is shown in Table II.

In Washington, where the average enrollment in 1953-1954 was 178.5, according to Thomas, the problem of small school size was believed to limit business curricula. Fewer than 300 pupils each were enrolled by 68.3 percent of the schools in Washington, as compared to 88.6 percent in Montana.\(^8\) In

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TABLE II
COMPARISON OF NUMBER OF PUBLIC THREE- AND FOUR- YEAR HIGH SCHOOLS IN MONTANA AND PUPIL ENROLLMENT AT DIFFERENT PERIODS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number of schools</td>
<td>195c</td>
<td>176</td>
<td>175</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of pupils</td>
<td>22,090d</td>
<td>24,794</td>
<td>27,992</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average enrollment</td>
<td>113</td>
<td>135 [141]</td>
<td>160</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

aYoung, op. cit., p. 8.
bLangenbach, op. cit., p. 19.
cOne school with 129 pupils in combined junior and senior high school not counted in this figure because there was no breakdown of enrollment.
dYoung, op. cit., p. 10.
eTo nearest whole number.
Wisconsin, where school size is also considered a problem, the average enrollment in 1953-1954 was 210 pupils. Korpal reports a substantial increase in business education offerings after Wisconsin's extensive reorganization program which began in 1947 and which resulted in the combination of many small high schools.9

**Extent to which Business Subjects are Offered in the Schools**

The increase in the number of public high schools in Montana offering business subjects is shown by Table III. According to Young, of the 195 high schools in Montana in 1928-1929, almost 50 percent, or 97 schools, offered one or more business subjects. Langenbach reported that 98.9 percent of the 176 public high schools in the state, or all but two, offered one or more business subjects in 1949-1951. In 1953-1955, all of the schools offered one or more business subjects. Probably the percent of schools offering at least one business subject in 1928-1929 would have been higher, had Young's study included a two-year cycle, as did the surveys for 1949-1951 and 1953-1955. No doubt some of the schools offered certain subjects on alternate years.

In interpreting Table III, it must be noted that the findings in the study of 1928-1929 were based on questionnaire

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### TABLE III

**COMPARISON OF THE NUMBER OF MONTANA PUBLIC HIGH SCHOOLS OFFERING BUSINESS EDUCATION AT DIFFERENT PERIODS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1928-1929&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</th>
<th>1949-1950 and 1951&lt;sup&gt;b&lt;/sup&gt;</th>
<th>1953-1954 and 1954-1955</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total number of schools</td>
<td>195&lt;sup&gt;c&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>176</td>
<td>175</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number schools offering one or more business subjects</td>
<td>97</td>
<td>174</td>
<td>175</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percent of schools offering one or more business subjects</td>
<td>49.7</td>
<td>98.9</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<sup>a</sup>Young, *op. cit.*, p. 8.  
<sup>b</sup>Langenbach, *op. cit.*, p. 19.  
<sup>c</sup>One school with 129 pupils in combined junior and senior high school not counted in this figure because there was no breakdown of enrollment.
returns; those of the other two studies were based on Form A reports for two consecutive years. In the 1923-1929 study, questionnaires were sent to principals of all of the 97 public high schools in Montana which, according to records in the State Department of Public Instruction, offered one or more commercial subjects. Responses were received from 82 of the schools. Young's data as to course offerings and pupil enrollment were based on these returns. Comparisons based on these three surveys thus probably indicate tendencies affecting the business curricula in the state; beyond that, they are unreliable in ways. As was pointed out in a preceding section of this report, dealing with limitations, such comparisons are complicated, statistically, by the fact that the data were not gathered by parallel methods.

The business subjects offered in each enrollment group of the 176 Montana public high schools in the school years 1953-1954 and 1954-1955, as reported on the Form A reports, are shown in Table IV. Typewriting, the most popular subject, was offered by all of the schools at least one year of the two-year cycle. Bookkeeping was offered in all of the 15 schools in Group I (schools enrolling more than 350 pupils each). Among the Group II schools—those enrolling from 151 through 350 pupils each, 93.6 percent offered bookkeeping. Of the Group III schools, 40, or 95.2 percent, offered bookkeeping. In Group IV, almost the same percentage, or 95.6,
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offered the subject. The number dropped to 81 percent for the Group V schools, where the enrollment was below 41. The overall percent of schools offering bookkeeping was 92.

