

DECLINING ENROLLMENTS IN VIRGINIA:
IMPLICATIONS FOR STATE GOVERNANCE

by

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Dissertation submitted to the Graduate Faculty of the
Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

DOCTOR OF EDUCATION

in

Educational Administration

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April, 1979

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Perhaps the most difficult task of all is to adequately and to appropriately express my personal appreciation to all those who made this work possible, while at the same time influencing my life and philosophy of education.

To the chair of my committee, Dr. A. P. Johnston I wish to acknowledge the outstanding contribution to this work, but beyond that contribution the faith, confidence, and friendship shown will always be valued. To the other members of my committee, Dr. W. M. Worner, Dr. L. L. McCluskey, Dr. K. E. Underwood, and Mr. H. W. Tulloch I offer my appreciation for the scholarly assistance and personal interest.

To the members of the State Board of Education, the State Department of Education personnel, and those representatives of the local divisions who provided not only information, but also encouragement, I offer my thanks.

To my family, from whom I took the time and resources to pursue another of my goals, and said only "do it," words are inadequate.

To all the above and all the unnamed friends and associates who encouraged me, I realize you expect no thanks. I, therefore, offer a promise to always dream a little of "how it could be."

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Chapter I

INTRODUCTION

The history of the United States has been with little exception one of economic, social, and demographic manifest destiny. Growth in population, growth in business and industry, growth in government at all levels, and growth in real income, in technology, and in practically every segment of society have thus been expansionist, such that even with segmented and short-term declines, all segments of private and public sector activity have adopted growth as a way of life, viewing it as natural, desirable and healthy. There has been a general capability to react to the temporary setbacks and short-term declines while looking to the future when the growth cycle would resume.

Paralleling this almost continuous trend in society for the past 100 years has been a corresponding growth in the public education system. This attunement to growth and the related growth psychology over the decades took firm hold in education not only as a natural and desirable phenomenon for the larger society, but for education as well. Now, however, for the first time in its history, education is being confronted with the very real possibility of a long-term and nationwide decline. Certainly an activity that touches the whole of society as does education will influence and be influenced by a broad spectrum of our social, economic, and political life. It is the demographic issue of declining enrollments with its immediate effects on public education to which the present research is addressed.

Background

A situation is rapidly developing in public education which could have serious implications for society generally. Declining birth rates have placed public education in the position of having significantly fewer clients, first at one level, then another, as the smaller numbers of students move through elementary, secondary, and finally institutions of higher education.

Since its earliest beginnings, education has enjoyed a sustained growth in both the number of students served and funds expended for its services to a growing and expanding society. With relatively minor and geographically defined fluctuations, this expansion has been generally continuous and often taken for granted. Exceptions, the result of these fluctuations, were most often offset by growth in other areas or segments as exemplified by rural area declines being offset by rapidly growing urban and suburban areas.

A review of the current demographic trends indicates an astonishing reversal of this pattern at both the national and state levels. The literature of the early 1970's showed crude birth rate, which simply relates the number of births in a given year to the total population, remained stable at 23 per thousand in the early 1960's, then fell sharply during the mid- and late-1960's to a figure below 15 per thousand at the national level. The Virginia birth rate began a decline slightly later, but by 1975 had declined to a 14.1 per thousand figure. Throughout much of this period many planners and demographers continued to project upturns in birth rates usually listing the reasons for the

projections as the large cohort of childbearing age females. In spite of this large cohort, the actual number of births continued to decline.

More recently, many demographers have turned their attention to predicting how low the birth rates will actually drop and/or when they will begin to increase. A common conclusion seems to be that the decline will continue at least through 1982. Many demographers predict that an upturn will occur at or about that time, while others state the lower birth rate will continue with us as society adjusts to different attitudes about bearing and raising children.

Enrollment and projections reflected in Table 1 (p.12) indicates the decline is generally nationwide and projected at an eleven percent overall decline during the decade 1972-82.¹ In Figure 1 (p. 14) the Series II projection line very closely parallels actual current birth rates with the 2.1 births per family representing exact population replacement only.² Table 3 (p. 22) shows the overall decline in Virginia very closely resembles the national decline.³

Whether the decline will continue, reverse itself, or stabilize in future years, one fact is clear: educational institutions and agencies are faced with at least a short-term inevitable reduction in

¹U.S., Department of Health, Education and Welfare, Office of Education, Projections of Educational Statistics to 1982-83 (1973 edition), (Washington, D.C.: National Center for Educational Statistics, 1973).

²U.S., Executive Office of the President, Social Indicators 1973 (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1973).

³C. Clear, "Enrollment Projections for Virginia Schools," Public Education in Virginia, 12, No. 4 (1977).

the number of its "traditional--ages 5-18--students. Since student enrollments function as the major economic "generator" for education, the impact of the decline is, at best, uncertain.

With the assumptions and values of an expanding future, many decision makers are ill-equipped for the management of decline and have problems even imagining a healthy decline. The blunt reality of decrease, however, will force a scaling down, at least for the foreseeable future unless counter developments move into the organizational vacuum. If decision makers allow the decline to run a natural course with no appropriate counter measures, the scaling down would still necessitate a number of decisions in regard to such issues as the level of financial support, surplus staff, surplus space, and the possibility of reduced programs.

Other crucial forces such as the relative growth of the economy, public attitudes toward public sector activity, and expectations toward schools, as well as the possibility of a broader spectrum of state responsibility, for example, older students returning to school, may stabilize anticipated decline. In any case, a course of action must be selected. A trend or development may be unalterable, but even so, the variety of responses available would require a policy position in regard to the most appropriate course of action.

Numerous other issues may force or direct the policy makers to make "override" decisions. For example, the cost and availability of energy may require an adjustment in school schedules and program capabilities. Increased unemployment might require schools to focus

attention on this as a part of their program; on the other hand, the training could be undertaken outside the realm of the school creating quite a different problem. If a different series of decisions were required by shifting priorities, those decisions identified as most likely would probably be invalidated, but the possibility of priority shifts needed to be exposed due to their potential overriding impact on the policy decisions.

This study was intended to determine some of the most common problems normally associated with declining enrollments along with most likely policy reactions. Beyond this, the study was focused on the possible implications of such policy postures. It is not the intent of this effort, however, to provide a single solution.

The Problem

The problem involved in this study was to examine and describe some of the possible courses of action available to legislators and educators as they attempt to face the problem of declining enrollments. The study was not designed to provide specific answers to the most common questions, but rather to provide focus to the central issues and their attendant implications. Specifically, the study was designed to determine the state level policy implications of declining enrollments in Virginia.

It was assumed from the data and demographics that decline and some related reaction was inevitable in the short run unless policy makers reacted in such a way as to change the existing structure or

scope of education as it currently existed. The focus of the study was, then, directed to four basic questions:

1. What are the central issues and their implications involved in the utilization or disposition of surplus space?
2. What issues and their implications are involved in the need to reduce staff?
3. If reduced state funding becomes a reality, what are the issues and their implications of the reductions?
4. If cutbacks in programs are necessary, what are the issues and their implications of such cutbacks?

Justification for the Study

Some states have already taken the initiative in addressing the serious issue of enrollment decline, but in too many cases their efforts have consisted of stop-gap measures, including legislation which does not address the long term issues.

It is clear that studies are needed state by state, using such literature as the 1976 Illinois "Report and Recommendations of the Illinois Task Force on Declining Enrollment,"⁴ and the similar 1976 Minnesota study, "The Impact of Fluctuating School Enrollments on Minnesota's Educational System,"⁵ as a beginning point to inform

⁴Illinois State Office of Education, "Report of the Illinois Task Force on Declining Enrollments in the Public Schools," (Springfield, IL, 1975).

⁵Minnesota State Planning Agency, "The Impact of Fluctuating School Enrollments on Minnesota's Educational System," (St. Paul, MN, 1976).

decision makers of probable futures and policy alternatives. The fact that states are not alike, that important differences prevail, and that many studies undertaken to date only partially address the problem provides the justification to perform this study in Virginia.

This study would serve as a catalyst for educational groups to address the problem before a potential opportunity to improve education turns into a negative, uncontrolled, unplanned for, and thus an unhealthy decline. Planning for management of decline should allow the educational community to capitalize on an opportunity before the competition for tax dollars, unused facilities, and surplus staff become the problem rather than symptoms of the larger problem.

Virginia, as a state on the beginning edge of a significant enrollment decline, will be provided with alternatives for more reasoned judgments by those who will have to make the difficult choice. It is hoped that the study will encourage an earlier and more thorough analysis of the problem before the full impact of the decline is felt.

