Effects of the Montana state foundation program on an isolated high school

Harold George Mogen

The University of Montana
EFFECTS OF THE MONTANA STATE FOUNDATION PROGRAM ON AN ISOLATED HIGH SCHOOL

by

H. G. MOGEN

B. S. Montana State College, 1950

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

MONTANA STATE UNIVERSITY
1957

Approved by:

[Signatures]

Chairman, Board of Examiners
Dean, Graduate School

AUG 14 1957
Date
## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CHAPTER</th>
<th>PAGE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I. INTRODUCTION .....................................</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Setting for This Study ..........................</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Purpose of This Study ..........................</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Procedures ..................................</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II. LEGAL AND COMMUNITY FACTORS AFFECTING THE ISOLATION OF WHITETWATER HIGH SCHOOL</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III. STATE FOUNDATION PROGRAMS AND EQUALIZATION POLICIES AND THEIR EFFECTS ON WHITETWATER HIGH SCHOOL</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theory of Equalization ........................</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Montana State Foundation Program ........</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foundation Program for Whitewater ............</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IV. PROBLEMS OF INADEQUATE FINANCE ...........</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS ..........</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BIBLIOGRAPHY .......................................</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FIGURE</td>
<td>PAGE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------</td>
<td>------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Map Showing Location of Whitewater, High School Students and Common School Districts Comprising High School District</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Foundation Program Costs for 1955-1957 Schedule Elementary and Secondary</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Foundation Program Costs Per Pupil, 1955-1957 Schedule, Elementary and Secondary</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

I. SETTING FOR THIS STUDY

Whitewater is a very small town of about sixty people, located in the north central part of Phillips County, Montana. It is about thirty miles from U. S. Highway number 2 which is accessible to it only by gravel roads. Besides a few dwellings, the town has one very small general store, a cafe, a bar, and a garage. The postoffice is located in a private home. The only industry in and around Whitewater is agriculture, mainly wheat farming and livestock. Since much of the land is grazing land the population is very sparse. Whitewater is serviced by a branch line of the Great Northern Railroad. This branch line extends from Saco to Hoagland. A train goes to Hoagland on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays and returns to Saco on Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Saturdays. Thus, mail is received and sent out three times per week. The town has but two telephones, both public, one located at the general store and the other at the cafe.

The school has three buildings, a high school, a grade school, and a gymnasium. The high school is a two story frame building composed of three classrooms, a small office and two small restrooms. The elementary building is also a frame structure of two classrooms, two restrooms, and a basement lunchroom. The gymnasium is a basement with concrete
walls below ground level and frame above ground level. The physical plant is grossly inadequate as to size, structure, and arrangement.

Because of its low enrollment the school has a foundation program which is insufficient to maintain even a very minimum program of education. The school is dependent upon a special levy each year for operating funds. The school has been declared isolated by the county budget board.

II. PURPOSE OF THIS STUDY

The purpose of this study was to determine how the Montana school finance program has affected the operation of Whitewater High School.

This study calls attention to the fact that the people of the Whitewater community were in need of a better school; but that it was assumed that it is necessary for the school to operate. It attempts to show to what extent the existing system of the foundation program financing, i.e., the per student basis for equalization does not provide a desirable program for the people of the Whitewater community. It calls attention to the fact that there is a need for the establishment of a minimum foundation program for such a high school regardless of size, that the present foundation program as it applies to Whitewater is inconsistent with the theory of equalization.

This study is limited to the Whitewater School for the years 1953-54, 54-55 and 55-56. The assumption is that any
isolated high school faces the same basic problems which are worthy of study and further, that a thorough study and explanation of the legal provisions for financing isolated high schools may point the way to a solution of some of these problems.

III. PROCEDURES

The information for this study was obtained from Montana School Law, the office of the County Superintendent of Schools of Phillips County, the State Department of Public Instruction, and related literature from the library of Montana State University. The writer had personal contact with the school, in the capacity of superintendent, for the school years of 1953-54 and 1954-55.