A total of 149 schools in the state, or 85.1 percent, offered shorthand, with all of the Group I and Group II schools offering it. In Groups III, IV, and V, the percentages were 95.2, 77.8, and 66.7 respectively. The subject offered with next highest frequency after the top three was general business, which was offered by 54 schools, or a total of 30.9 percent of the schools. There was not a wide variation in the percentages of schools in the different groups offering general business, except that a higher percent of the Group I schools—60 percent—offered the subject. In the Group IV and V schools, where the average enrollments were 58 and 27, respectively, the percent of schools offering general business was somewhat higher than in the Group II and III schools. This is as Shipley says it should be in the small high school, where the aims should mainly concern general business education.10 The title "General business" on Table IV represents the offerings at all grade levels and includes courses called "Junior business training," "advanced business training," and "business principles." Perhaps the

most common course of this type is junior business training, offered at the ninth grade level. A few schools offer advanced business training in the eleventh or twelfth grade.

Office practice was offered by 24 schools, or 13.7 percent, being given with most frequency among the large schools. Of the Group I schools, 33.3 percent offered it. Commercial law was offered in 20 of the schools, or 11.4 percent. Like office practice, commercial law was offered most frequently in the large schools of Group I, with one-third of the schools giving the course. The courses mentioned above were the only ones offered in more than ten percent of the schools. Among the other ten courses classified among business subjects, only business arithmetic was offered in more than six schools. This offering was made in 14 schools, or 8 percent of the total number. Five of the remaining courses, as shown in Table IV, were offered in only one school each.

In some of the schools, particularly the small ones, certain courses are offered every other year. Naturally, these courses are included as course offerings in Table IV.

A comparison of the frequency with which the most popular of the courses have been offered is shown in Table V. Typewriting, offered in 100 percent of the schools in the state in 1953-1955, had shown a great increase in frequency since 1928-1929, when it was offered in only 40 percent of the schools in the state. In 1949-1951, the course was being
TABLE V

COMPARISON OF EXTENT OF BUSINESS SUBJECT OFFERINGS FOUND IN THE MONTANA PUBLIC HIGH SCHOOLS AT DIFFERENT PERIODS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subject offerings</th>
<th>Percent of schools offering in 1928-1929&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</th>
<th>Percent of schools offering in 1949-1950&lt;sup&gt;b&lt;/sup&gt; or 1950-1951&lt;sup&gt;b&lt;/sup&gt;</th>
<th>Percent of schools offering in 1953-1954 or 1954-1955&lt;sup&gt;b&lt;/sup&gt;</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Typewriting</td>
<td>40.00</td>
<td>98.86</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bookkeeping</td>
<td>38.46</td>
<td>78.41</td>
<td>92.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shorthand</td>
<td>35.38</td>
<td>84.09</td>
<td>85.14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General business</td>
<td>7.18</td>
<td>25.00</td>
<td>30.85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business law</td>
<td>13.33</td>
<td>10.23</td>
<td>11.42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business arithmetic</td>
<td>18.46</td>
<td>9.66</td>
<td>8.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business geography</td>
<td>15.38</td>
<td>2.27</td>
<td>2.28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business English</td>
<td>5.13</td>
<td>1.14</td>
<td>3.42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Salesmanship</td>
<td>3.08</td>
<td>1.14</td>
<td>1.71</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<sup>a</sup>Young, op. cit., p. 15. Only 97 of the 195 public high schools in Montana had business subject offerings. (Young's study dealt with 195 schools; see footnote c of Table II, page 72.) Of the 97 schools offering business subjects, 82 responded to Young's questionnaire, and her findings are based on these responses. For the other two periods, percentages are based on Form A reports.