Purpose of the Study

The specific problem implied by the documented decline becomes a policy question of informing educators, lay boards, and others of policy issues involved and the implications in facing a new situation. In order to inform, demographic data had to be gathered and assimilated to provide projections for the specific jurisdiction of concern to the decision makers, be they involved in state or local governance.

By providing a review of the problem and attempting to supply information and analysis to the appropriate decision makers within

Virginia, this study would be, hopefully, a valuable source of information.

Limitations of the Study

The limitations of the study were in part associated with the fact that demographic data, as related to future school enrollments, cannot be definitely determined beyond births to date. Any attempt to proceed beyond this point would require projection and estimation requiring value judgments as to the plans of potential parents. In order to enhance the utility of the study, demographic patterns and projections were extended beyond births to date with the understanding that these figures were projections subject to the usual margin of error.

Another limitation noted was the fact that only the "most common" problems usually created by declining enrollments were viewed, along with some of the most common implications. Many other potential problems, both direct and tangential, may perhaps influence events as well as decision makers; however, the study could not be totally inclusive. This study provided a nucleus of information common to most localities in the state, while serving as a point of departure for those individuals and groups faced with the decision making created by the decline.

It was recognized that other crucial or unforeseen circumstances such as drastic shifts in the economy, altered public attitudes toward education, energy forecasts, and lifelong learning opportunities as a part of public education could quickly invalidate many, if not all, policy options or implications. By changing either the emphasis

or conditions drastically, the focus could be on an entirely new arena of problems and concerns and thus needed to be viewed at least in broad perspective as a limitation on the study.

Furthermore, changing attitudes of society in regard to sizes of families might reduce or even reverse the trend of fewer students. If the attitudes of society changed toward larger families, managing decline could become a short-lived phenomenon requiring an entirely new policy sequence centered around monitoring and short-term temporary adjustments. Some evidence of increasing birth rates is beginning to appear in current literature.

However, if birth rates remain low and do not generate additional clients for the public schools, public support for education could lessen as an older population supports other public services more appropriate to their age level. According to information provided by the Virginia State Department of Education, estimates based on the triennial census completed in 1977 indicate that by 1983 more families in Virginia will not have students in schools than those families who do.⁶

Organization of the Study

This study is divided into five chapters. Chapter I includes an introduction, a statement of the problem, background information, the justification, and the need and purposes of the study. Chapter II

⁶Everett B. Howerton, Address Delivered to Southwest Virginia Phi Delta Kappa Chapter (Emory, VA, November 16, 1977).

includes a review of the related literature including a review of enrollment figures and projections, an assembling of data on common related characteristics associated with the identified problem, and an analysis of the likely implications of specific courses of action concerned with the identified symptoms and the problem generally.

The design of the research and the procedures utilized in the study are described in Chapter III. The data and related analysis appears in Chapter IV. The study is summarized, conclusions are drawn, and implications and recommendations are presented in the fifth and final chapter.

Chapter II

REVIEW OF THE RELATED LITERATURE

The review of the related literature was divided into three parts: part one concerning enrollment figures and projections for the nation and Virginia; part two assembling the common associated problems and the typical reactions to each of the associated problem areas; and part three a summary of the related literature.

The common associated sub-set problems identified in the literature review for part two were: utilization and/or disposition of surplus space, reduction in force, reduced financing, and cutbacks in programs.

Enrollment Figures and Projections

National

National enrollment trends and projections have been closely paralleled within Virginia. Table 1, adapted from data supplied by the National Center for Education Statistics, indicates the lowered birth rates of the early 1960's showing up in the mid-seventies as reduced enrollments.⁷ Extending the series two population projections from the Bureau of Census a continued decline is noted into the 1980's.

⁷U.S., Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, Office of Education, Statistics of Trends in Education 1964-65 to 1984-85 National Center for Education Statistics (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, January, 1976).

Table 1

School Age Population and Enrollment Trends in Education

United States, Fall 1964 to Fall 1984^a

	Fall 1964	Fall 1974	Percentage Change, 1964 to 1974	Fall 1984 Pro- jected)	Percentage Change, 1974 to 1984
	Thousands			Thousands	
School-Age Population					
5-13	35,373	33,903	- 4	30,213	-11
14-17	14,229	16,880	+19	14,229	-15
18-21	11,542	16,194	+40	15,839	- 2
18 (nearest birthday)	3,350	4,166	+24	3,610	-13
Enrollment:					
K-12	47,716	49,756	+ 4	44,900	-10
K-8	35,025	34,419	- 2	31,500	- 8
9-12	12,691	15,332	+21	13,300	-13
Public	41,416	45,056	+ 9	40,600	-10
K-8	30,025	30,919	+ 3	28,500	- 8
9-12	11,391	14,232	+24	12,100	-14
Non-Public	6,300	7,400	-25	4,200	-11

^aTable adapted from: U.S., Department of Health, Education and Welfare, Office of Education, Statistics of Trends in Education, (Washington, D.C.: National Center for Educational Statistics, January 1976), p. 1.

Enrollment figures for the fall of 1974 indicated a decline in the 5-13 group and by the 1984-85 school year the decline extends through the age 18 group covering all age groups.⁸

Nationwide the annual number of births leveled off in the late 1950's, showing a substantial decline in 1962. This decline in births is clearly reflected in the 1968 first grade enrollments. Each year thereafter a continuous decline is noted. The "baby bust" of 1974, with one million fewer births than in 1960, indicates the 1979 first grade enrollment will be down by 25 percent from the 1966 first grade enrollments with 1966 representing a peak at that level.

Demographic analysis can project creditable if not certain estimates of school enrollments up to 2000. By this extension, a third point of reference can provide a clearer picture of the probable long range enrollment trends. Changes in enrollment in both elementary and secondary schools relate directly to changes in the school-age population, which in turn is largely the result of changes in the annual number of births. A birth cohort will enter kindergarten at approximately age five and influence future enrollments as the cohort moves through successive years.

Figure 1 indicates the number of past births as well as the number of births projected in the three series of U.S. Bureau of Census population projections for the period 1940 to 1973 in actual numbers

⁸Ibid.



Figure 1. Total Births in the United States, 1940 to 1973, and Projected from 1974 to 2000. (Sources: U.S. Bureau of the Census, Current Population Reports, Series P-25, No. 601, Tables 1 and 2.)

and further projected from 1974 to 2000.⁹ The essential differences among the three population projections result from different assumptions of fertility rates. Series I represents a tendency toward larger than a two child family, while series III represents an increased tendency toward the one child family. Series II projections are being called the "ones appearing at this time to be the reasonable choices."¹⁰

Robert J. Goetell pointed out that only three states--New Hampshire, Florida, and Arizona showed enrollment increases in the K-8 area.¹¹ Even in these states the increases were only very slight.

Goetell further noted that with the exception of Alabama, all states with K-8 enrollment declines greater than eight percent were found in northeast or midwest regions of the country, and indicated most of the states reflecting growth in enrollment were those "sun belt" states enjoying a corresponding population growth.¹²

Similar statistics prepared for the Education Commission of the States by Allan Odden and Phillip E. Vincent differ slightly yet paint the same picture of general decline.¹³ These statistics

⁹U.S. Bureau of the Census, Current Population Reports, Series P-25, No. 801, "Projections of the Population of the U.S., 1975 to 2050," (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1975), tables 1, 2.

¹⁰Ibid.

¹¹National Association of State School Boards of Education, The Imperatives of Leadership, 2, No. 1 (Denver, Colorado: July, 1976), p. 4.

¹²Ibid.

¹³Allan Odden and Phillip E. Vincent, The Fiscal Impacts of Declining Enrollments (Denver, Colorado: Education Commission of the States, 1976).

present the total of all public school pupils and therefore show some states gaining in student enrollment between the years 1970 and 1975. If corresponding comparisons of K-8 enrollments were made, fewer states would have shown the growth somewhat disguised in the total picture. The states of Alaska, Arizona, Colorado, Florida, Idaho, Maine, Massachusetts, Nevada, New Hampshire, Vermont, and Virginia all show small increases in total students with only the previously mentioned four states showing growth at the K-8 level.

The Virginia Pattern

Virginia's school age population and projections reflect a very similar pattern. Dr. Richard L. Boyer, Assistant Superintendent for Program Development for the Virginia Department of Education stated,

Though the decline is arriving in Virginia somewhat later than in other parts of the United States, its impact will be significant during the 1978-80 biennium and will continue into the 1980's.¹⁴

Grade one enrollments peaked in the 1966-68 period and declined through the period 1973-74. Although an upturn was noted in the 1974-76 period, much of the short-term increase was due in part to a change in the school entry age allowing 13 months of students to enroll in each of three years as the entry date moved from October 1 birthdates to November 1 birthdates, then to December 1 and eventually to the

¹⁴Richard L. Boyer, Public Education in Virginia, State Department of Education, 13, No. 2 (Summer, 1977).

