T H E S I S

THE INDEPENDENT DISTRICT, A CAUSE OF CONDITIONS IN THE RURAL SCHOOIS OF TEXAS

Submitted by

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for the Degree of Master of Science

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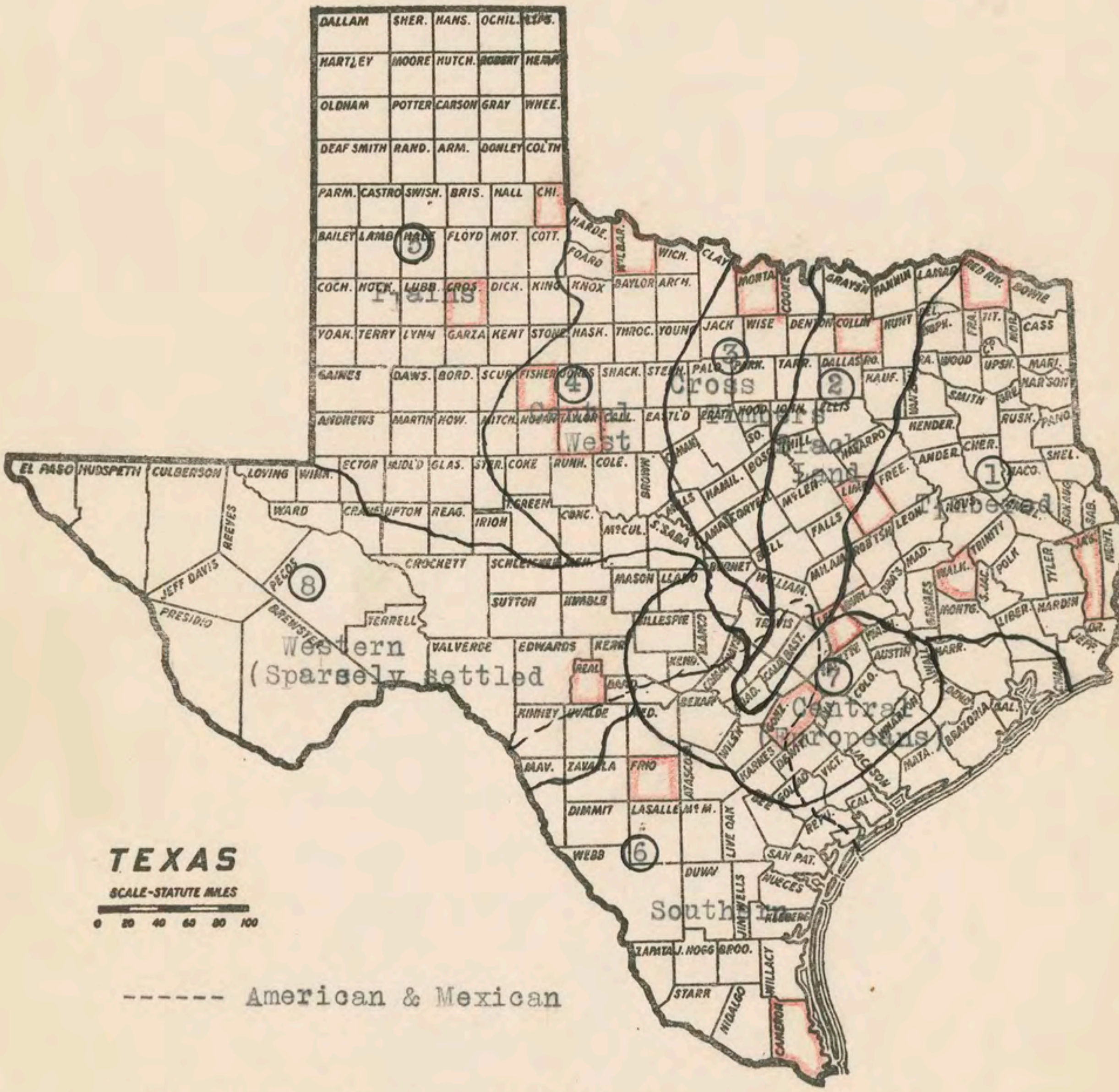
AGRICULTURE COOPERATING

CHARLES H. ALVORD, DIRECTOR



MAP SHOWING CHARACTERISTIC AREAS OF THE STATE.
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(Counties studied outlined)

INTRODUCTION

For many years there have been complaints from many quarters to the effect that the independent districts were handicapping, or ruining the country schools. The state superintendents have frequently called attention to certain evils resulting from too free exercise of the legislature in creating independent districts and have made definite recommendations as to the procedure in forming them. No absolute information was had concerning the many factors involved in the matter until the Educational Survey was made. The survey at once branded the practice as a pernicious one and very clearly outlined its recommendations for the correction of the evil.

The idea was conceived that by taking representative counties from the various natural divisions of the state and making a comparative study of the independent districts and the common schools in detail, it would be possible to formulate some conclusions relative to the questions of the independent districts being a factor in retarding the development of the common schools. It was soon discovered that it would have been easy to show the inequalities of educational opportunities, but so many factors were involved in the solution of the major problem that a rather devious path had to be chosen to search out the most intangible factors and influences that alone and collectively have placed the country

schools at a disadvantage.

The study has been made by attempting to show that the city schools have always been favored in their development; that the town schools have aided in the discriminations practiced against the common schools; that unfair practices have commonly been employed by the independent districts, thereby riddling the territory and making it impossible to establish an adequate system of rural schools; that the motives for creating many independent districts have been other than those manifested; that the indifference of the independent districts to the tragic state of affairs in the common schools has widened the breach between town and country as well as the culture of the towns people and the country people; that by means of good schools the towns have unintentionally drawn away the leaders of the rural community,who in turn have assumed the role of absentee-landlord,which has led to graver complications; that the town schools have fostered keen local pride that has not been shared with the country schools; that the country districts have contributed to the wealth of the towns and should share,in some measure, the benefits derived from this wealth.