<sup>b</sup>Langenbach, op. cit., p. 78.
offered in 98.86 percent of the schools. In Washington, 98 percent of the high schools offered typing in 1953-1954.11

The fact that typing is offered in all of the Montana public high schools attests to the demand for it among high school students. Typing for personal use is apparently very widespread, for it is obvious that only a small percentage of all the typists trained in high schools can be used as professional typists. Another factor which has a bearing on the personal use of typewriting is the increase in the use of portable typewriters, which have undergone great mechanical improvement in the last three decades, and which have become relatively less expensive.

The number of schools offering bookkeeping was larger in 1953-1955 than it was in 1928-1929. In 1928-1929, 38.46 percent of the schools offered bookkeeping; in 1949-1951, 78.41 percent of the schools were giving it; and in 1953-1955, 92 percent of all the schools offered bookkeeping. This increase occurred during a period in which technological advances gave the business world machines with marvelous powers to record and compute figures. The bespectacled "bookkeeper" crouched over his high, slanted desk is now almost a fictitious character. A survey conducted by the New York

11Thomas, op. cit., p. 30.
City Chapter of the National Office Management Association in September, 1954, revealed that only 45 percent of the office positions in New York City required a knowledge of bookkeeping. No doubt the percentage is higher in Montana, or in any area where business and industry is more dispersed and presumably could not profitably make use of expensive bookkeeping machines. In any event, it would appear that the value of a bookkeeping course in Montana high schools is not primarily vocational. As has been pointed out before, few of the graduates polled in follow-up studies in the state had taken positions requiring a knowledge of bookkeeping; however, the one finding reported in all of the studies was that bookkeeping was considered among the most valuable courses in the high school curriculum. Apparently, students turn to bookkeeping for training in such business affairs as management of personal and home accounts, savings, investing, and budgeting. Probably they find such training concentrated mostly in bookkeeping courses in many high schools. This might be the case in schools where a course in neither general business nor consumer education is offered. Some students believe they can find elements of consumer education in bookkeeping courses, as they can in some schools—where the teacher makes a special effort to include units adapted to the needs of her students.

In an attempt to keep up with the trend toward bookkeeping for personal use, business educators are in the
process of revising the course aims. Originally they conceived of bookkeeping as a vocational subject. In speaking of trends reflecting the thinking of 373 business educators, Enterline says:

... bookkeeping positions are not as plentiful as they once were. Less emphasis should be placed upon bookkeeping from the strictly vocational point of view.\(^{12}\)

In the state of Washington, 97 percent of all the high schools offered bookkeeping in 1953-1954—an even higher percentage than in Montana.\(^{13}\)

Bookkeeping has a long and honorable history as a part of the curriculum in Montana schools. Hutchinson reports that in 1872, seven years after the establishment of the common school system for the territory, bookkeeping was added by law as a curriculum requirement in the common schools. In the days of the territorial common schools, according to Hutchinson, the curriculum was largely determined by what books they could gather. Perhaps the bookkeeping text was either lost or worn out two years later, for in 1874 the legal requirement of bookkeeping was removed from the territorial statutes.\(^{14}\) In 1881,

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\(^{13}\)Thomas, *op. cit.*, p. 30.

bookkeeping occupied a prominent place in the high school course of study in Bozeman, as reported by Sasek.\(^{15}\)

Table V shows that shorthand is being offered in 85.14 percent of the high schools in Montana. About the same percentage—85—of Washington high schools offered the course in 1953-1954.\(^{16}\) Montana schools during the 1949-1951 period offered shorthand in 84.09 percent of the cases, but in 1928-1929, the course was offered in only 35.38 percent of the schools. Follow-up studies of high school graduates in Montana already cited herein revealed that only a negligible number go into stenographic positions. Enterline says:

Too many students are receiving stenographic training. There needs to be a better adjustment between the number of persons being so trained and employment possibilities.\(^{17}\)

Of great concern to business educators should be the fact that many high schools in the state offer one year of shorthand, when it is impossible because of small school size to offer a second year.\(^{18}\) The writing speed of approximately


\(^{16}\) Thomas, op. cit., p. 30.

\(^{17}\) Enterline, op. cit., p. 18.