The data collected were analyzed to show facts and figures of school finance. A map of the county is included to show size and location of the local school district and the high school district, and also to show roads and geographic conditions. Graphs are included to show total costs and per student costs of the foundation programs for different sized schools.
CHAPTER II
LEGAL AND COMMUNITY FACTORS AFFECTING
THE ISOLATION OF WHITewater HIGH SCHOOL

Reasons usually advanced for the continued operation of Whitewater High School are: (1) the large area served by the school, (2) the distances involved in the students attending any other high school, (3) the infeasibility of operating a bus to another school, because of distance, road conditions, and the small number of students who could be served by a bus, (4) the fact that the Whitewater High School has been declared an isolated school.¹

The accompanying map (Figure 1) shows the location of the high school students attending Whitewater for the 1953-54, 1954-55, and 1955-56 school years. It also shows the common school districts which make up the high school district. In the school year 1953-54, of the fifteen students in attendance, only four lived in Whitewater; the remainder lived from six to twenty-one miles in various directions from Whitewater. Of twenty-one students, in the year 1954-55, six resided in town. The same was true for 1955-56.

If the Whitewater High School were to cease operating, these children and their families would all be faced with the problem of getting to another school or of not going to high

¹Office of County Superintendent of Schools of Phillips County, Montana.
school at all. There would be the possibility of commuting from home which would involve distances of from thirty-five to fifty-six miles one way over poor roads. This would be not only a great financial burden but a threat to the safety and welfare of the children involved. There is the possibility of seeking room and board for the children in another town maintaining a high school. Again, the family would be faced with a financial burden and the children would be deprived of parental guidance and homelife. There is the fourth possibility of the parents renting or buying a home in another town and moving there for the school year. This would probably be the most desirable of the possibilities as to the welfare of the children, but the financial burden could well be prohibitive. Any one of these possibilities would be less desirable than to maintain a high school at Whitewater. Any one of them would be in greater conflict with the theory of education in this country, i.e., the theory of equal opportunity and free public school education for all. Operating a bus from Whitewater to Malta seems absurd in view of the fact that only a small portion of the students reside in Whitewater. The very fact that the school has been declared isolated tends to verify the inadvisability of adopting any of the above alternatives. Montana School Law is very clear on what criteria shall be applied in determining isolation:

Before any elementary school having an ANB of eight (8) or less may be approved as an isolated school, and before any high school having an ANB of twenty-four (24) or less
may be approved as an isolated high school, the board of trustees of the district wherein said school is located shall, on or before the fifteenth day of June in each year, make written application to the budget board for approval. Such application shall be acted upon at the time the budget of the applying district is considered, and such application shall be granted if said budget board and the county superintendent of schools shall find and determine that transportation of the pupils of such school to another school is impractical by reasons of the existence of obstacles to travel, such as mountains, rivers, poor roads, distances of the pupils' homes from county roads or highways, or the distance of such isolated school from the nearest open school having room and facilities for the pupils of such isolated school; and an elementary school may also be approved as an isolated school upon a finding and determination by said budget board, approved by the county superintendent of schools, of the existence of conditions other than obstacles to travel which would result in unusual hardship to the pupils of such isolated school if they were transported to another school; and if none of the above mentioned circumstances exist, such application shall be denied.  

The fact that the budget board and the county superintendent have repeatedly approved this school as isolated, verifies that they consider the possibilities of other means of providing education undesirable.

---

CHAPTER III

STATE FOUNDATION PROGRAMS AND EQUALIZATION POLICIES
AND THEIR EFFECTS ON WHITewater HIGH SCHOOL

In order to study the problems involved in the financing of the Whitewater High School, it is necessary to review and define the principles of equalization and the foundation program. It is then necessary to test the extent to which these principles have been adhered to in the financing of an isolated school.

I. THEORY OF EQUALIZATION

The theory of equalization for education developed in the United States upon acceptance of the idea that all children were entitled to equal educational opportunities regardless of where they live and further recognition of the fact that the abilities of different local areas to supply this level of education varied a great deal. This variation was due to the difference in property valuations per student and to conditions which increased the cost of education. Equalization then, ideally aims to accomplish two things; (1) equalize the tax burden for education and (2) equalize the educational opportunity. Ward G. Reeder has discussed the development of state equalization and in commenting on the trends he states:

Three desirable objectives have been realized by this tendency; (1) educational opportunity for all pupils has
been made more equal; (2) the taxation burden among the
various districts has been made more equal; (3) the tax
on real estate has been lowered.  

According to Edgar L. Morphet the following principles
should be observed.

The basic plan of financing public schools should
guarantee all children an equal opportunity for an ade­
quate foundation program of education....