Questionnaires were sent to the superintendents of sixteen counties from different sections of the state, as shown by the accompanying map of the state. Some of the counties failed to give complete information, thus slight

errors have crept into the total averages in some instances. The information has been compiled in the form of averages and totals for each county. The results, while not entirely satisfying, indicate that there is real worth in the study of the problem.

QUESTIONNAIRE TO COUNTY SUPERINTENDENTS

_____Texas

_____

_____County

_____Superintendent

1. Number of Independent Districts in your county_____
2. Number of Common School Districts in Your County_____
3. Enrollment in Schools of Independent Districts_____
4. Enrollment in Schools of Common School Districts_____
5. Number of 1 yr. high schools-Independent Districts_____
6. Number of 1 yr. high schools-Common Schools_____
7. Number 2yr. high schools-Independent Districts_____
8. Number 2yr. high schools-Common Schools_____
9. Number 3yr. high schools-Independent Districts_____
10. Number 3yr. high schools-Common Schools_____
11. Number 4yr. high schools-Independent Districts_____
12. Number 4yr. high schools-Common Schools_____
13. Assessed per capita wealth of Independent Districts_____
14. Assessed per capita wealth of Common Districts_____
15. Tax rate of Independent Districts-Number having tax rate of 10-20-30-35-40-45-50-55-60-70-80-90-1.00
16. Tax rate of the Common Districts-Number having tax rate of 10-20-30-35-40-45-50-55-60-70-80-90-1.00
17. Length of school term in Independent Districts_____ Average number days taught_____
18. Length of school term in Common Districts_____ Average number days taught_____
19. Per capita cost of instruction in Independent Districts___
20. Per capita cost of instruction in Common Districts_____
21. Tuition rate in Independent Districts-Primary_____ Intermediate_____High School_____
22. Number teachers in the Independent Districts_____
23. Number teachers in the Common Districts_____
24. Academic training of teachers in Independent Districts____ Graduates of-high school_____Normal school___College__
25. Academic training of teachers in Common Districts Graduates of-high school____Normal school_____College_____
26. Course of study for Independent Districts--Have own_____ follow state_____
27. Course of study for Common Districts--Have own_____ Follow State_____
28. Attendance, Independent Districts-Total days_____ Average Daily_____
29. Attendance,Common Districts-Total days____Average Daily___

PART II

A BRIEF SURVEY OF THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE INDEPENDENT DISTRICT

CHAPTER I

MUNICIPAL CONTROL OF SCHOOLS

The early efforts to establish a system of education naturally centered about the municipalities; rural education was not contemplated, for the need did not exist. During the Mexican regime special privileges were granted to the municipalities which gave them entire control over all arrangements for education.

As quickly as the Congress of the Republic convened, these same towns began a concerted effort to secure the same privileges in the management of their school affairs. In December, 1837, Congress gave permission to Gonzales, Victoria, and San Antonio to incorporate. This act gave these towns complete control over their schools, but made it their specific duties to "promote by every equitable means the establishment of common schools, male and female, within the limits of the corporation in which the English Language shall be taught, and the children of the poor class of citizens invited and received gratis".

In December, 1839, an act to incorporate the cities of Austin, Victoria, Goliad and Gonzales was approved by President Lamar, which granted more extensive control than the previous

act to incorporate San Antonio, in that it granted to the mayor and council full authority to erect and establish, and regulate such common schools as they may erect. Additional power was given "to sell any portion of lands owned by said corporation, and appropriate.....the remainder of the proceeds for the purpose of education within said towns and for no other purposes".

Some of these charters did not bear fruit until several years had passed. In 1846 Galveston obtained the privilege of voting taxes for the establishment and maintenance of public free schools. This school had its opening in 1847. Notwithstanding the large attendance, the opposition to the tax increased and after two or three years the school had to be abandoned. Similarly, Corpus Christi received permission to incorporate and the mayor and aldermen were empowered to act as superintendent and administrator of schools "and to expend annually all funds as may be raised or received by taxation, or otherwise, for the establishment and support of said school or schools". Galveston was the only community that ever exercised the rights conferred upon them.

These provisions, however, are of the greatest importance, as they indicate that the towns had thus early secured the right to control their own educational affairs and to vote local taxation for their development. Perhaps more significant is the fact that it worked the beginning of the

breach between the town and the rural districts, which has grown wider through these many years.

CHAPTER II

RAPID INCREASE OF THE NUMBER OF CORPORATE DISTRICTS AND INDEPENDENT DISTRICTS

This period marked rapid progress in Texas as to accumulation of wealth and the number of schools established under the acts of the legislature of 1846. During the period 1846-1873, the first legislature and the thirteenth legislature, more than two hundred high schools, colleges and academies were established. The largest percent of these institutions, regardless of their high sounding titles, were established by the independent boards of the various towns and chartered by the legislature. Even to the present day, the name of some college clings to the high school of some of our city high schools.

By the close of 1877, twenty-one cities had assumed control of their school systems, and not until 1883 did any other method of forming the independent district come into vogue.

