

BACK TO SCHOOL, part fifteen,

►TITLE: Educational Survey of Madison County Schools with Plans for Reorganization

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---excerpt from 79 pages

At present (1936) Madison County contains twenty-three common school districts and three independent school districts (Madisonville, North Zulch, and Willowhole). Within these districts are 25 white schools and 13 colored schools. All districts are under the supervision of the elected County Superintendent. In addition to the County Board of Education, there are 98 board members responsible for the employment of only 124 teachers and the education of 3,598 school children.

There were no consolidations during the 20 years ending in 1933. During the 1934-35 school year, Cobbs School was combined with Elwood. Antioch, Liberty, and Herring Common Schools were grouped with Midway. Kickapoo joined Willowhole ISD.

The lengths of terms for the schools vary from 80 to 180 days with an average of 149 days. The average elementary pupil-teacher load ranges from 5.5 in Mecca to 39 in Elwood. Nine elementary schools have pupil-teacher loads averaging less than 15, while both Madisonville and North Zulch have loads of 35 and 40 respectively.

In some schools, teachers must prepare for, and teach from 8 to 12 different subjects per day. In two common school districts, a total of eight teachers are forced to teach ten days each year, one half of a school month, without pay.

Sixteen school busses are operating in the County, transporting 961 pupils over routes totaling 341.5 miles per one-way trip, or a total of 683 miles per day.

Several schools need complete rebuilding. A large percentage of schools need roof repairs and paint. Very few have water systems or are equipped for fire protection. Several schools are equipped with rudely constructed benches instead of pupil desks.

❖RECOMMENDATIONS❖

1. The County should be administered as one educational unit, under one Superintendent assisted by one principal over each elementary and high school in the County
2. Attendance areas should center around Madisonville, Midway, and North Zulch following the general lines of the three respective trade territories. The districts whose inhabitants trade primarily in Normangee should be assigned to that school. These include the Plainview, George, Mecca, and Ten Mile Common School Districts.
3. A minimum number of schools should be maintained. Fifteen of the County's present 38 schools would remain.
4. Each attendance area should be covered by a network of bus routes
5. There should be a county bond issue of approximately \$102,000 to cover the cost of needed additions and repairs.
6. All property should be assessed at its true value to equalize the financial burden of education across the County
7. Every school should be offered a chance to attend a nine-month free school term.
8. Teachers' salary schedules should be set as high as the County budget will allow since this will make possible the employment of better-trained teachers.
9. Vocational training should be offered to every school child because agriculture will probably continue to be the principal occupation of its inhabitants
10. No one teacher should be allowed to teach more than three grades or enroll more than thirty-five pupils in one section.