The foundation program should be financed jointly by
the state and local school system in accordance with an
equitable plan which assures that the program will be
adequately supported throughout the state. This requires
an equitable fiscal partnership between the states as a
whole and the individual school systems responsible for
operating the schools. Such a partnership plan should
assure the financing of an acceptable educational offer­
ing in all local school systems regardless of their tax
paying abilities.

The cost of the defined foundation program should rep­
resent a major portion of the total school expenditures
within the state. It should be as good a program as the
people of the state are willing and able to support on a
partnership basis. Nevertheless, it should be considered
a minimum beyond which the citizens of any local school
system may go at their own discretion.

The adoption of a state foundation program should then,
guarantee to the districts operating schools in the state,
sufficient funds to provide a minimum program of education for
all systems with, as nearly as possible, equivalent local
effort by each. The state should define its minimum program

---

3Ward G. Reeder, The Fundamentals of Public School

4R. L. Johns and E. L. Morphet (eds.), Problems and
Issues in Public School Finance (New York: National Confer­
ence of Professors of Educational Administration, 1952),
pp. 154-5.

5Ibid., p. 155.
and provide a means of finance such that each system will be assured of funds to carry on this minimum program.

In arriving at a desirable or workable foundation program for different school systems Burke points out that many factors must be considered when comparing differences in expenditure levels for public schools among states and within states. Among the factors listed, which effect the expenditure levels of different localities are economic ability of the supporting public, price and cost differential among communities and population density and sparsity. In discussing this population density and sparsity factor later in his book he asserts that sparsity of population, no matter what the type of district structure, increases expenditure levels for public schools. Transportation, small classes, small pupil-teacher ratios and other factors of sparsity inflate the cost of any public school service. This factor, he contends, is operating in such states as Arizona, Montana, Wyoming, and Nevada.

Again the same author states:

Extreme sparsity of population means that a sufficient number of pupils cannot be brought together at a reasonable transportation cost to provide economical instruction. A given quality and quantity of education will be costly in sparsely settled areas. Nevertheless, this expense is defensible under democratic principles.

---

7 Burke, op. cit., pp. 64-65.
8 Ibid., pp. 74-75.
II. MONTANA STATE FOUNDATION PROGRAM

Until 1949, in Montana, the method of distribution of funds for education did not take into account the relative needs of each particular district. Rich districts were able to maintain lower levies and poorer districts were forced to levy as high as eighty mills.9

In 1949 the entire method of support for the public schools in Montana was changed by the passage of a minimum foundation program law. In brief, this law provided that after each school district and county in the state made the same efforts to support programs of education the state would supply the balance needed up to a certain foundation program established by law. For small elementary schools and for schools of a certain size operating with two teachers the foundation program was on a teacher unit basis of financing. For elementary schools with greater enrollments and for all high schools it was based on the number of pupils in average number belonging.

The uniform effort to be made for elementary schools was a five mill district levy10 plus a ten mill county-wide levy11 and for high schools a ten mill county-wide levy.12

---


11Ibid., p. 145.

12Ibid., p. 205.
If these sources did not bring in the scheduled amounts for the foundation program for each district in the county, the state contributed the balance needed. Any amount needed above this minimum foundation program was the obligation of the common school district concerned and for high schools this became the obligation of the common school district concerned or the high school district if there was one.

School districts were entitled to raise additional funds on the district up to thirty percent of the foundation program for elementary students without a vote of the people.\(^\text{13}\) Any additional funds needed had to be voted. For high schools the amount which could be raised without a vote was thirty percent for high schools with one hundred or fewer pupils and twenty-five percent for those with more than one hundred.\(^\text{14}\)

The foundation program for Montana for 1955-57 as enacted by the thirty-fourth legislative assembly was as follows:

**ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS**

(1) For each elementary school having eight (8) or fewer pupils and which, upon the request of the board of trustees of the district, is approved as an isolated school by the county budget board, the district shall receive two thousand nine hundred dollars (\$2900.00), and if said school is not approved as an isolated school, then it shall receive seventeen hundred dollars (\$1700.00).

(2) Schools with an ANB in excess of eight (8) but less than eighteen (18) pupils, shall receive two thousand nine

\(^{13}\text{Ibid.}, \ p. \ 64.\)

\(^{14}\text{Ibid.}, \ p. \ 207.\)
hundred dollars ($2900.00) plus eighty-five dollars ($85.00) per pupil on the basis of average number belonging over eight (8).