The first constitutional amendment, brought on by an agitation for a better school system, was passed in 1883. This amendment favored the district school system and the right of voting local taxation wherever the people wished to exercise the privilege. In a few years this method became more popular than the former one of the cities assuming control. The number of independent districts gradually increased and in

1899 another method of formation came to be used by special act of the legislature. Two hundred forty-four districts had been formed in Texas by the various methods up to this date. One district was formed this year, 1899, by the new method which had a special run of popularity until the year 1925. The last legislature created one hundred sixty-two independent districts, bringing the grand total for the whole state to 1,434.

TABLE NO. I

NUMBER OF SCHOOLS IN COUNTY

County	Common	Independent
Childress	24	3
Cameron	7	14
Collin	101	17
Crosby	9	7
Frio	17	2
Fisher	15	6
Gonzales	45	4
Jasper	19	5
Lee	42	2
Limestone	64	7
Montague	66	7
Red River	74	7
Real	6	1
Taylor	33	7
Walker	21	3
Wilbarger	30	5

CHAPTER III

THE INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICTS

The independent district is the product of the practice of granting full authority to the municipalities for the control and management of their school affairs. At a later date these districts came to be known as independent, because they were given permission to manage their school affairs without the interference of the county superintendent. They levy and collect their own taxes and make their reports to the State Department of Education.

The law requiring the independent district's area to have a limit of twenty-five square miles has led to the practice of so manipulating the boundaries that they can take in the greatest amount of wealth, regardless of any consideration of the rural communities, that have as much right to the income of this wealth as the independent district, and are left in almost destitute conditions as far as maintaining a school is concerned. A central Texas town is a fair example of the working of this practice. For thirty years the corporate limits of the town were the boundaries of the independent district. Gas and oil were discovered in a near-by rural district in one direction, and a big oil company located a tank farm in another rural district in the opposite direction. These properties repre-

sented millions of dollars taxable valuations. In a very short time the independent district extended its boundaries to take in all this wealth.

In many instances whole counties are included in the independent districts. Sterling, Odessa and Eagle Pass are districts that include their respective counties. Fort Stockton district has an area of 3000 square miles.

In some instances, the objects sought by the creation of these districts are nothing more than a desire to be free from the pressure brought by the county authorities for the improvement of the schools. One instance has come to light where a landlord of south Texas had his immense holdings made an independent district. Levell Land, Hockley county, when created in 1923 had only fifteen scholastics. Indian Creek, Roberts county, had five scholastics at the time it was created. The bill provided for five trustees. Only four adults could be found in the district, as the list submitted contained the names of two men and their wives.

The Wentz district in McMullen county, created a number of years ago, is perhaps an example of the creation of such districts in aid of land speculation. The district now has only twenty-one scholastics.

There have been instances where a big percent of the people of the area concerned did not know their district had been made independent until sometime after it had been

engineered through the legislature. Legislative "courtesy" guaranteed the passage of these provisions.

CHAPTER IV

HIGH SCHOOL OPPORTUNITY

The data in the table following, for the 46 counties on which information was obtained, show that only 15.7% of the common schools offered instruction beyond the ninth grade, or second year of high school, and only one percent offered four years of high school work. It is evident, if these conditions are representative of the state, that country children would have little opportunity for high school training, if they were limited to such facilities as are provided by common school districts.

The Tables II and III show the number of high schools in the sixteen counties studied. Sixty-two, or sixty percent of the high schools of the independent districts maintain four-year high schools; thirty-two, or thirty percent, maintain three-year high schools; five, or five percent, maintain two-year high schools; three, or three percent, maintain one-year high schools.

The common schools of these counties maintain fifteen, or less than one percent of four-year high schools; sixty-seven, or twenty percent, maintain three-year high schools; one hundred, or thirty percent, maintain two-year high schools; one hundred forty-seven, or forty percent, maintain one-year high schools.

EXTENT TO WHICH HIGH SCHOOL PRIVILEGES
FOR WHITES ARE AVAILABLE IN
COMMON SCHOOL DISTRICTS

(Based on reports from all common school districts in 46 counties)

	Number	Percent
Schools that give no high school instruction	566	34
Schools that gave one and no more high school instruction	391	24
Schools that gave two years and no more high school instruction	428	26
Schools that gave three years and no more high school instruction	241	15
Schools that gave four years and no more high school instruction	17	1
Total number schools	1643	100

Texas Educational Survey Vol. VIII, page 67.

No accurate information was obtained as to the number offering no high school work.

Such conditions place the small independent districts in very intimate relation to the high school problem for country children. In a great many instances the country children look to the small town schools for their high school opportunity. Here again they are forestalled in some degree, for these town schools make it almost a common practice to charge a tuition rate ranging from $2.00 to $5.00 per month. Credit is usually given the pupils for their amount of their state apportionment. Nevertheless, this expense has caused many country boys and girls to forego a high school education.

TABLE NO. II

HIGH SCHOOLS-COMMON SCHOOL DISTRICTS

	1 yr	2 yr	3 yr	4 yr	Total
Childress	8	4	6	2	20
Cameron*					
Collin	37	17	9	0	63
Crosby	1	4	4	0	9
Frio	2	3	0	0	5
Fisher	2	2	1	0	5
Gonzales*					
Jasper	0	0	3	0	3
Lee	4	3	2	2	11
Limestone	21	14	13	2	49
Montague	8	16	5	1	30
Red River	37	17	3	0	57
Real	4	0	0	5	9
Taylor	15	11	13	2	41
Walker*					
Wilbarger	8	9	8	1	26