\(^{18}\) The Form A reports do not always show whether the shorthand offering is first- or second- year, so that it is not possible to tell from that source how many schools offer only beginning shorthand. However, it is clear that many schools do.
sixty words a minute which the average student attains by the end of one year of shorthand, as reported in Langenbach's survey, represents a great investment in time and effort, but it does not constitute vocational competence. The outlines have been learned, but no great speed has been developed; that is the primary concern of advanced shorthand classes. There is little chance that speed will be developed to any great extent on the job, because speed is best built through carefully planned and timed dictation such as is found in advanced shorthand classes but not in the dictation situations in most offices. It is likely that the graduate with only one year of shorthand training and a speed of about sixty words a minute will find only limited opportunities for employment. Even if the job-seeker were fortunate enough to find an employer who is willing to dictate at approximately sixty words a minute, the chances are that he might be unwilling to pay the salary of a stenographer trained in shorthand when he might find an untrained person who could write almost that fast using longhand.

There is a high drop-out rate between the first and second years of shorthand. In 1949-1950, Langenbach found 149 classes in first-year shorthand, with a median enrollment of 9 pupils. In second-year shorthand, there were 68 classes in

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19Langenbach, op. cit., p. 120.
the state, with a median of 6 pupils enrolled. In view of the fact that shorthand is a vocational subject, and that one year of training does not, in general, give vocational competence; it would appear that there should be careful examination of the extent to which one year of shorthand is given in Montana high schools. According to Walters:

Success in shorthand depends upon the students' possessing a number of abilities—keen hearing, a good memory for symbols, manual dexterity, and a thorough knowledge of the English language, including an extensive command of words. The fact that the abilities that contribute to skill in shorthand are so varied in nature is frequently overlooked by school officials. Consequently, many students who lack one or more of these abilities are permitted to elect the subject. There can be no question about the need for more careful guidance for those who are thinking of preparing for stenographic work.

Walters' comments point out some of the main reasons for the high drop-out rate between the first and second years of shorthand. This attrition, added to the limitation in advanced shorthand offerings caused by small school size, results in many pupils taking shorthand for only one year. Is this worth their time?

In the opinion and experience of many business teachers, Walters' statement concerning the practice of allowing students of limited ability to elect shorthand seems a classic understatement. Enterline discusses a significant trend thus:

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20 Langenbach, op. cit., p. 84.


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There is an erroneous belief that if students lack the aptitudes, interests, and abilities essential to success in academic studies, they can do creditable work in business courses. Students of limited ability should be eliminated from vocational business courses. The business department must not be permitted to become the "dumping ground" for failures and misfits from other courses.22

In the consideration of any conscientious business educator, the needs of the pupils are more important than the threatened stigma of becoming a "dumping ground," but most feel that allowing pupils of low ability to take vocational business courses cheats the pupils by failing to fulfill their needs. They feel that it would be an unpleasant waste of time for the pupil of limited ability to struggle along in vocational courses, even though he were incapable of vocational competence. They believe that it would be better for the pupil of limited capacity if he were counseled to take a course in general business education, or in some other area which could be of help to him.

Table V, on page 79, shows the trend toward wider offerings in general business. In 1953-1955, 30.85 percent of the high schools in the state offered general business courses, as compared to 25 percent in 1949-1951 and 7.18 percent in 1928-1929. The importance of general business education has been repeatedly emphasized by business

educators. Enterline reports this consensus of opinion among 373 business educators:

> More emphasis should be placed upon a type of social-business-economic education that will develop an understanding and an appreciation of the various economic factors and relationships involved in modern living...