(3) Schools having an ANB of eighteen (18), but less than forty-one (41), shall receive a maximum of thirty-nine hundred dollars ($3900.00) plus thirty-five hundred dollars ($3500.00) provided two (2) teachers are regularly employed as full time teachers in such school. Thirty-nine hundred dollars ($3900.00) shall be the maximum for any one teacher school.

(4) Schools having an ANB in excess of forty (40) will be guaranteed funds only on the basis of the total pupils (ANB) in the district for elementary pupils as follows:

For a school having an ANB of more than forty (40), and employing a minimum of three (3) teachers, the maximum of two hundred seventy-two dollars ($272.00) shall be decreased at the rate of forty-three cents ($0.43) for each additional pupil until the total number (ANB) shall have reached a total of one hundred (100) pupils. Provided, however, that if only two (2) teachers are employed in a school with an ANB over forty (40) the maximum schedule shall be seventy-four hundred dollars ($7400.00) plus seventy-five dollars ($75.00) for each ANB over forty (40). For a school having an ANB of more than one hundred (100) pupils, the maximum of two hundred and forty-six dollars and fifty cents ($246.50) shall be decreased at the rate of twenty-five and one-fourth cents ($0.2525) for each additional pupil until the ANB shall have reached three hundred (300) pupils. For a school having an ANB of more than three hundred (300) pupils, the maximum shall not exceed one hundred ninety-six dollars ($196.00) for each pupil; provided that the maximum per pupil, for all pupils, ANB, shall figure on the basis of the amount allowed herein on account of the last eligible pupil, ANB, and provided further that all the schools operated within the incorporated limits of a city or town shall be treated as a school unit for the purpose of this schedule.

HIGH SCHOOLS

For a school having an average number belonging (ANB) of forty (40) or fewer pupils in a school, the guaranteed budget shall not exceed four hundred and fifty dollars ($450.00) for each pupil. High schools shall not receive state equalization aid unless they have been accredited by the state board of education.

For a secondary school having an ANB of more than forty (40) pupils, the maximum four hundred and fifty dollars
($450.00) shall be decreased at the rate of two dollars ($2.00) for each additional pupil until the ANB shall have reached a total of one hundred (100) such pupils. For a school having an ANB of more than one hundred (100) pupils, the maximum of three hundred and thirty dollars ($330.00) shall be decreased at the rate of forty-five cents ($0.45) for each additional pupil until the number ANB shall have reached two hundred (200) pupils. For a school having an ANB of more than two hundred (200) pupils, a maximum of two hundred and eighty-five dollars ($285.00) shall be decreased at the rate of twenty-seven cents ($0.27) for each additional pupil until the total number, ANB, shall have reached three hundred (300) pupils. For a school having an ANB of more than three hundred (300) pupils, the maximum of two hundred and fifty-eight dollars ($258.00) shall be decreased at the rate of six cents ($0.06) for each additional pupil until the total number, ANB, shall have reached six hundred fifty (650) pupils. Schools having an ANB in excess of six hundred fifty (650) pupils shall receive two hundred and thirty-seven dollars ($237.00) per pupil, provided that the maximum per pupil for all pupils, ANB, shall be computed on the basis of the amount allowed herein on account of the last eligible pupil, ANB.13

When comparing the minimum foundation programs for elementary and high schools, certain similarities and also certain inconsistencies are found in the criteria used to arrive at the financial support for different sized schools. Figure 2 of this study gives a graphic picture of the foundation programs for elementary and high schools. Figure 3 does the same for the pupil cost of education under the present foundation program.

When either elementary or high schools reach ANB's of forty or more, their foundation programs are based upon this figure and a much higher figure per pupil is allowed for high

FIGURE 2

FOUNDATION PROGRAM COSTS 1955-1957 SCHEDULE
ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY
FIGURE 3

FOUNDATION PROGRAM COSTS PER PUPIL, 1955-1957
SCHEDULE, ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY
schools than for elementary, apparent recognition of the fact that secondary education was more costly than elementary. Further, as the ANB increases beyond forty the support per student is decreased, indicating that costs per pupil decrease as the enrollment increases. Thus, the two programs were consistent when enrollments were more than forty; i.e., they were both supported on a per pupil basis.