*no report

TABLE NO. III

HIGH SCHOOLS-INDEPENDENT DISTRICTS

	1 yr	2 yr	3 yr	4 yr	Total
Childress	0	0	0	3	3
Collin	0	0	12	5	17
Cameron	2	2	3	9	16
Crosby	1	1	2	4	8
Frio	0	0	0	2	2
Fisher	0	1	3	4	8
Gonzales	0	0	2	2	4
Jasper	0	0	0	5	5
Lee	0	0	0	2	2
Limestone	0	0	0	7	7
Montague	0	0	2	5	7
Red River	0	0	1	6	7
Real	0	0	0	1	1
Taylor	0	1	5	2	8
Walker	0	0	1	2	3
Wilbarger	0	0	1	3	4

TABLE NO. IV

TUITION RATE-INDEPENDENT DISTRICTS

	Primary	Intermediate	High School
Childress	3.50	4.00	5.00
Cameron	2.50	3.50	5.00
Collin	0	0	0
Crosby	2.00	3.00	5.00
Frio	2.50	2.50	5.00
Fisher	3.00	4.00	5.00
Gonzales	0	0	0
Jasper	3.00	3.00	4.50
Lee	0	0	5.00
Limestone	0	0	0
Montague	0	0	5.00
Red River	3.00	4.00	5.00
Real	0	0	0
Taylor	2.00	3.00	4.00
Walker	3.00	3.00	5.00
Wilbarger	4.00	4.00	5.00

PART III

INTERPRETATION OF DATA

CHAPTER I
NEMBER TEACHERS AND PUPILS PER TEACHER

The data of Table V show that the independent districts employ 975 teachers in eleven of the fifteen counties studied. This number is used because the reports from some of the counties failed to report the number of teachers in the schools of the county. Table IX shows an enrollment in these same schools of 29,592 children, or an average of thirty children per teacher.

The same Table V shows that the common schools employ 823 teachers to teach 39,781 children, or an average of one teacher for every 47 children. And it must be remembered that the teacher in the independent district usually has the children of one grade, rarely ever more than two, while the teacher of the common school often has all grades to teach, or some thirty-five or forty recitations per day. A great number of the rural schools enroll from five or six pupils to ten of fifteen, while others may have fifty or sixty pupils per teacher. The city teacher may have a special subject,as English or arithmetic,and all the equipment, libraries etc.,that one could wish; but the country teacher has little or no equipment,and is responsible for all the

subjects, even into the high school. The city teacher has expert direction and supervision, but the country teacher has to be content with working out her own salvation, for often times the county superintendent is unable to give aid, owing to lack of preparation or over work.

TABLE NO. V.

NUMBER TEACHERS EMPLOYED

1926-1927

	Common Districts	Independent Districts
Childress	62	68
Cameron	31	268
Collin	200	*
Crosby	21	91
Frio	38	*
Fisher	9	114
Gonzales	99	*
Jasper	78	82
Lee	58	20
Limestone	164	129
Montague	120	60
Red River	189	*
Real	10	6
Taylor	96	43
Walker	57	*
Wilbarger	91	93

*No Report

TABLE NO. VI.

AVERAGE NUMBER PUPILS PER TEACHER

Based upon Enrollment

1926-1927

	Common Districts	Independent Districts
Childress	32	33
Cameron	45	30
Collin	35	*
Crosby	34	28
Frio	17	*
Fisher	27	40
Gonzales	25	*
Jasper	32	35
Lee	35	30
Limestone	26	28
Montague	27	38
Red River	31	*
Real	30	32
Taylor	32	31
Walker	54	*
Wilbarger	36	35

*No report

CHAPTER II

LENGTH OF SCHOOL TERM

The data from Table VII show the average length of the school term in days. It is significant that the average for the 97 independent districts is 175 days. Some of these districts may fall a little short of a nine months term, but by far the greatest number have a full 180 day term. The common schools vary in length from 120 days to 160 days, the average for the sixteen counties being 145 days. It is a fact however that many of the common schools have a term of only four months.

The short term, magnified by irregular attendance, a crowded program and a poorly trained teacher, with poor equipment, is the cause for the vast number of eliminations and retardations in our country schools. If a boy or girl in such a school gets an education, it is in spite of the school, and not through its help in guidance.

TABLE NO. VII.

LENGTH OF SCHOOL TERM IN DAYS

1926-1927

	Common District	Independent District
Childress	145	180
Cameron	160	180
Collin	120	180
Crosby	150	180
Frio	160	180
Fisher	140	180
Gonzales	150	160
Jasper	140	180
Lee	150	170
Limestone	140	180
Montague	135	180
Red River	140	170
Real	160	160
Taylor	140	160
Walker	160	180
Wilbarger	160	170

CHAPTER III

SCHOLASTIC POPULATION

The total scholastic population of the sixteen counties in 1926-1927 as indicated by Table VIII is 46,046 for the independent districts and 42,444 for the common schools of the same counties. Yet a further study of the data shows that in eight of the counties studied the enrollment of the common schools is decidedly greater than that of the independent districts. These counties represent the average for the state fairly well.

Rapid increase in the number of independent districts has caused the scholastic population of that class of districts to grow by leaps and bounds. This is shown by the following statistics:

Scholastic Population of Texas

Independent Districts		Common Schools
647,442	1921-1922	649,797
643,744	1922-1923	652,822
672,425	1923-1924	631,845
692,852	1924-1925	628,748
729,267	1925-1926	610,786
755,782	1926-1927	589,484

The reasons for this rapid increase are: in the first place,the rapid increase in the number of independent districts created by special acts of the legislature; in the second place,the great number of people who move into the bounds of an independent district in order to have better school facilities for their children.

A significant feature about the scholastic population is that those counties having the largest number of scholastics have the least amount of means to give them the proper type of schools. A good example of this is Collin county with a population of 6,268 scholastics, 101 common school districts in the county employing 200 teachers, and an assessed valuation of less than four million dollars.