> Every secondary school student should be required to include in his preparation certain phases of social-economic or general business education regardless of educational or vocational aims. No general education is complete without including some instruction about business.23

In Washington, 34 percent of the high schools offer courses in general business, according to Thomas, who recommends that "commercial subjects for personal use be stressed more than in the past, as the majority of the students will use their commercial education for personal use and not vocationally."24

Korpal reports that:

> The aim of business educators in Wisconsin prior to 1930 was vocational in nature. Since that time, the aims of most Wisconsin business educators were to give basic business training to all business students and vocational training to those seeking employment in business.25

Korpal considered the position of general business or basic business courses "rather secure" in 1950-1951, and

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23 Enterline, op. cit., p. 17.
24 Thomas, op. cit., p. 59.
stated that such courses "seemed to supplement rather than supplant the more traditional offerings."²⁶

As is shown in Table V, page 79, business law, business arithmetic, business geography, business English, and salesmanship are the other business courses offered in high schools frequently enough to make comparisons meaningful. In 1953-1955, these were offered in 11.42 percent, 8 percent, 2.28 percent, 3.42 percent, and 1.71 percent of the Montana public high schools, respectively. Time has proven that there is little or no demand in offices for the subject matter taught in some of these courses, such as business geography, for example. Its value is primarily for personal use. These basic business courses had all been offered to a wider extent in Montana in 1923-1929. Thus it appears that the trend toward increase in number of schools offering vocational subjects is reversed for the non-vocational subjects. However, there are several reasons why this apparent reversal cannot be taken at face value. First is the fact already mentioned—that bookkeeping is to some extent being made to serve the purposes of basic business. Second is the fact that course names are not an adequate indication of course content, and it may be that much basic business training is being offered in courses under other names. For example, business arithmetic course

²⁶Ibid., p. 52.
offerings show a decrease from 18.46 percent of the schools in 1928-1929 to 8 percent in 1953-1955. However, a course called "practical mathematics" is now being offered to a considerable extent in Montana high schools, and it is likely that the course content is much like that of business arithmetic. Another important example of basic business training being given in courses under other names is that of economics. Much consumer education is now a part of courses in economics, which are not usually classified as business subjects, but rather as social studies.

Among the recommendations Shipley makes for expanding the range of business offerings to meet individual student needs in small high schools, is this one:

By correlating courses which have a close relation to one another. Instead of offering a separate course in business arithmetic it can be correlated with bookkeeping situations where computations are in concrete setting or context.27

Any line drawn between business subjects and others must perforce be arbitrary, and it is beyond the scope of this study to make such a division except for purposes of comparison. In labeling subjects "business courses" an attempt was made to err, if at all, on the side of conservatism, by excluding any courses which presumably could be competently

27Shipley, op. cit., p. 33.
taught by teachers not trained in the business subject field. The subjects listed in Table IV, page 76, are simply the ones for which business teachers usually feel a responsibility.

**Pupil Enrollments in Business Subjects**

Pupil enrollments in the business subjects offered in Montana public high schools in September, 1954, are shown in Table VI. In typewriting, there were 96 classes in the Group I schools, with 2,998 pupils enrolled. In the Group II schools, there was the same number of classes, but the enrollment was 1,946. The Group III schools had 105 classes with 1,400 pupils enrolled; and the Group IV schools enrolled 872 typing students in 92 classes. The 72 typing classes in the smallest schools, Group V, enrolled 435 pupils. All of the schools had a total of 461 typing classes, with 7,651 pupils enrolled. Percentages of total high school pupil enrollment are shown later, in Table VII, page 94.

As shown in Table VI, shorthand classes were most numerous and class enrollments were largest in the large schools, with 61 Group I schools enrolling 1,435 pupils. There was a steady decrease in number of classes and size of class enrollment as school size decreased. The total number of shorthand classes in the state was 225, with 2,934 pupils enrolled.

Pupil enrollments in bookkeeping were comparable to those in shorthand, with roughly the same proportionate
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decrease of classes and size of enrollment as school size decreased.

In bookkeeping, there were fewer classes, with the median enrollment somewhat higher. The total number of classes was 162, with 2,762 pupils enrolled.

In general business, there were 57 classes in the state, with 1,097 pupils enrolled. Of these classes, 19 were found in the large schools, with 543 pupils enrolled; 6 were found in Group II schools, with 119 pupils enrolled; 13 in Group IV schools, with 164 pupils enrolled; and 9 in Group V schools, with 80 pupils enrolled in the classes.

For each of the other thirteen business subjects offered in the 175 Montana public high schools in September of 1954, the number of classes was twenty or less. No subject among them had a total pupil enrollment in all classes of more than 242 pupils.