There is one very conspicuous inconsistency however, which is most significant. The elementary school had to employ a minimum of three teachers in order to qualify for the per pupil basis of equalization, which was not the case for high schools. In the elementary schedule then, for lower enrollments the degree of support was based primarily upon the weighted classroom theory and secondarily upon the number of pupils.

When looking at the plan for support of programs for less than forty pupils, little or no consistency is found in the theory of planning the degree of support. For high schools an unqualified per pupil basis for support from one to forty pupils is indicated by a straight line on the graph. Elementary minimum programs for different sized schools are based upon isolation, number of teachers employed, and number of students. The cost per student in an isolated elementary school may range from $2900.00 down to $362.50. No one-teacher school may receive more than $3900.00 for foundation. A two-teacher school in excess of forty pupils receives far
less than if it employed three or more teachers. For example, a school with an ANB of forty-one pupils, employing two teachers, will be guaranteed $7,475.00. If it employs three teachers it will receive $11,151.57, a difference of $3,676.57. It seems that the equalization programs for small elementary schools are more nearly an attempt to provide for what is considered a minimum education program for all situations and sizes of schools, regardless of the cost per student and also to provide a foundation program which encourages better teacher-pupil ratios. This is more nearly in harmony with the theory of equalization than the policy adopted for financing small high schools.

The monies derived from the county ten mill levy for high school were distributed to the high schools of the county as a percentage of the established foundation program. Whitewater High School District, which had a taxable valuation of one million dollars raised $10,000 on this levy. Of this amount, raised on its own valuation, Whitewater received but $3,990.00 in 1954, the remainder was distributed to other larger schools which did not have to vote special levies. This distribution would be made more equitable by a more realistic equalization program.

In 1953-54 there were forty-eight high schools in Montana with an ANB of forty or fewer pupils, of these all took the full permissive levy and thirty-nine of them voted special levies. In the same year each of twenty-eight high schools
had an ANB of forty-one to sixty pupils; of these, twenty-one took their full permissive levies but only six voted special levies. Of the one hundred and twenty-four high schools of over forty ANB only thirty-four voted special levies. Thus, 27.4 per cent of the schools from the forty to sixty ANB group voted special levies whereas 81.3 per cent of the schools of forty ANB or less voted special levies. It appears that the local burden of support is considerably greater for the smaller high schools. No information is available for those high schools of less than thirty ANB but to maintain a minimum program it is quite obvious that close to 100 per cent had to resort to special levies.

III. FOUNDATION PROGRAM FOR Whitewater

In the 1953-54 school year the foundation program for the Whitewater High School was $6000.00 based on an ANB of fifteen students the previous year. (Until 1955 the foundation program was based on $400.00 per ANB.) By taking the full permissive levy this figure was increased to $7800.00. This was the maximum money available for operation of the high school without a voted levy. A special levy of six mills was voted that year but for the purpose of building a residence for the superintendent. It is, of course, impossible to

conduct a school program for a four year high school on such a budget. This could only result in a very substandard educational situation with only one high school teacher in addition to the superintendent.

The following year the ANB for budgeting remained the same and again the full permissive levy was taken. A special levy of eleven mills was voted for a budget of $19,000.00. Another teacher was added to the staff, a shop program was set up, some badly needed repairs were made, and the remainder was spent for replacing obsolete text books and other supplies.

Since the ANB of 1954-55 increased to twenty-one the foundation program for 1955-56 was considerably improved, but still was not adequate to support a desirable educational program. The foundation program amounted to $9450.00. Again the full permissive was taken and an eight mill levy voted. This was necessary in order to carry on and expand the improved program of the previous year.

Among the standards for accreditation of senior high schools, as revised by the Montana State Board of Education, October 6, 1956, the following are of particular interest here: adequate recitation rooms, science laboratories and equipment, tenure of teachers, minimum of three teachers for a four year high school, $400.00 a year for library improvement, and no excessive teacher load.\(^{18}\)

\(^{18}\)Standards for Accreditation of Senior High Schools Revised by the Montana State Board of Education in Montana Educational Directory (Helena, Montana: State Department of Public Instruction, 1956), pp. 50-55.
It is assumed that these standards are part of the defined minimum educational program for Montana high schools. It is further assumed that the foundation program should be adequate to support this defined minimum. No attempt will be made here to compute just what this minimum foundation program should be in dollars and cents, since it is realized that any such computation would be argumentative and the figures employed presumptive. With the present trend in teachers' and superintendents' salaries the foundation program for a school such as Whitewater could not even support that portion of the educational cost.
CHAPTER IV

PROBLEMS OF INADEQUATE FINANCE

As has been pointed out in the previous chapter the full permissive levy plus a voted levy has been used in each year covered by this study in budgeting for the operation of the Whitewater High School. The fact that the foundation program funds were insufficient to meet the requirements of a substandard program poses certain problems for the school board and the administrator.