January 1 birthdates as a deadline for school entry. This temporary increase tends to skew the statistics for a short period, but projections indicate the decline continues in the 1977-78 school year and becomes continuous through the 1981-82 school year.

Table 2 reflects a continuous and similar pattern of decline in Virginia as noted nationally in Table 1. A decrease of 17 percent during the decade 1975-85 was projected by the Department of Education.¹⁵

In an examination of enrollment statistics for Virginia school divisions, summarized in a State Department of Education publication, the decade 1965-66 to 1975-76 revealed the following enrollments:

	<u>Elementary and Special Education</u>	<u>Secondary</u>	<u>Totals</u> ¹⁶
1965-66	689,000*	349,000	1,038,000
1975-76	711,000	432,000	1,143,000

*rounded to thousands

Upon first examination it appeared that elementary enrollments had increased some 22 thousand while secondary enrollments grew by some 83 thousand during this period. Further examination revealed the decade saw a growth in new clients at the elementary level in the form

¹⁵C. Clear, "Enrollments Projections for Virginia Schools," Public Education in Virginia, 12, No. 4 (1977), pp. 5-7.

¹⁶Ibid.

Table 2

School Age Population and Enrollment Trends in Education in
Virginia, 1975-76 (actual), 1976 through 1985 projected^a

	Elementary (Thousands)	Secondary (Thousands)	Special Ed. Post Grad. (Thousands)	Total (Thousands)
1975-76	693	431	19	1143
1976-77	687	435	20	1141
1977-78	665	436	21	1122
1978-79	647	430	22	1098
1979-80	632	417	22	1070
1980-81	619	402	22	1043
1981-82	603	393	22	1017
1982-83	583	388	22	993
1983-84	562	392	22	975
1984-85	550	389	22	961
1985-86	548	379	22	949

^aTable adopted from: Virginia Department of Education,
Public Education in Virginia (Richmond, VA: Winter, 1977), p. 9.

of kindergarten students. From approximately 5,000 students enrolled in the school year 1965-66 to almost 80,000 students during the 1975-76 school year, a slow, steady growth was insured by action of the General Assembly in the middle 1970's requiring all divisions to offer kindergarten.¹⁷

During the same decade, first grade enrollments showed a decline from a high of 102,348 in 1967-68 to a low of 81,626 in the 1973-74 session.¹⁸ A slight upturn noted in the 1974-75 and 1975-76 sessions is directly traceable to the result of legislation allowing students to enter school one month earlier as the school entry age advanced four months in four years providing the first grade classes with 13 months of students in each of these four years.

Assuming that an approximately equal number of births occur each month, the pool of students available for first grade membership would be increased by approximately 1/12th. For the most part this approximate eight percent increase would more than offset the apparent growth noted in the 1974-75 and 1975-76 school years without noting the corresponding massive inflow of students into the now state mandated kindergarten program.

Allowing a direct comparison of total elementary enrollments without note of the kindergarten and 13 month years more than one-half

¹⁷Virginia State Department of Education, Standards of Quality for Public Schools in Virginia (Richmond, VA: 1972), p. 2.

¹⁸Virginia State Department of Education, Superintendent's Annual Report(s) (Richmond, VA: 1966 and 1976), pp. 167, 262.

the school divisions in Virginia still experienced an overall decline in elementary enrollments. Based on 131 divisions, 64 noted gains while 67 noted a decline; of the 64 divisions in the growth column, 15 noted growth of five percent or less.

With the passage of time and the upward movement of the smaller cohort of students secondary enrollments will be seriously impacted. Noting a peak enrollment projected for 1977-78 at 436,000 in secondary schools in the state, the projections indicate a decline to 380,000 by the 1985-86 school year, a decline of 12.8 percent in eight years. For the same period, elementary enrollments would drop from 693,000 to 548,000 or a 20.9 percent decline. Combining for total enrollment the decline in the eight year period would be a significant 17 percent.

Upon examination of the 1967-68 and 1976-77 total enrollments in Virginia there appears to have been a growth of 28,000 students during the decade. Closer examination, however, showed that new clients in kindergarten more than offset the apparent growth. By adjusting for kindergarten enrollments by division, the 67 divisions showing a decline in enrollments was increased to 82 of the 130 reporting divisions.

Illustration No. 1 presents a map of the State of Virginia color coded to reflect the divisions experiencing growth in light shade and the divisions reflecting fewer students in a dark shade. The adjusted enrollments from Table 3 were calculated by removing the new cohort represented by kindergarten.

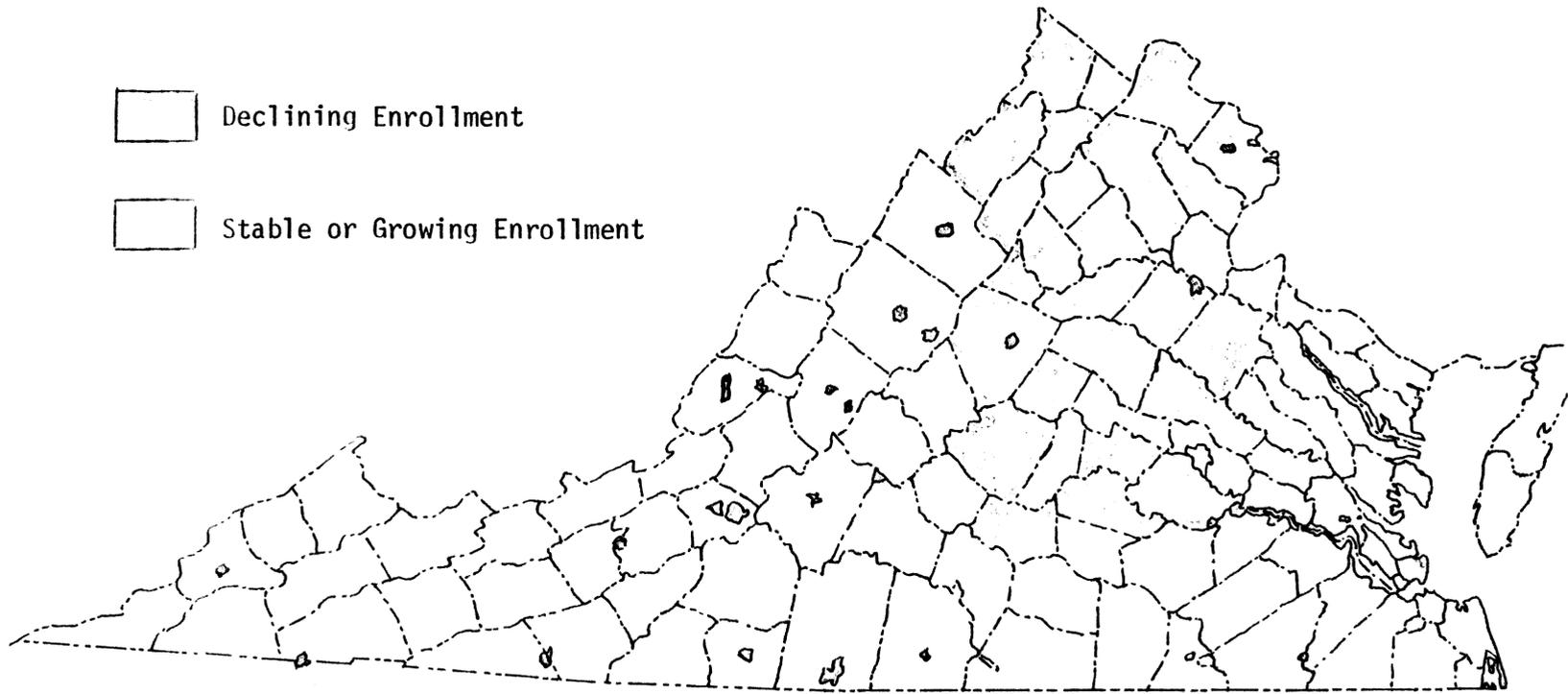


Figure 2. Growth patterns in Virginia. (Source: Data adapted from State Superintendents Reports 1967/68 and 1977/78.)

Table 3
A Comparison of Enrollments in Virginia in the Decade
1967-68 and 1976-77

	1967-68 ^a	1976-77 ^b	Difference
Kindergarten	8,174	71,965	+63,791
Total Elementary	703,291	659,233	-44,508
Total Secondary	369,613	441,490	+71,877
Total Enrollment	1,072,904	1,100,723	+27,819
Adjusted for Kindergarten	1,064,730	1,028,758	-35,972

^aVirginia: State Board of Education, Superintendent's Annual Report 1967-68 (Richmond, VA: November, 1968), p. 285.

^bVirginia: State Board of Education, Fall Membership in Virginia's Public School 1976-77 (Richmond, VA : November 1976), pp. 1-8.