TABLE NO. VIII.

SCHOLASTIC POPULATION 1926 - 1927

	Common Districts	Independent Districts
Childress	2,107	2,239
Cameron	1,882	13,523
Collin	6,528	5,526
Crosby	703	2,467
Frio	1,527	1,317
Fisher	1,543	2,291
Gonzales	3,894	2,096
Jasper	1,639	1,993
Lee	2,023	607
Limestone	4,892	3,589
Montague	3,274	2,418
Red River	4,780	1,831
Real	302	196
Taylor	3,021	1,926
Walker	1,152	1,041
Wilbarger	3,177	2,986

TABLE NO. IX.

ENROLLMENT

1926-1927

	Common Districts	Independent Districts
Childress	1,889	2,048
Cameron	1,124	7,164
Collin	6,268	5,156
Crosby	740	2,436
Frio	915	1,057
Fisher	2,015	1,704
Gonzales	2,676	1,928
Jasper	1,528	2,222
Lee	2,023	475
Limestone	4,978	3,261
Montague	3,246	2,738
Red River	4,845	3,246
Real	298	289
Taylor	3,035	4,781
Walker	1,991	678
Wilbarger	3,010	2,474

TABLE NO. X.

ENROLLMENT

Percent of pupils enumerated in Census actually enrolled

	Common Districts	Independent Districts
Childress	111.9	127.8
Cameron	54.5	51.5
Collin	25.9	119.3
Crosby	95 .8	93.4
Frio	39	90.5
Fisher	79.8	106.7
Gonzales	61.1	86 .6
Jasper	105.8	109
Lee	63.8	87.1
Limestone	94.2	123.3
Montague	99.5	120.1
Red River	90	161.5
Real	90	158
Taylor	90	109.9
Walker	102	70.7
Wilbarger	113	128.8

CHAPTER IV

ENROLLMENT AND ATTENDANCE

In Table X it is important to notice that only four counties in the common districts report 100% of the scholastic census enrolled. These counties are Childress, Jasper, Walker, and Wilbarger. Walker is a typical county as to country school conditions, and this splendid showing is unaccounted for. While Jasper is in the timber belt of east Texas and lumbering is the chief industry, and most of the people are engaged in this work. This makes it possible for the children to attend school more regularly than in the cotton section of the state. Childress is in a section of the state that has developed within the last few years and the people of that section of the state take more interest in the schools than in some of the older counties. Wilbarger, an adjoining county, has practically the same conditions existing as in Childress.

In practically all the other counties there is a marked falling off of enrollment in the rural schools when compared with those of the independent districts.

There is no doubt that retardations, lack of interest in school, and lack of adaptations of the curriculum to meet the needs of the older pupils, are the principal causes of eliminations in the country schools.

TABLE NO. XI.

AVERAGE DAILY ATTENDANCE 1926-1927

	Common Districts	Independent Districts
Childress	979	1,523
Cameron	744	5,629
Collin	4,620	3,893
Crosby	410	1,830
Frio	412	564
Fisher	110	869
Gonzales	2,504	1,163
Jasper	1,448	1,360
Lee	1,544	382
Limestone	2,916	1,771
Montague	2,800	1,921
Red River	3,484	1,670
Real	208	132
Taylor	1,826	962
Walker	2,036	565
Wilbarger	*	*

* No report

Table XI shows the average number pupils attending daily during the sessions of 1926-1927. These data show a marked falling off in numbers of both types of schools when compared with Table IX, the actual enrollment. Parochical schools may be a factor in all these data.

This may be accounted for by the same reasons that were given in the preceding paragraph as a cause for elimination, but an additional factor is race. The negroes and Mexicans do not attend school with any regularity. The other big factor is child labor. This is more especially true in the cotton growing region of Texas. Collin,Gonzales,Lee,Limestone, Red River and Taylor are typical cotton growing counties. Table XII gives the percentages of these counties as ranging from 54 percent of scholastic enrollment attending daily, to 66 percent.

A similar interpretation can be made of Table XIII that gives the percent of pupils enrolled attending daily. While not as low as the averages shown in Table XII, there seems to be a close relationship between the two tables of data. It is most likely that the factors named before are the same for every phase of enrollment and attendance.

TABLE NO. XII.

ATTENDANCE

Per Cent Scholastic Enrollment Attending

Daily 1926-1927

	Common Districts	Independent Districts
Childress	61	95
Cameron	36	56
Collin	66	65
Crosby	53	99
Frio	18	81
Fisher	4	54
Gonzales	57	52
Jasper	100	66
Lee	67	70
Limestone	55	52
Montague	85	84
Red River	65	83
Real	62	76
Taylor	54	78
Walker	17	60
Wilbarger	*	

*No report

TABLE NO. XIII.

ATTENDANCE

Per Cent Pupils Enrolled Attending

Daily 1926-1927

	Common Districts	Independent Districts
Childress	51	74
Cameron	65	78
Collin	73	75
Crosby	55	75
Frio	45	52
Fisher	50	51
Gonzales	94	60
Jasper	94	61
Lee	76	80
Limestone	58	54
Montague	86	70
Red River	71	51
Real	69	73
Taylor	60	*
Walker	59	83
Wilbarger	*	

* No report

CHAPTER V

RESOURCES COMPARED

A study of Tables XIV and XV reveal some interesting information. These data show that in terms of assessed valuation, that independent districts are more than five times as wealthy as the common school districts, although returns could not be had from Frio county. Tables XIV and XV indicate the extent to which these districts are willing to pay for educating their youth. The average tax rate of the independent district is $0.90, while the common schools is $0.76. Many of the common school districts are content to receive from year to year the amount doled out by the state which, in many cases is far more than is paid into the state treasury.