First of these is the problem of securing and retaining teachers. It can be readily understood from the description of Whitewater in Chapter I that the town itself, its distance from other towns, the road conditions, and communications do not attract teachers. They are thirty-five miles from a theatre, a doctor, a hospital, or a shopping center. The best available housing for rent is not very attractive. Consequently, the main attraction for teachers must be in salaries. Teachers are further not inclined to come to Whitewater nor to remain long because of the inadequacy of the physical plant, the lack of equipment, the lack of educational supplies and facilities for teaching. Because of the limited number of teachers in the system and the attempt to offer as nearly as possible a well-rounded curriculum, teachers will probably be expected to teach in fields in which they may not be adequately prepared. Each year it was necessary to wait until after a special levy had been voted to offer renewal of
teachers' contracts, since the foundation program money plus the permissive levy was all that the school board and the administrator knew they would have for the coming year's operation.

The planning of a curriculum from one year to the next was uncertain and difficult for the same reasons, i.e., the desired program was dependent upon a special voted levy which may or may not pass.

The Whitewater High School building, as has been previously stated, was grossly inadequate in size, structure, and arrangement. It had but one recitation room, a commercial room, and a study hall. It had only a small closet for library books. It had no science laboratory facilities whatsoever. Heating the building was very difficult and very costly. The writer has seen days when the temperature was such that children and teachers had to wear coats and overshoes in the classrooms, the temperature at times being as low as 40°F. The frame building was a fire hazard.

From the foregoing description it seems obvious that a new physical plant was a necessity if the school was to continue to operate. The question immediately arises, however, when one recognizes this necessity, of whether such an expenditure would be wise or justifiable when there was no assurance from one year to the next whether or not funds would be available for the operation of a school program if and when a new building had been supplied.
CHAPTER V

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In this study information has been presented to explain the conditions affecting the operation of the Whitewater High School. As was pointed out in Chapter II, any other alternative would be quite undesirable for the people concerned both from an educational point of view and a financial one. It has been pointed out that by closing the Whitewater School the students attending there would either be deprived of an opportunity to attend high school at all or that to attend a school in another town could become a great financial burden upon the respective families. Information has been submitted as to what constitutes an isolated school according to Montana School Laws. Since it has been declared isolated it must be assumed that conditions do exist making it inadvisable for the school to consolidate with another school. In keeping with the theory of equalization and in view of the condition of isolation it is concluded that the operation of a high school at Whitewater should be continued.

Upon the assumption that the school will continue to operate as an isolated high school accredited by the State Department of Public Instruction, thus permitting it to participate in equalization funds, the question becomes one of how the program should be financed. It has been shown conclusively that the present foundation program for Whitewater cannot possibly support the level of education as defined by the
state standards for high schools in Montana. A comparison of the foundation programs for elementary and high schools has been presented. The information shows conclusively that teacher units were used in arriving at foundation programs for the elementary schools and a fixed per pupil rate for high schools, where enrollments are below forty. Information has been submitted showing that a per pupil basis of arriving at a foundation program is not adequate for small schools. It has been shown that, in order to maintain even a substandard high school at Whitewater, it must rely upon a special voted levy. It can only be concluded that the theory of equalization is not being adhered to either in providing equal educational opportunity or in equalizing the tax burden.

Assuming that the theory of equalizing educational opportunity and the tax burden should dominate the Montana educational system, it is recommended that the Montana Legislature review this problem and recognize on the high school financing what it has recognized since 1949 on the elementary, that the per pupil basis for a foundation program is not a desirable means of determining financial needs. It is further recommended that a minimum foundation program sufficient to carry out a minimum educational program for accredited isolated high schools, be provided regardless of the number of students, and that any present statutes prohibiting equalization to this extent be repealed.
A. BOOKS


B. PUBLICATIONS OF THE GOVERNMENT


C. BULLETINS