No attempt was made to determine the specific impact of the thirteen months of students admitted to kindergarten and first grade. The effect of this event was judged to be cumulative over the three year period and was simply noted as a compounding factor in making a direct comparison.

The enrollment figures in Table 3 represent total statewide enrollments adjusted by subtracting kindergarten enrollments from the respective totals.

Evidence of the certainty of at least a short-term continuation of the decline was noted in Table 2. Only the new cohort of kindergarten keeps the decline from being evident before the 1975-76 school year.

Viewing the population trends and projections for the state as a whole, the 1960 population of 3,966,000 is projected to increase to 6,454,000 by the year 2000¹⁹ (See Table 4). This projected growth is not uniform across age groups, although each age group shows a numerical increase, the percentage of the total population shifts upward. The youngest group, the 0-20 cohort, percentage decreases, while the 20-44, the 45-64, and the 65 and up groups all increase as a percentage of the total.

Viewing the 5-19 age group cells, the cohort normally supplying the enrollments for public schools, a numerical increase is

¹⁹Charles H. Benrud, Final Report, Virginia Population Projections, Prepared for Department of Planning and Budget, Commonwealth of Virginia. (Research Triangle Park, NC: Research Triangle Institute, 1976).

Table 4

Number of Persons in Virginia in Respective Age Groups in Thousands
1960-1970 actual, 1980-2000 projected^a

Age Group	1960	Percent	1970	Percent	1980	Percent	1990	Percent	2000	Percent
0-9	881	22.2	686	15.1	759	14.4	922	15.7	929	14.4
10-19	712	18.0	915	20.2	903	17.1	739	12.6	970	15.0
20-29	541	13.7	775	17.0	1,003	19.0	969	16.5	846	13.1
30-39	565	14.3	549	12.1	800	15.2	1,031	17.6	979	15.2
40-49	493	12.4	563	12.4	566	10.7	802	13.7	1,028	15.9
50-59	355	9.0	459	10.1	531	10.1	530	9.0	751	11.6
60-69	239	6.0	306	6.7	405	7.7	464	7.9	464	7.2
70-79	134	3.4	223	4.9	222	4.2	289	4.9	331	5.1
80+	45	1.1	66	1.5	89	1.7	119	2.0	156	2.4
TOTALS	3,965	100.0	4,542	100.0	5,278	100.0	5,865	100.0	6,454	100.0

^a Charles H. Benrud, Final Report, Virginia Population Projections, Prepared for Department of Planning and Budget, Commonwealth of Virginia. (Research Triangle Park, NC: Research Triangle Institute, 1976).

projected through 1980, dipping at the 1900 level and rebounding rather significantly by the year 2000. During this 40 year span percentages of the total population falling in this group was projected to decline from 2.9 percent in 1960 to 2.0 in 1990, and back to 2.2 percent by the year 2000. The projected growth in the total population related inversely to percentages of the population in that age group causing a reduced impact in terms of future growth in school enrollments.

Projected growth across the state was also not uniform. Viewing the state in terms of planning districts, 21 of 22 districts were projected to grow while one district, the southside area numbered Planning District No. 13 was projected to decline in total population. In districts projected to grow, growth rates varied from 16 percent to 180 percent during the 1960-2000 period of time.

Table 5 lists the actual population for 1960 with projected population figures for the year 2000. Percentage of change figures were calculated simply as the percentage of change in totals from 1960 to 2000.

Associated Problems

Problems created by declining enrollments generally were identified in the areas of surplus space, reduction in force, reduced financing and cutbacks in programs. Overlapping each of these areas is the communication and public relations problem of keeping all segments of the population apprised of the changing situations.

Table 5

Actual Population 1960 and Projected Population 2000 by
Planning District with Percentage Change Calculated^a

Planning District	Actual 1960 Population	Projected 2000 Population	Percentage Change
1	100,212	135,600	35
2	128,016	158,700	24
3	160,065	192,800	21
4	97,233	185,100	90
5	207,332	292,200	41
6	166,585	246,900	48
7	97,045	178,400	84
8	601,811	1,378,800	179
9	65,609	113,300	73
10	98,049	190,600	94
11	150,877	228,400	51
12	205,213	263,300	28
13	88,818	74,700	-16
14	80,205	93,000	16
15	461,993	800,900	73
16	64,302	186,600	190
17	36,776	44,300	21
18	45,501	74,700	64
19	141,471	173,200	22
20	666,841	987,200	48
21	242,874	393,500	62
22	47,601	62,800	32
STATE TOTALS	3,954,429	6,455,000	63

^a Charles H. Benrud, Final Report, Virginia Population Projections, Prepared for Department of Planning and Budget, Commonwealth of Virginia. (Research Triangle Park, NC: Research Triangle Institute, 1976).

Utilization or Disposition of Surplus Space

After a quarter of a century of rapid and sometimes spectacular growth, an increasing number of school systems are finding themselves faced with shrinking enrollments. The problem has changed from what to do about overcrowding, double sessions and temporary facilities, to what to do about empty classrooms.²⁰

In many sections of the country the problem of financing new construction has changed to the problem of selling old school houses. Projecting an overall school population decline, it was noted that the shrinking enrollments were not uniform; therefore, many areas are faced with drastic reductions while others were experiencing a certain stability or even a continuing upward growth pattern.

School population decline most often is a gradual process. Superintendents, according to Sargent, tend to follow a similar pattern of reactive steps when adjusting to this gradual loss of students.²¹

In the first phase adjustments, primary consideration was given to "curriculum enrichment" and rehousing in better or more permanent facilities those segments of the program which, in time of growth, had been temporarily located in make-shift facilities. Through years of growth, many facilities had become crowded and spaces within buildings originally designed for counseling, testing, conferences, and other general support activities had been pressed into service as classrooms and instructional spaces. The addition of special programs, often mandated by new legislation, or general enrichment activities often placed

²⁰C. G. Sargent, Fewer Pupils/Surplus Space (New York: Educational Facilities Laboratories, May, 1974).

²¹Ibid.

a strain on the facility. In extreme cases of growth, double shifting and temporary facilities had appeared.

In the early stages of decline there are positive advantages to the schools such as reduced teacher loads and the availability of more desirable spaces. Double shifting, usually considered an undesirable option, is eliminated early as a positive measure. Spaces gradually become available to rehouse special and elective classes such as music, art, and remedial reading in more satisfactory quarters.

In the second phase of decline, opportunities may still be available: opportunities to close or consolidate small schools or to eliminate older and perhaps unsafe facilities.²² Although the debate as to the desirable size of school remains unresolved, almost all educators agree that once a school declines to an unspecified enrollment figure, it is not economically feasible to operate, nor can the "too small" school offer a broad enough program to justify its continued operation.

Once the adjustments are made to reduce the pupil-teacher ratio, rehouse enrichment programs, and perhaps close the small and/or undesirable facilities, the serious cutbacks may have to begin if the decline continues.²³ Based on assumptions about the future of the communities involved, certain courses of action may be desirable. Given a situation where economic conditions or growth patterns indicate probable

²²Ibid,

²³Ibid.

future growth it may be desirable to hold empty facilities for the anticipated future need. Disposing of a well-built, well-designed facility and finding the need for a replacement in the same general area at a later date would be a political disaster, as replacement costs, in light of inflation, would almost certainly make this course of action a significant financial burden.

On the other hand, there are disadvantages in holding an empty building in reserve: vandalism, pressure from "outside" groups for usage, pressure to reopen the facilities to cut back on travel to other schools, and the psychological and political issue of an expensive facility standing empty as an apparent liability to the taxpayers.²⁴

As the student population continues to decline and the marginal adjustments have been made, entire buildings often can be made available for other educational uses. In view of legislative moves to increase educational opportunities for special groups such as the handicapped, it was not uncommon to note entire schools converted to these special needs in the form of special education centers. Similarly, facilities have been designated as alternative schools for drop-outs and potential drop-outs, adult education centers, pre-school programs, kindergarten programs, and day care centers.²⁵ Still in the realm of other educational usage were facilities converted to administrative

²⁴Ibid.

²⁵Ibid.

offices, storage and maintenance areas and teacher centers for in-service and resource work.

Beyond additional educational needs usage, facilities have been provided for other governmental agency occupancy. Quite often, city and county office space is needed and an unused school provides a reasonable answer. Other examples of successful alternative uses of such facilities have been park and recreational activities, gerontology programs, and general purpose community or civic centers. With the broad range of facilities such as playgrounds, gymnasiums, cafeterias, auditoriums, and libraries in the typical school, the potential for a broad range of community uses makes it a most attractive center.