A good example of this is Smith county. In this county there are fifty-one common schools that are levying a local tax. Only seven of this number have $1,000.00 of wealth per school child. There are nineteen districts in which the wealth per school child ran from $263.00 to $488.00.

The average assessed valuation per capita of the independent district, shown in Table XVI, range from $1,384.08 in Real county, to $6.208.09 in Limestone county. The common school presents a contrast; the lowest is found in Real county, $145.28, and the highest in Cameron county, $3,555.15.

TABLE NO. XIV.

ASSESSED VALUATION AND TAX RATES

COMMON SCHOOL DISTRICTS-1926-1927.

Childress	$2,074,795.00	$.879
Cameron	4,000.000.00	.500
Collin	3,607,870.00	.610
Crosby	1,762,255.00	.911
Frio		*
Fisher	3,215,119.00	1.00
Gonzales	657,271.00	.416
Jasper	2,882,903.00	.884
Lee	771,757.00	.610
Limestone	8,268,787.00	.787
Montague	2,220,322.00	.800
Red River	1,288,286.00	.681
Real	40,190.00	1.00
Taylor	3,980,004.00	.927
Walker	1,516,155.00	.626
Wilbarger	4,574,610.00	.825

*No report

TABLE NO. XV.

ASSESSED VALUATION AND TAX RATES

INDEPENDENT DISTRICTS 1926-1927.

Childress	$ 7,398,000.00	$ 1.00
Cameron	26,338,564.00	.97
Collin	17,005,851.00	.899
Crosby	13,663,861.00	.892
Frio	3,385,412.00	.875
Fisher	6,439,721.00	1.00
Gonzales	5,259,000.00	.656
Jasper	5,399,307.00	1.00
Lee	1,997,523.00	.75
Limestone	20,244,590.00	.928
Montague	7,592,420.00	1.00
Red River	6,918,648.00	.817
Real	400,000.00	1.00
Taylor	27,612,333.00	.957
Walker	2,462,106.00	.775
Wilbarger	15,287,466.00	1.00

It is safe to say that in many cases the country districts are too poor to support good schools, unless they were to tax themselves entirely beyond their ability to pay.

Selecting six typical counties from the total number studied, it is found by a study of Table IX and State Superintendents report, that they collect the following amounts of local taxes.

County	Independent	Common
Collin	$98,059.06	$53,689.06
Gonzales	30,589.62	15,799.80
Limestone	141,435.06	105,067.19
Taylor	75,655.12	42,934.25
Walker	11,913.08	24,219.73
Childress	24,419.04	21,827,29

Comparing this data with the scholastic population of the above counties, Table VIII gives the following amounts per capita:

County	Independent	Common
Collin	$17.74	$8.22
Gonzales	14.59	4.06
Limestone	39.40	21.47
Taylor	39.25	14.21
Walker	11.44	21.02
Childress	10.90	10.31

Thus it will be seen that the counties that are rich in children are, in most instances, seemingly poorest in means to afford them an education.

A glance at the assessed valuations, Tables XIV and XV of the counties in question will confirm the truth of the above statement:

	Independent District Valuations	Common School Valuations
Collin	$ 17,005,851.00	$ 3,607,870.00
Gonzales	5,259,000.00	657,271.00
Limestone	20,244,590.00	8,268,787.00
Taylor	27,612,333.00	3,980,004.00
Walker	2,462,106.00	1,516,155.00
Childress	7,398,000.00	2,074,795.00

Town property is usually rendered for more nearly its true value than are the farm lands. It has been found by the Texas Educational Survey that in many counties lands were rendered at twenty percent of their true value. A chief reason for this is on account of the inflated value of the land. Texas has not entirely emerged from the period of land speculation. Perhaps another cause for the difference is that apparently the common people have never thoroughly awakened to the economic need of an education as have the towns people.

The data in Table XVII for the same six typical counties show the total available resources per school child to be:

County	Independent	Common
Collin	$35.96	$26.29
Gonzales	38.00	35.64
Limestone	63.06	42.47
Taylor	30.94	31.73
Walker	51.67	37.27
Childress	29.93	31.67

Regardless of whose fault it may be, the town child has a decided advantage over the country child from a study of the above calculations, which are averages, and do not show the wide contrasts that actually exist in many cases.

TABLE NO. XVI.

ASSESSED VALUATION PER SCHOLASTIC

Based on Enrolment 1926-1927

	Common Districts	Independent Districts
Childress	$1,098.35	$3,612.25
Cameron	3,555.15	3,676.51
Collin	577.23	3,298.26
Crosby	2,516.56	5,609.13
Frio	*	3,202.84
Fisher	1,595.58	3,779.17
Gonzales	245.51	2,727.69
Jasper	1,886.69	2,429.92
Lee	381.49	4,205.10
Limestone	1,661.06	6,208.09
Montague	684.01	2,772,97
Red River	265.90	2,131.43
Real	145.28	1,384.08
Taylor	1,308.07	5,775.43
Walker	756.52	3,631.42
Wilbarger	1,187.57	6,179.65

*No report

TABLE NO. XVII.