A comparison of Table IV, page 76, and Table VI, shows that the rank order of pupil enrollment in the top four business subjects is almost the same as the order of frequency of offerings in the high schools. That is, typewriting has the largest pupil enrollment, and is the business subject most frequently offered. Shorthand ranks third in frequency of offerings, but has a slightly larger pupil enrollment than does bookkeeping, which ranks second in frequency of offerings. General business ranks fourth in both.
A comparison of pupil enrollments in typewriting, shorthand, and bookkeeping in the Montana public high schools at different periods is shown in Table VII. The total pupil enrollments in typing classes—1,836 in 1928-1929; 6,918 in 1950-1951; and 7,651 in 1954-1955—represent, respectively, the following percentages of the total pupil enrollment in Montana public high schools: 8.3 percent, 27.9 percent, and 27.3 percent. In 1928-1929, the bookkeeping enrollment was 5 percent of the total pupil enrollment in Montana high schools; twenty-one years later this percentage had increased to 9.6; and after another four years it was 9.9. In shorthand, there were 1,074 pupils, or 4.9 percent of the whole high school enrollment, in 1928-1929. In 1950-1951, this was 9.9 percent; and in 1954-1955, the figure was 10.5 percent of the total high school pupil enrollment.

In 1949, reports Korpal, Wisconsin had 29 percent of its total pupil enrollment taking typewriting; 13.2 percent enrolled in shorthand classes; and 12.3 percent taking bookkeeping.\textsuperscript{28}

\textbf{The Place of Business Education in the Curriculum}

Commercial courses have occupied an important place in

\textsuperscript{28}Korpal, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 65.
TABLE VII
COMPARISON OF PUPIL ENROLLMENTS IN TYPEWRITING, SHORTHAND, AND BOOKKEEPING IN THE MONTANA PUBLIC HIGH SCHOOLS AT DIFFERENT PERIODS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total high school pupil enrollment in all subjects in Montana</td>
<td>22,090&lt;sup&gt;c&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>24,794&lt;sup&gt;d&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>27,992</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In top three business subjects:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Typewriting</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number</td>
<td>1,836&lt;sup&gt;e&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>6,918</td>
<td>7,651</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percent of total high school pupil enrollment</td>
<td>8.3</td>
<td>27.9</td>
<td>27.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bookkeeping</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number</td>
<td>1,120&lt;sup&gt;e&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>2,394</td>
<td>2,762</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percent of total high school pupil enrollment</td>
<td>5.0</td>
<td>10.1 [9.6]</td>
<td>9.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shorthand</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number</td>
<td>1,074&lt;sup&gt;e&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>2,460</td>
<td>2,943</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percent of total high school pupil enrollment</td>
<td>4.9</td>
<td>10.0 [9.9]</td>
<td>10.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<sup>a</sup>Figures for 1928-1929 based on questionnaire returns; with 82 schools responding out of 97 schools which offered one or more business subjects; others based on Form A.

<sup>b</sup>Langenbach, op. cit., p. 93.
<sup>c</sup>Young, op. cit., p. 10.
<sup>d</sup>Langenbach, op. cit., p. 19.
<sup>e</sup>Young, op. cit., p. 20.
the course of study from the earliest days of the educational system in Montana, as is revealed by Hutchinson's study.  

Sasek reports that, as early as 1902, Helena High School had a four-year commercial course, and Butte High School reported a commercial department with more than two hundred pupils enrolled in 1904.  

Commercial curricula have escaped specific regulation or control by the accrediting agencies, because business subjects have been offered on an elective basis. However, there have been frequent recommendations concerning subject offerings, course content, and aims considered most useful and beneficial to the students. In 1912, Deputy Superintendent of Public Instruction G. A. Ketcham discussed in some detail the aims and objectives for eight business subjects he deemed beneficial, as a part of the course of study published for accredited high schools. In bookkeeping, the course objectives were purely vocational at that time. Ketcham urged that more attention be given commercial geography and chided teachers for having regarded the subject as a "sort of incidental." Business English was recommended