Ultimately, the "other educational usage" stage passes into the next phase of adjusting to continued decline. This phase noted converting parts or entire buildings to usage by other governmental agencies or other non-profit outside agencies. Agencies such as Easter Seals, private day care centers, and even neighborhood civic clubs had found it advantageous to use the idle facilities.²⁶

Finally, when facilities are not needed by the school system, the other governmental or non-profit agencies, the board may ultimately be faced with the hard decision to rent, trade, sell or even give away the property. Rental, of course, is the desirable option if it appears the facility may be needed again sometime in the future.²⁷

²⁶Ibid.

²⁷National School Boards Association Research Report, "Declining Enrollments," Report No. 1 (Evanston, IL: 1976), p. 23.

Many states have legislation which allows school divisions to lease, sell or generally dispose of unneeded facilities. Much of this legislation was passed in a time when the growth mind-set prevailed. In Virginia, school law allows the sale, exchange or lease of real and personal school property under the supervision of the circuit court.²⁸ Restrictions are placed on "token" leases or transfers of title without due compensation.²⁹ Whatever the option selected, it would be subject to state and local regulations, as for example, schools are often located in residential areas which have zoning ordinances prohibiting commercial use.

Highline School District in Seattle, Washington, devised an "educational adequacy" matrix to rate each school in the district considering such factors as operational cost, percentage of decline in enrollment, and modernization potential.³⁰ By using such a matrix and weighted scale a comparison between schools was possible. A case for closure must be made as few communities seem willing to give up their school unless the evidence is overwhelming and the advantages of changing schools obvious.

Sargent points out that such a plan must include:

1. A set of agreed-on goals, with specific objectives spelled out for each.

²⁸Virginia School Laws, 1975, Sect: 22-161 and 15.1-262.

²⁹Ibid.

³⁰State of Washington, Highline Public Schools, Report of the Task Force of Declining Enrollments (Seattle, Washington: 1976).

2. A factual base defining the "givens" upon which the plan can be developed. In the case of a plan for facility use, this base includes enrollments and their projections; schools, their location, capacity, and general level of adequacy; community changes affecting the location of people and the composition of their groupings; and a "picture" of the physical structure of the district. Cost of a new construction and/or renovation may also be required.
3. An analysis of the factual data. This is an exercise in fitting the numbers--pupils and schools--together, and of arranging them in their physical setting.
4. A set of possible solutions: alternative grade organizations, patterns of school use, abandonment for outmoded and/or unsafe schools, needed new construction or closings (or both).
5. A choice among alternatives for a preferred course of action; a justification for the alternative selected; the preparation of the time sequence for the actions to be taken; a cost analysis of the implications of the selected plan as against alternative options.³¹

Summary surplus space. The adjustment to declining enrollment and the related spatial adjustment appeared in the literature to flow through three general states: (a) adjustments in usage such as rehousing or reallocating more satisfactory or permanent quarters to special programs and other classes, as needed--these adjustments were generally viewed as positive and desirable options, (b) sharing facilities with other governmental and/or non-profit agencies as appropriate under existing law, and (c) closure and disposal of facilities as appropriate under existing legal provisions.

An emphasis on the importance of communication was evident in

³¹C. G. Sargent, Fewer Pupils/Surplus Space (New York: Educational Facilities Laboratories, May, 1974).

the literature as indicated by the conclusion of Sieradski that the needs for community involvement in any plans to seriously alter the existing programs by closure and transfer.³²

Odden and Vincent wrote in The Fiscal Impact of Declining Enrollments that school buildings may be closed only when declining enrollments have occurred in relatively large numbers over relatively long periods of time.³³ The pattern tends to allow some time for action, if the division carefully monitors trends in student population.

Considerable research at the state and local levels tend to indicate basically the same options, the real variations being what options are legal or permissible under existing legislation. Most of the literature tends also to provide suggestions, but emphasized the importance of carefully considering all options in light of unique local situations. The importance of comprehensive, systematic planning was emphasized by many of the authors.

Reduction in Force

When decline in enrollment begins, an effort to reduce expenditures generally follows very quickly. Professional staff salaries are the single greatest expense for the school operation. Cutting back

³²Karen Sieradski, Implications of Declining Enrollment for Schools, NAESP (Arlington, VA: School Leadership Digest, 1975), p. 22.

³³Allan Odden and Phillip E. Vincent, Education Commission of the States, The Fiscal Impacts of Declining Enrollments (Denver, Colorado, 1976).

staff, therefore, was the major strategy adopted for reducing operational costs.

"The public payroll should not support one person who is not needed to educate young people."³⁴ These sentiments express not only the administrators' but also the public's attitude toward manpower cost in education. While this statement is in some sense accurate, determining whether a person is "needed" or not is very difficult. This determination of need relates directly to class size, student ability and achievement, pupil and teacher morale, methods of instruction, and the goals of education in the district.

The first priority of divisions facing declining enrollments is to upgrade educational quality and expand pupil opportunities by examining community needs. But faced with unmanageable cost and decreased state assistance, school boards ultimately must reduce the number of teachers in their employ. In 1972-73, slightly over one third of the school divisions polled by an Educational Research Service survey reported that they had reduced staff, largely through normal attrition.³⁵

In 1975, Dr. V. W. Grant reported that "this fall there were about 20.7 pupils per teacher as compared with 24.7 pupils for each

³⁴"Cutting Staff is the Toughest Part of Student Decline," Educational USA, 17, 339 (May 26, 1975).

³⁵"Enrollment Trends and Staff Reductions," Educational Research Service Research Memo (November, 1974).

teacher ten years ago."³⁶ While the number of available teachers continued to grow, schools that cannot face increased costs or feel no need for further lowering pupil-teacher ratios will have to cut back their staffs.

Although it may take two or three years of decline before there is an opportunity for divisions to reduce the number of personnel in a school division, those divisions that have to develop anticipatory measures were advised by the American School Board Journal:

1. Place a moratorium on teacher leave policies, thus reducing the number of teachers returning to claim positions vacated when enrollments were higher.
2. Offer one- or two-year termination contracts to new teachers, thereby allowing the district to declare openly that teaching positions may not be available in the immediate future.
3. Initiate staffing needs studies that permit estimates of natural attrition through retirement or moves.
4. Introduce early retirement incentive programs, resulting in an accelerated out-movement of top salaried senior teachers and in-movement of lowered salaried new teachers.³⁷

In addition to placing a moratorium on teacher leave policies, the division may also want to update the deadline for teachers wishing to return from leave in order to plan for vacancies and teacher termination. There are many different early retirement incentive plans, as discussed in the "AASA Handbook on Declining Enrollments: What to Do,"

³⁶W. Vance Grant, "Toward New Peaks in Education," American Education, 11, No. 8 (October, 1975).

³⁷William F. Keough, Jr., "How to Make the Most Out of Declining Enrollment," The American School Board Journal (January, 1973), p. 162.

focusing on the Pasadena Unified School District's program.³⁸ Besides defining length of service, age requirements, and compensation, this plan also specified that "the person selecting the program would serve a maximum of 20 days per year at activities mutually agreed upon." These activities included teaching, staff development, helping with testing, designing programs and aiding new teachers. "The person selecting early retirement would be on a contract as a consultant for a period of five years to age 65, whichever came first."

While these measures may offset the necessity of future reductions in force, dealing with current needs for cutbacks is hazardous. The first to go are generally the last hired, and while that policy is a common phenomenon in all types of industry, it may serve badly the division that has been trying to institute an affirmative action program.

Five years ago school officials in Berkeley, California, launched one of the first affirmative action hiring programs aimed at achieving racial and ethnic balance between district employees and students. In spite of good intentions, however, their progress--and that of schoolmen in a number of other cities--has been slower than expected.³⁹

"When employment is down, affirmative action is down too," explains Louis Zolkovich, Assistant Superintendent in Berkeley.

"When there is almost no new jobs, things just have to taper off."⁴⁰

³⁸Ibid.

³⁹Robert Yeager, "Enrollment Dip Hinders Affirmative Action Plans," Nation's Schools, 93, No. 5 (May, 1974).

⁴⁰Ibid.

The Berkeley school division has not had to terminate employees hired under affirmative action policies, but their ability to equalize the ethnic balance in the staff has been curtailed. For districts faced with laying off teachers, it is important that policies be developed to guard the progress made toward equalization.

The Minnesota State Legislature enacted a provision in 1974 as a part of House File 210 that specifically provided provisions for placing teachers on unrequested leave in an inverse order of employment provided such reductions do not violate the provisions of the division's members in Minnesota to cut back staff with sensitivity to affirmative action programs and protects them against court action from tenured teachers.