AVAILABLE RESOURCES PER CAPITA

Based on Scholastic Census

1926-1927

	Common Districts	Independent Districts
Childress	$31.67	$29.93
Cameron	26.39	37.77
Collin	26.29	35.96
Crosby	43.22	32.60
Frio	63.23	*
Fisher	40.46	24.85
Gonzales	35.64	38.00
Jasper	43.73	75.14
Lee	32.78	37.64
Limestone	42.47	63.06
Montague	26.34	33.00
Red River	25.70	20.58
Real	24.32	24.45
Taylor	31.73	30.94
Walker	37.27	51.67
Wilbarger	33.37	34.88

*No report

CHAPTER VI

ACADEMIC TRAINING OF TEACHERS

1926-1927

Tables XVIII and XIX show the academis training of the teachers for the entire state. As the reports from the sixteen counties surveyed were very incomplete, the tables were compiled from the State Superintendet's annual report. It will be noticed that 2 percent of the teachers of the independent districts are graduates of no school,while the number in the common schools is 20.9 percent. The number of such teachers employed in the independent districts is only 353, while the common schools employ 3,277 such teachers. The independent districts employ only 39.9 percent high school graduates, while the common districts employ 59.9 percent; the independent districts employ 25.1 percent normal school graduates, while the common schools employ only 12.6 percent of such teachers; the independent districts employ 33 percent college graduates,the common schools employ only 6.4 percent.

It is a significant fact that the teacher with the least amount of preparation and experience, is sent out into the country schools where they have no supervision, and where the task confronting them is well nigh insurmountable. Indeed, it is not surprising that the rural schools of Texas are backward; they could scarcely hope to be otherwise.

TABLE NO. XVIII.

ACADEMIC TRAINING OF TEACHERS FOR THE

COMMON SCHOOLS OF ENTIRE STATE

1926-1927

	Graduate of no school	Graduate of High School	Graduate of Normal	Graduate of College
Superintendents	11	35	19	19
Elementary Principals	498	1072	229	126
High Schools Principals	319	894	344	155
Elementary Teachers	2228	5700	1119	513
High School Teachers	221	686	277	191
Total	3277	9397	1988	1004
Percent	20.9%	59.9%	12.6%	6.4%

TABLE NO. XIX.

ACADEMIC TRAINING OF TEACHERS FOR THE

INDEPENDENT DISTRICTS OF

ENTIRE STATE

1926-1927

	Graduate no school	Graduate High School	Graduate Normal	Graduate College
Superintendents	39	178	207	425
Elementary Principals	59	250	239	212
High School Principals	19	187	117	307
Elementary Teachers	129	5598	2903	1628
High School Teachers	107	738	897	3164
Total	353	6924	4363	5736
Percent	2%	39.9%	25.1%	33%

CHAPTER VII

COURSE OF STUDY

The data received from the county superintendents was so very indefinite that no special interpretation is possible. However, it was observed that while many of the town schools reported either special courses of study or special adaptations of the state's course, all of the country schools reported that they were using the state's course. In some of the counties the superintendents have undertaken to give the teachers special helps in their work in the form of a course of study for the county, in which they use the state course as a nucleus and build their own course around the experience of the children of the county. This work is highly commendable for there is no locality in the state that does not possess a wealth of material for such work.

From a study of the situation, the conclusion is reached, that a carefully worked out system of supervision will go a long way toward solving many of the difficulties now experienced by the country schools. It is quite impossible for the county superintendent, under the present condition, to supervise the county schools in any thing like a satisfactory manner. In too many cases, if he had the time to give to this work, he could not do it properly, but loaded down as he is with the host of other duties and details of his office, he is doing exceedingly well if he pays one visit per school

term to the various schools of his county. Yet the teachers of the country schools stand most in need of careful supervision, for theirs is a more difficult task than that of the grade, or subject teacher, in a city system where they have immediate supervision of the work at every step of the way. Many leading educators of the state are beginning to see that through supervision lies the solution of many of the ills of the rural school. No doubt the opportunity to express their wishes in this matter will present itself in the near future.

CHAPTER VIII

TEACHERS' SALARIES

Table XX shows that the lowest salary paid to a teacher of an independent district is $803.00, in Childress county. Real county is not counted as it is not a typical situation and connot be considered here. This salary is poor enough but is almost $200.00 more than the lowest paid to the teachers of the common schools , which is $683.95 in Chidress county also. The highest average salary that any one county paid to teachers of the independent districts,is found in Limestine county. The highest for the common schools,is in Cameron county. The salaries are $1,298.59 for the former and $1,086.18 for the latter, a difference of $212.41.

It must be borne in mind that these are average salaries for the counties; some are higher , but a great number are lower.

In 1926-1927 the average salaries for teachers of independent districts of the state were $1,238,93 for white teachers,and $714.66 for the colored teachers, while in the common schools, the average ran $745.92 for white teachers, and $456.56 for colored teachers.

Considered all in all, it is not surprising that the teachers do not care to prepare themselves for teaching in the country schools. The salary becomes a minor factor when compared with living conditions, etc. All of these factors

have contributed toward the conditions that exist. It is a well known fact that a vast number of the one and two teacher schools are now taught by inexperienced girls, with little or no training beyond the high school, who consider their duty and responsibility at an end when Friday afternoon of each week arrives. If they do not live in town and make the trip to and from school each day, they usually manage to spend the week-end in town, and go back to the school Monday morning.

It is safe to predict that such a teacher is anxiously awaiting the time when she may secure a position in the town school, and turn her country charges over to another one who must have the required experience before being employed in a town school.

TABLE NO. XX.

AVERAGE SALARIES

	Common Districts	Independent Districts
Childress	$683.95	$803.00
Cameron	1,086.18	1,184.55
Collin	801.60	1,088.84
Crosby	890.90	1,021.20
Frio	701.13	1,200.00
Fisher	938.91	1,115.30
Gonzales	840.17	1,186.29
Jasper	861.68	1,152.94
Lee	795.47	1,197.50
Limestone	869.90	1,298.59
Montague	705.11	1,000.49
Red River	762.06	1,017.99
Real	680.90	710.00
Taylor	819.96	1,307.67
Walker	912,41	902.50
Wilbarger	881.71	1,394.81

TABLE NO. XXI.