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29 Hutchinson, op. cit., pp. 98-100.
30 Sasek, op. cit., p. 193.
highly, with the following statement: "If the High School is to turn out really competent stenographers there must be a special course in business English." This course was recommended only for the larger schools.\

Course content and aims for commercial law, commercial arithmetic, penmanship, and typewriting were also suggested in some detail. Concerning the requirements for shorthand, Ketcham seemed to hold rather strong convictions. He had this to say:

The use of good English is the first requirement of the course. A student seriously deficient in English will be an everlasting source of annoyance to his employer and of little profit to himself.\

The course of study published in 1932 recognized the importance of two main purposes justifying the inclusion of business courses in the curriculum. State Superintendent of Public Instruction, Elizabeth Ireland, emphasized the needs of students for general, non-vocational business education as well as vocational courses, and recommended serious consideration of the addition of basic, non-vocational courses. Ireland stated that not one, but several commercial curricula should be offered in the high schools, insofar as possible. Course aims and content were outlined in the course of study for the following courses: bookkeeping, shorthand, typewriting,

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32 Ibid., p. 75.
33 Ibid., p. 73.
commercial law, salesmanship and advertising, junior business training, business English, commercial geography, and business arithmetic. In the course of study, course aims in bookkeeping tended toward training for general, personal use, and less toward vocational use. 34

Implications of Findings

In reviewing the findings of the 1953-1954 survey of business education in Montana, as reported herein, and in following the development of commercial curricula in the state, the observer wonders if too much emphasis is being put on these subjects, particularly in the very small high schools with enrollments of fewer than one hundred pupils. Are business courses crowding more vital and essential courses out of the curriculum? Concerning this, Barnes reports:

... Montana schools put more emphasis on the general than on the vocational subjects (a ratio of seven to three); more on the academic than on the non-academic (ratio of three to two). 35

Another tendency which might be suspected by the educator who examines the curricular trends in business education is that popular demand for business courses may

34Elizabeth Ireland, A Course of Study for the Secondary Schools of Montana, State Department of Public Instruction (Helena: State Board of Education, 1932), pp. 543-599.

lead schools to let students enroll for courses they do not actually need. Typewriting, for example, is a course most pupils are eager to take in high schools. Is this because they need to know how to type, either for personal or vocational use, or because typing usually requires no preparation or homework and furnishes a pleasant change from the academic pursuits that fill the school day?

For many high school girls, a certain glamour surrounds shorthand classes, probably because stenography is believed to be a quick route to a supposedly pleasant and well-paid secretarial position. Many pupils enroll in shorthand with no idea of the abilities, time, and effort involved in acquiring skill in stenography.

The Place of Guidance in the Business Education Program

The need which the foregoing facts make apparent is for positive guidance in connection with business education. Before choosing business subjects as electives, particularly vocational business subjects, students need definite information as to the uses to which the skills acquired, if any, can be put. They need to be encouraged to weigh the value of such skills against the expenditure in time that their acquisition requires. A student who wishes to take typing, for example, might do well to ask himself whether he is likely to go into a job requiring typing. If not, is it likely that he will have access to a typewriter for his
personal writing; and does he do enough writing to make it worth his time to spend hours learning to type, when he might gain more useful knowledge from a course in economics, for example?

The student of low academic ability may wisely be encouraged to take courses in consumer education, or other basic business courses dealing with personal-economic problems. Leith reports that it is among students of low academic ability that personal-economic needs are most keenly felt; such pupils greatly need to improve their personal-economic competency.36

With the growth of the guidance program in Montana high schools, the business education departments have experienced a lessening of direct responsibility for vocational guidance for pupils in the subject field. According to Sorenson, the most significant trend is toward offering occupational information as an integrated part of other courses. Over ninety percent of the schools offer vocational guidance, to some extent.37


37 Eugene Sorenson, "Mid-Twentieth Century Re-Survey of Educational and Vocational Guidance in Montana Public High Schools" (unpublished professional paper, Montana State University, Missoula, 1951), p. 46.
CHAPTER V

SUMMARY AND OBSERVATIONS

The problem which prompted this study was that of discerning the curricular trends in business education in Montana public high schools, as revealed by research studies already completed and by other data already collected by the State Department of Public Instruction, relative to business education in the state. Comparisons between findings in previous studies were needed in order that trends might be discovered.