California's State Superintendent of Schools, Wilson Riles, created a reform panel to study tenure. This commission has recommended that "tenure for teachers in the state be abolished." The commission, which included businessmen, school administrators, teachers, parents and students, "voted to abolish current laws." However, changes will "have to be approved by the legislature and governor."⁴²

⁴¹Ellen J. Fitzgerald, "The Status of Teachers' Continuing Contracts in the Event of Declining Enrollments or School District Consolidation as Interpreted by the Minnesota Supreme Court." Prepared for the Advisory Commission on Fluctuating School Enrollments (Minnesota: June, 1975).

⁴²"A Prestigious California Reform Commission has Recommended that Tenure for Teachers in the State Be Abolished," Education USA, 17, No. 32 (April 7, 1975).

While the legal relationship between school boards and courts is not clear-cut, in most instances courts have upheld decisions concerning reductions in force. Some divisions establish commissions to rule on board-personnel disputes.

As an example of the latter, when the Harper Woods, Michigan School District found it necessary to reduce staff for financial reasons, in so doing an industrial arts teacher with one year's previous experience in social studies claimed seniority rights to another position in that area. A commission was asked to rule and did so by upholding the school division which saw fit to recall a tenured teacher.⁴³

While this case involved tenured teachers rather than probationary teachers, the right of a school board to determine qualifications was reaffirmed. Though there was no evidence in the literature of cases in which a probationary teacher had been retained over a tenured teacher because of qualifications, such was seen as a foreseeable future event.

Tenured teachers appear much more difficult to dismiss even temporarily. Before such dismissals or unrequested leaves of absence are handed down, school boards might consider some alternative methods of reduction.⁴⁴ Besides providing early retirement incentive, boards can also transfer teachers to other schools, make teachers permanent

⁴³Carl Wilkerson, "The Legal Corner," Michigan School Board Journal, 21, No. 11 (January, 1975).

⁴⁴Carol B. Epstein, Declining Enrollments, Current Trends in School Policies and Programs (Arlington, VA: National School Public Relations Association, 1976), p. 30.

first-call substitutes, or make new contractual agreements.

In Farmingdale, New York, teachers signed an agreement providing for a "no-release" provision for both probationary and tenured teachers for a period of two years. In exchange for this provision, teachers agreed to handle five rather than four classes and seek smaller raises. West Babylon teachers negotiated a transfer provision to use surplus teachers in other positions in the division.⁴⁵

Transferring teachers to other schools within the division was seen as a viable way of reducing force as long as the teaching contract did not specify any particular school building. Teachers may also be transferred to other levels or subjects as long as the contract does not specify subject area or grade level in which the teacher would teach. In general, transfers may be made "so long as the transfer is reasonable, in the best interest of the school division, and not in violation of the law." (Ruling by the District County of Johnson County for USD 512, Shawnee Mission, Kansas.)

In "Policy Options for Staffing Schools in A Declining Market," Superintendent G. J. Greenawait found working with the staff a positive way to handle staff reductions.⁴⁶ "In the Hopkins (Minnesota)

⁴⁵Ira Freedman, "Declining Enrollment: Some Causes and Effects," *Journal of the New York State School Boards Association*, (October 1974).

⁴⁶G. J. Greenawait, "Policy Options for Staffing Schools in a Declining Market," *Minnesota School Boards Association Journal*, 27, No. 1 (September 1974).

School District there is a strong tradition of broad staff involvement in important issues, a tradition which I personally support and attempt to maintain."⁴⁷

Most of the preceding section has reflected how board and administrators might attempt to handle reduction in personnel. From the view of the teacher and/or the teacher associations, job security has become as big a topic in contract negotiations as salary has been.⁴⁸

The most acceptable criteria to teachers and their associations for releasing teachers appeared to be "seniority," though this criteria in some cases tended to be harmful to the quality of education.⁴⁹ First it tended to eliminate younger people by the fact of inexperience rather than according to competence. Secondly, it tended to be regressive socially, severely affecting affirmative action programs, and thirdly, it tended to eliminate entirely some newer programs such as bilingual instruction.⁵⁰ In many states, legal constraints blocked school boards from courses of action other than seniority rights.

The United States Supreme Court in a recently issued opinion, International Brotherhood of Teamsters vs United States et al., stated that seniority is a very valid criteria for consideration when reduction

⁴⁷Ibid.

⁴⁸Karen Sieradski, Implications of Declining Enrollments for Schools, NAESP (Arlington, VA: School Leadership Digest, 1975), p. 22.

⁴⁹"Declining Enrollment: What To Do," Executive Handbook Series No. 2 (Arlington, VA: American Association of School Administrators, 1974).

⁵⁰Ibid.

in force is necessary.⁵¹ Although the ruling was in regard to a labor union, the Teamsters, there seemed to be implications for the educational field. The court opinion further held that a bona fide seniority system does not become unlawful simply because it may perpetuate pre-Title VII discrimination, and noted that seniority systems apply to all races and ethnic groups, and was negotiated and is maintained free from any discriminatory purpose.⁵² If applied to educational fields, Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 would be superseded by seniority rights traditions.

For all divisions faced with RIF, seeking legal advice seemed necessary in order to assure due process in dealing with employees. At such time, communication with all employee unions could alleviate part of the strain. If teachers were given a fair hearing in RIF maneuvers, a fair policy could usually be achieved.⁵³

The Educational Research Service collected and analyzed examples of RIF policies from 16 school divisions, and developed an extensive check list of the points to be considered when devising a policy.⁵⁴ Briefly, it suggested points to consider, while favoring

⁵¹The United States Law Review (Washington, D.C.: May 1977), p. 45, LW4506-24.

⁵²Ibid.

⁵³Karen Sieradski, Implications of Declining Enrollments for Schools, NAESP (Arlington, VA: School Leadership Digest, 1975), p. 11.

⁵⁴Educational Research Service, Some Local Policies on Reduction in Professional Personnel, ERS Information Aid No. 15 (Washington, D.C.: 1973).

tenured full-time faculty. The division must comply with state law and its own agreements made with any teachers union to determine timing and order of layoffs. Seniority rights before, during, and after a period of layoffs must be established to detail, as must rehire provisions, grievance procedures, and retirement status. Other problems, according to the checklist, that should be solved included racial imbalance among teaching staff, "bumping" rights, substitute teaching, and job training.

Listing 13 reasons for reducing staff, the Virginia School Board Association Newsletter included recommendations for items to be included in any RIF policy.

- I. General Statement of Policy--to include appropriate state codes and reasons for having such a policy.
- II. Reasons for Reduction/Elimination.
- III. Definitions.
- IV. Procedures.
- V. Policy provisions not applicable to promotions.⁵⁵

At a recent legal conference sponsored jointly by the University of Virginia and the Office of the Attorney General, presentations centered on the growing problem of declining enrollments of which staff reduction was a central issue.⁵⁶ It was pointed out that school divisions should establish policies before the problem became critical.

⁵⁵Virginia School Board Association Newsletter, Charlottesville, VA., June 1976.

⁵⁶Attorney Generals Workshop on School Law, Charlottesville, VA, May 1977.

Sample RIF policies from within and outside the state were discussed. The school divisions of Charlottesville, Rockingham County, Richmond, and Chesapeake were the only divisions submitting sample policies to the Attorney General. Franklin City indicated the division had such a policy, but it was not included with the response.

At the October 1977 meeting of the Virginia State Board of Education, Dr. Richard Boyer briefed the board on the potential magnitude of problems arising from the projected enrollment decline in Virginia citing the same four basic problem areas.⁵⁷

Although Virginia does not recognize public employee unions, active teacher associations do exist. Due process in the transfer or dismissal of teachers is assured by appropriate parts of the state-wide grievance procedure.⁵⁸

Summary of reduction in force. Many states have taken the issue of reduction in force seriously and have developed state policy or prepared appropriate guidelines. Other states have been less forceful in their efforts, some ignoring the problem, some denying that it was a problem, and some providing limited direction to divisions.

National teacher associations are keenly aware of the implications of reductions in force as a companion to declining enrollments.

⁵⁷Virginia Department of Education, Summary Report--Meeting of the Board of Education of the Commonwealth of Virginia (Richmond, VA: October 1977).

⁵⁸Virginia Department of Education, Regulations of the Board of Education of the Commonwealth of Virginia (Richmond, VA: 1975), p. 35.

Negotiations emphasis has shifted toward job security and no-release clauses.⁵⁹

As in the case of facilities disposition, the board anticipating reduction in personnel by any means other than attrition was advised to seek legal advice.⁶⁰ The importance of establishing an R.I.F. policy "before the fact" was documented. The far reaching impact of significant staff reduction requires the involvement of the administrators, teachers, and the community in order to minimize the emotional impact on all parties concerned.⁶¹

Reduced Financing

The California School Boards Association summarized the fiscal impact of declining enrollments:

. . . declining enrollment hurts a school district financially in two major, direct ways: (1) it results in a real loss of revenue from the preceding year, such loss tending to offset any allowances for handling inflation; (2) it forces a true and unavoidable increase per A.D.A.⁶²

Both federal and state funds distributed to local school divisions are most often tied to Average Daily Attendance (ADA). Typically,

⁵⁹"Declining Enrollment: What To Do," Executive Handbook Series No. 2 (Arlington, VA: American Association of School Administrators, 1974).