COST OF INSTRUCTION PER CAPITA

1926-1927

Based on Salaries

	Common Districts	Independent Districts
Childress	$46.37	$39.25
Cameron	27.00	44.00
Collin	42.00	36.57
Crosby	38.43	50.83
Frio	62.85	*
Fisher	40.00	50.00
Gonzales	43.90	44.18
Jasper	47.16	45.15
Lee	43.30	46.80
Limestone	32.24	45.17
Montague	39.35	*
Red River	*	29.70
Real	48.36	50.00
Taylor	*	35.00
Walker	46.60	48.20
Wilbarger	50.42	58.72

*No report

CONCLUSIONS

From a study of the conditions as represented in the schools as shown in this survey, it is evident that something is vitally wrong with the educational system, and that something ought to be done to remedy the defects. The following conclusions have been reached in regard to the situation.

The progress of the rural schools has been made in the face of discrimination in every phase of development.

Gross inequalities of educational opportunity of town and country children exist at the present time, and very little effort is being made to overcome the evil. Indifference of both town and rural residents is apparent.

It is likely that many independent districts are guilty of "gerrymandering" in order to gobble up the wealth of the county.

The evidence is conclusive that numbers of independent districts have been created on account of motives other than those manifested.

The process of forming independent districts is entirely too easy for the absolute safety of the best educational interests concerned. A good system of common schools cannot be had as long as the practice of riddling the territory with independent districts is permitted.

The number and preparation of the rural school teachers

is decidedly inadequate for the development of a highly efficient system of common schools.

The short term of the rural schools, the crowded program, poorly adapted curricula, and poorer equipment, makes the task of serving the country children to the best advantage, an insurmountable one.

It would seem that a good school system bears a close relation to the general intelligence, efficiency and economic progress of the citizens of any locality.

In many localities, "absentee-landlordism" holds in check the adequate development of the country schools.

The early development of an efficient system of town schools tends to rob the rural communities of much needed leadership.

The ability to pay makes it possible for the urban, or independent districts, to secure more efficient teachers than the rural schools.

The vast amount of wealth in the independent districts makes it far easier to maintain a more efficient system of schools than the less fortunate rural schools.

The principle of taxation for school support was early established in the town schools and quickly capitalized, owing to the nature of the assessed wealth. Rural districts were restricted in adopting this course, first by legal authority, and later by the nature of the assessed wealth.

It is a financial impossibility for the majority of rural districts in Texas to support good schools without outside assistance, owing to the small units of taxation.

The rural children have no adequate high school opportunities.

The small independent district bears a close relation to the rural school, since it is the chief means of developing high school opportunities for country children.

High tuition rates close this avenue to a high school education to many country children.

The independent districts show a greater percent enrolled and a better attendance than the rural schools.

The town schools offer a richer curriculum and greater adaptation to local conditions than the country schools that follow the text book and the state course of study.

The country schools, with few exceptions, have little or no supervision.

Considered all in all, the independent districts have operated to the disadvantage of the rural schools, notwithstanding the fact that the towns have drawn their wealth chiefly from the rural districts, and should share the responsibility, in some measure, in educating its youth.

RECOMMENDATIONS

After a study of the foregoing conclusions, the following recommendations have presented themselves as a means for correcting the glaring defects in the rural educational system of the state.

The authority of creating independent districts by special acts of the legislature should be abolished.

No independent districts should be created except upon recommendation of the State Superintendent, after he has made a careful investigation of all interests concerned.

Independent districts having fewer than 500 scholastics should be placed under the County Board of Education.

A county wide tax to be distributed on some equitable basis, would serve as a leveling process, eliminating the existing inequalities of educational opportunity, and would defeat the evil effects of "gerrymandering", or any other practices that operate to the disadvantage of the rural schools.

Adequate support of a system of schools insuring efficiency by making it possible to employ as good teachers as are found in any system.

The state school fund should be distributed in such a manner that it may supplement the county fund to the end that educational opportunity throughout the state may be equalized.

A minimum salary schedule for rural teachers should be

established, as well as a higher degree of preparation.

The rural aid fund might more profitably be used to establish rural high schools.

There should be a strict enforcement of the compulsory attendance law.

A determined effort should be made by the proper authorities to make special adaptations and enrichment of the curriculum of the rural schools.

Provisions for helping teachers and supervisors should be made in each county.

A severance tax on all products of the soil, other than agricultural, and devoted to the schools, would make possible a more efficient system of public schools for Texas.

County	Superintendent	Address
Childress	Miss Mable Hare	Childress, Texas
Cameron	P. D. Kennamer	Brownsville, Texas
Collin	S. C. Stephens	McKinney, Texas
Crosby	B. H. Hicks	Crosbyton, Texas
Frio	Miss Nena Betts	Pearsall, Texas
Fisher	J. W. Tarlton	Roby, Texas
Gonzales	G. E. Bradley	Gonzales, Texas
Jasper	T. B. Watters	Jasper, Texas
Lee	E. McIntosh	Giddings
Limestone	Mrs. Cora Furgeson	Groesbeck
Montague	J. J. Haralson	Montague, Texas
Red River	W. S. Storey	Clarksville, Texas
Real	Ed A. Kelly	Leakey, Texas
Taylor	M. A. Williams	Abilene, Texas
Walker	Miss Bettie Mitchell	Huntsville, Texas
Wilbarger	Ercell W. Brooks	Vernon, Texas

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