Summary of Findings Concerning Curricula Considerations

The curriculum is the most important part of the educational program, in the opinion of many experts, and continual revision is necessary to keep it adapted to the needs of pupils. Practically every type of life activity has a business side; therefore, business education is an integral part of general education.

The main purposes of business education are: (1) training in business relationships through the basic business education program, and (2) vocational training. The objectives of business education are planned to serve these two purposes in the light of the needs of the students involved.

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Summary of Trends Indicated by Follow-up Studies

School surveys and follow-up studies are essential for the purpose of determining the needs of pupils and forming a basis for curriculum revision. The synthesized findings of twelve professional papers involving thirteen schools in Montana are indications that:

1. Some educators felt there should be more emphasis on basic business courses and more attention to non-vocational aims in the business curricula.

2. Even though commercial courses constitute already a proportionately large part of the curricula in the high schools of Montana, many of the graduates believed that the business curricula should be expanded.

3. Most of the graduates polled in follow-up studies considered bookkeeping and typewriting among the most valuable of their high school subjects, if not the most valuable. Other commercial subjects were also ranked high in the scale of value, although not as high as were bookkeeping and typing.

Summary of Trends Indicated by Survey of Curricular Phases of Current Business Education, and Comparison of Data for Different Periods

About eighty-eight percent of the high schools in Montana enroll fewer than three hundred pupils each. Thus the problems of limited curricular offerings are common. Average enrollment has increased from 113 in 1928-1929
to 160 in 1954-1955, along with an increase in the total number of pupils and a decrease in the number of high schools.

All of the schools in the state offered typewriting in 1953-1954 or 1954-1955, 92 percent offered bookkeeping, and 85.1 percent offered shorthand. These three courses were by far the most frequently offered. They also enrolled the largest percentages of the total pupil enrollment in the schools. Since 1928-1929, there has been a great increase in the number of schools offering the top three business courses, as well as increases in the percentages of students enrolled in the courses.

Bookkeeping is apparently being pressed into service as a basic or general business course, and taught for its personal value more than its vocational use.

That an unnecessarily high percentage of students is enrolling for shorthand appears likely. The course is not justified by its value for personal use, and business and industry cannot use all of the pupils who are being trained, or partly trained, in shorthand.

Basic business training is offered as a part of other courses, and under so many course names, that it is not possible to discern the trends with any scientific accuracy. The tendency toward correlating related courses obscures changes which may be taking place in the area of general business. A need for non-vocational business was found.
Course offerings, pupil enrollments, and curricular trends in Wisconsin and Washington were somewhat like those in Montana. Comparisons revealed many similarities. Somewhat greater emphasis on the aims for general, basic business education for personal use seems to be found in Washington and Wisconsin than in Montana.

Commercial courses are a vital part of the high school course of study in Montana; they have been so for some time; and they promise to continue so. The extent to which vocational courses are offered in very small high schools would bear close scrutiny to insure that only pupils who actually need the skills taught are enrolled in the courses.

There is a need for careful guidance for pupils taking vocational business subjects, or planning to enroll in them. Furnishing this guidance is the joint responsibility of the business department and guidance personnel of the school.

Observations

A previous researcher plowing his way through the Form A reports suggested that research be done as to why the reports are so inaccurately and incompletely filled out. His recommendation may seem petulant, but it indicates a need. Perhaps training in the completion of Form A and similar official reports should be a part of the preparation for administrative positions in the schools. Administrators should recognize such paper work as part of their duties.
Several questions beyond the scope of this study have been raised by the foregoing inquiry into business curricular trends. One area in which there is need for further research concerns the shorthand offering in high schools. Should enrollment in this subject be limited more, through careful counseling? Is one year of shorthand training worth the time and effort invested?

Another area needing further study is that of basic, non-vocational business education, particularly consumer education. Is such training being offered to a great enough extent to meet the needs of the pupils served?
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