⁶⁰Karen Sieradski, Implications of Declining Enrollment for Schools, NAESP (Arlington, VA: School Leadership Digest, 1975), p. 11.

⁶¹"Declining Enrollment: What To Do," Executive Handbook Series No. 2 (Arlington, VA: American Association of School Administrators, 1974).

⁶²Jack Wentzal and John Stock, "Declining Enrollments Will Bankrupt Us," California School Boards, 33, No. 9 (October 1974).

the amount of funding loss is directly proportional to the percentage of non-local funding. Divisions of "low wealth" appear to be hardest hit due to their heavy dependence on state apportionments based on equalization. "High wealth" divisions tended to experience financial difficulties to a lesser degree when facing declining enrollments due to the healthier tax base and ability to generate local funds to replace lost federal and state revenue.⁶³

As long as state funding formulae were based in large part on ADM, declining enrollments will always affect, to some degree, the amount of funding a division is eligible to receive, but some states have adjusted their formulae to minimize the loss.

Rhode Island provided that no division receive less than 90% of the prior year's entitlement. A law in Iowa raised the allowable growth limits for school budgets from 8 to 10 percent and uses a new formula component to soften the blow of declining enrollments.⁶⁴ In addition, numerous states allow districts to use a variety of enrollment figures to minimize or delay funding cuts. For example, California allows divisions with a decline greater than one percent to claim up to 50 percent of the lost pupils for reimbursement.⁶⁵ Kansas provided

⁶³"Declining Enrollment: What To Do," Executive Handbook Series No. 2 (Arlington, VA: American Association of School Administrators, 1974).

⁶⁴"Legislative Review," Education Commission of the States, 5, No. 16 (August 1975).

⁶⁵Illinois State Office of Education, "Report of the Illinois Task Force on Declining Enrollments in the Public Schools," (Springfield, IL: 1975).

additional assistance for divisions with declines of 10 percent or more.⁶⁶

Although a number of states have made provisions for minimizing or delaying loss of funds, ultimately the funds are reduced. Many of the states which have made provisions for slowing cuts allow only one year's delay deemed by most to be an inadequate amount of time to adjust to reduced funding.⁶⁷ States with some provision for adjusting for loss place school divisions in a better position than those who have no such provisions by their very recognition of the problem.

The typical school division's educational cost simply does not decrease in a direct ratio to its enrollment. With the onset of decline, schools may lose 50 students across the several grade levels, yet because of the across-the-board decline, cannot give up a teaching position. A loss of some 20-30 students in a given grade in a given school is generally required before a position can be eliminated and a saving realized.

An across-the-board decline of students in a given school allows very little opportunity to reduce maintenance, transportation, and other fixed costs. Only when the decline justifies a consolidation or closing does the likelihood of savings appear.⁶⁸ At least in the

⁶⁶Ibid.

⁶⁷"Declining Enrollments," Report No. 1, National School Boards Association Research Report (Evanston, IL: 1976), p. 19.

⁶⁸Illinois State Office of Education, "Report of the Illinois Task Force on Declining Enrollments in the Public Schools" (Springfield, IL: 1975), p. 12.

short run, per pupil expenditures must rise, creating a political dichotomy; fewer pupils requiring more local funding. When the impact of inflation is added, the problem is further compounded in terms of offering an explanation to the tax paying public.

Based on the assumption that the level of educational quality is to be maintained or improved, certain assumptions can be made about costs. Much of the literature indicated marginal decline is an opportunity to improve the quality of education by reducing pupil-teacher ratios and providing the opportunity for individualized instruction.⁶⁹ Such measures, however, do increase the cost.

Looking at the instructional and administrative expenditures in divisions with large declines in enrollments, Odden and Vincent found operating expenditures exceeded statewide averages in both administrative and instructional areas.⁷⁰ It was further noted that while expenditures per pupil on teachers and instructional items increased, increases were even more pronounced on a percentage basis, for administrative expenses.

In Virginia, the funding formula currently in use was based on a per-pupil expenditure rate and funding on a composite index determined by the number of students, sales tax generated locally, and the

⁶⁹The New York State Education Department, "Nyquist Lists His Priorities for the Year," Inside Education, 30, No. 4 (August 1975).

⁷⁰Allan Odden and Phillip E. Vincent, Education Commission of the States Monograph, The Fiscal Impacts of Declining Enrollments (Denver, Colorado: December, 1976), p. 18.

ability and effort of the local divisions. The formula component, ability and effort, addressed equalization between the poorer and more affluent divisions to a limited extent. A "no-loss" clause covers reduced enrollments to the extent that no division shall receive less funding than in the previous year. This provision dealt exclusively with actual dollar amounts and thus would not address the issue of inflation nor the increase in per-pupil cost most likely caused by the reduced number of students enrolled.

Reduced financing summary. Declining enrollment created two major financial problems for the local school division: the almost certain loss of state and federal support proportionate to the student loss, and a corresponding increase in costs based on a per student basis. Without additional funding from local sources, cut-backs are likely. Until such time as the decline becomes significant, few savings can be realized without a corresponding decline in the quality of the educational program. Even when state formulae provide for cushions in declining divisions, eventually dollars are lost. Inflation further compounded the need for extra dollars for fewer students.

The difficulty of securing extra dollars when fewer clients for this service were available created an added concern for the division. Communicating the facts to a tax conscious public was an added concern and a task for the school division in light of increased competition for tax dollars at all levels of government.

Cutbacks in Program

Most of the literature addressed program cuts in terms of the opportunity involved. Little has been written on the very specific ways program cuts can be made with the least detrimental impact on the educational opportunities of the students involved.

New York State Commissioner of Education, Ewald B. Nyquist, speaking at a press conference in New York pointed to these potential positive effects when he stated:

Declining enrollments should be an opportunity to reduce class size and give students more attention, to consolidate school districts, develop community education centers and teacher staff-renewal centers, and adult education; to achieve racial integration, provide early-childhood programs, better programs for the gifted and talented, and more programs for the handicapped.⁷¹

The Illinois Task Force on Declining Enrollments stated not all the issues of declining enrollments are those of reduction or contraction, however; a reduced student population usually produces surplus space which presents opportunities to improve existing programs or develop new ones.⁷²

Again, viewing newly available space created by fewer students, the Illinois Task Force recommended that regular school, special needs, alternatives and vocational/career education programs be examined to

⁷¹The New York State Education Department, "Nyquist Lists His Priorities for the Year," Inside Education, 30, No. 4 (August, 1975).

⁷²Illinois State Office of Education, "Report of the Illinois Task Force on Declining Enrollments in the Public Schools" (Springfield, IL: 1975), p. 24.

determine how to best utilize this space in program expansion.⁷³

If enrollment declines significantly, programs will almost inevitably have to reflect a corresponding reduction.⁷⁴ After taking advantage of all the opportunities arising from extra space and extra staff, the question must be faced as to where the program can be cut. Programs built up through long years of growth are eventually subjected to inspection for those segments which can be reduced with the least harmful effect.

Stating that no one likes to lose services like transportation, printing, curriculum consultation, extracurricular sports, medical services, clerical staff, staff travel, and all other activities normally considered a part of the regular program, Sieradski noted some of the areas usually subjected to first cuts.⁷⁵

Goettel and Paige stated that supplemental services such as nurse-teachers, librarians, and social workers, closely followed by reduction in music and art programs, particularly at the elementary level generally constituted first level real cuts.⁷⁶

Plans for program improvements, additions or cutbacks must be responsive to increasing financial constraints. As noted in the

⁷³Ibid.

⁷⁴Karen Sieradski, Implications of Declining Enrollment for Schools, NAESP (Arlington, VA: School Leadership Digest, 1975), p. 11.

⁷⁵Ibid.

⁷⁶National Association of State School Boards of Education, The Imperatives of Leadership, II, No. 1 (Denver, Colorado: July, 1976).

Illinois study, state and federal funding tended to decline along with student enrollment decline.⁷⁷ The decrease in external funding places pressure on the locality to increase financial efforts to maintain the quality of the educational program. Where communities have been unable to maintain sufficient community support for increasing local taxes, programs have suffered according to Goettel and Paige.⁷⁸

In the same work for the National Association of State Boards of Education, Goettel and Paige stated from the results of a survey of over 300 school divisions experiencing the highest rate of decline throughout the country, few divisions actually had made cutbacks as of the 1976-77 school year.⁷⁹ A similar study in Michigan noted that declining divisions improved services, though often with substantial increases in millage rates.⁸⁰

Noting that communities differ and priorities vary within divisions, the criteria for making program decisions appeared essentially the same. The Illinois study stated program decisions are based on laws, accrediting agency requirements, student demands, staff and space availability, fiscal resources, division policies, and

⁷⁷Illinois State Office of Education, "Report of the Illinois Task Force on Declining Enrollments in the Public Schools" (Springfield, IL: 1975).

⁷⁸National Association of State School Boards of Education, The Imperatives of Leadership, II, No. 1 (Denver, Colorado: July 1976), p. 15.

⁷⁹Ibid.

⁸⁰Michigan State Department of Education, Effects of Losses or Gains in Membership (Lansing, Michigan: 1976), pp. 3-9.

educational goals, local economic and employment needs, community expectations and others.⁸¹

Little was found in the literature about the components of the decision making in regard to actual cuts. Likewise, little substantial writing has been done on the information base required for reaching decisions in regard to cutbacks.

The particular impact of community preferences and expectations was noted, but literature on the impact of categorical funding and locally "favored" programs was almost non-existent. The politics of local decision making apparently has not been addressed in view of program cutbacks, perhaps due to the complexity and multifaceted aspect of the issue.

Summary--Cutbacks in program. Educational program cuts were noted in both administrative and educational programs. The administrative area is perhaps the most difficult to cut in that savings are generally not proportionate to the loss and/or the cost of administration is generally not significantly higher for several more students. Cuts in transportation, maintenance, and support services are often counter-productive in decreased attendance or deteriorating facilities and at best represent short-term savings only.

Educational program cuts tend to pare programs back toward a "required" nucleus, most often at the expense of extracurricular,

⁸¹Illinois State Office of Education, "Report of the Illinois Task Force on Declining Enrollments in the Public Schools," (Springfield, IL: 1975).

elective and fine arts areas. The "required" nucleus is viewed as those courses and programs specifically required by the state or federal government with less thought toward the broader educational experiences desirable for the typical student. Staff development activities also tend to be early casualties in the cost cutting activities generated by the revenue losses from fewer students.

Increased local support is almost always required to minimize the impacts of lost revenues coupled with reduced state and federal revenues. In spite of increased local efforts, cuts were generally inevitable, creating a local public relations problem with taxpayers and governmental agencies providing more funds for fewer programs and services.

Summary

The review of the literature revealed four major sub-set problems generally associated with declining enrollments: utilization or disposition of surplus space, reduction in force, reduced financing, and cutbacks in program.

SURPLUS SPACE--School divisions adjusting to declining enrollments seemed to move through three identifiable phases: (1) in the early stages of decline positive readjustments such as providing more suitable or more permanent space to programs previously housed in temporary or sub-standard facilities was noted; (2) sharing facilities with other governmental and non-profit agencies was noted when the decline became more than marginal; and (3) in the final stages of

decline more drastic actions were noted in that facilities were leased, sold, or otherwise disposed of as districts no longer needed or could afford to maintain empty buildings.

REDUCTION IN FORCE--Local school divisions addressing the surplus of staff problems tended to move through the following phases: (a) in the early stages of decline, there was an opportunity to reduce pupil-teacher ratios, and marginal adjustments were made to afford more opportunities for individualized instruction; (b) further, in early stages of decline, curriculum enrichment activities were employed as available staff provided additions to the curriculum; (c) in the intermediate stages of decline, issuance of short-term contracts, and adjustments in leave policies, were developed as temporary measures to reduce staff with additional emphasis on planning for attrition; (d) in the latter stages early retirement policies were developed and promoted; and (e) under conditions of serious decline, full blown reductions in force policies were adopted and implemented.

REDUCED FINANCING--Unlike the other sub-section problems associated with declining enrollments, responses and reactions could not be clearly placed in phases. Fewer students placed pressures on localities by: (a) creating a corresponding reduction in state and federal funding support; (b) creating an increased per-pupil cost; (c) requiring additional local support to compensate for lost external funding coupled with increased cost; and (d) making it more difficult to compensate for inflationary trends.

CUTBACKS IN PROGRAM--Usual reactions to the necessity to pare programs followed typical lines as exemplified by: (a) loss of non-revenue producing extracurricular activities; (b) loss of limited revenue producing extracurricular activities; (c) loss of electives, especially the more expensive special programs and fine arts; (d) loss of administrative support such as clerical, medical, attendance, and transportation personnel; (e) loss of supervisory support personnel; and (f) increased pressures on school officials to retain certain popular segments of the school program.

Across the four areas, the adjustment to declining enrollments placed pressures on the local school division. Reduced funding from outside sources placed pressure on the localities to provide more funds for fewer students. The decision to "cut-back," for all practical purposes, guaranteed the state's interest by retaining the required courses and cutting the elective courses, placing the pressure on local officials for staff and program cuts.

Early identification of the problem and early involvement of the local community was noted as important, but the effectiveness of local reactions were often hampered by the failure of the state to provide leadership and support. Due to the lack of enabling legislation or the existence of restrictive legislation, options available to educators in some states are not available in other states.

Chapter III

THE DESIGN OF THE RESEARCH

The design of the research was concerned with five major segments of methodology. Those segments included: (1) establishing the scope and magnitude of the decline; (2) selecting the tentative associated policy issues; (3) selecting the respondents; (4) conducting the field work; and (5) the analysis of the findings.

Establishing the Scope and Magnitude of the Decline

Establishing the scope and magnitude of the decline had two purposes. The first purpose was to produce an accurate descriptive picture of the problem and the second was to convey that information in an easily interpreted form to those persons most likely to be involved in the policy process.

This segment primarily involved collecting and assembling the data for both the national and state scene. The major source of information for national level enrollments was the National Center for Educational Statistics of the United States Department of Health, Education, and Welfare. State level enrollment data was secured from enrollment reports of the Virginia State Department of Education, the report of the Superintendent of Public Education in Virginia, and triennial census reports. Projected enrollments for the state were supplied by the Tayloe Murphy Institute in Charlottesville, the Lenowisco Planning District, and the Virginia Department of Planning and Budget.

Selecting the Tentative Associated Policy Issues

Tentative associated problems were selected from the current literature on the frequency of their inclusion in the writings. Associated problems which appeared unique to a given locale, or which were only infrequently mentioned, were excluded from the original listing.

The identified problems were termed tentative to aid the respondents in establishing a mind set to consider the problem areas related to decline and to provide a point of departure for further consideration. The tentative designation also provided respondents with an opportunity to insert other concerns or problems as they deemed appropriate. Even as tentative, however, the problems were designed to provide focus and to allow the respondents to validate, or fail to validate the findings of the literature review.

Selecting the Respondents

Individual (Primary) Respondents

Individuals selected as respondents included members of the Virginia State Board of Education and certain members of the Virginia Department of Education staff. It was not intended to query all members of either the Board or the Department, but rather to seek information from those who were informed particularly on the issue under study. The respondents were identified through a process of asking each State Board member about their knowledge of the topic. Only those who avowed some familiarity with the issues of declining

enrollments were selected. As a result of this process, two Board members were asked to respond to further inquiry.

Similarly, all members of the top administration of the Virginia State Department of Education were queried regarding their knowledge regarding declining enrollments or their knowledge of others in the Department with such knowledge. This process resulted in the final selection of two assistant superintendents for further inquiry.

School (Secondary) Respondents

Local school divisions selected for responses were selected from an inclusive list based on calculated percentages of decline noted between the years 1965-66 and 1975-76. Those divisions reflecting a ten percent or larger decline were contacted and requested to complete an information sheet on their decline and their reactions to that student loss. Ten percent decline was judged to be more than a marginal decline. Although Smyth County showed a decline of less than ten percent, it was added to bring response totals to 25. A sample of this request for information may be found in Appendix A.

Conducting the Field Work

Conducting the field work had two basic purposes, the first of which was to identify and contact twenty-five school divisions within Virginia which had experienced significant enrollment decline. These divisions were asked to respond by survey and follow-up interviews to the tentative issues and to provide information on any additional reactions required by their declining enrollments. The

reactions from divisions actually experiencing decline were intended to address the practical rather than the theoretical aspects of problems associated with enrollment decline.

The second purpose was to establish contact between the researcher and those individuals identified as primary respondents for the purpose of sharing the assembled data on the identified problem. This contact was designed to allow the primary respondents the opportunity to provide validation for the tentatively identified issues and, further, to provide an opportunity to recommend other problem areas for consideration.

Reliability and Validity

The reliability of research findings relative to future policy actions was difficult to establish. The extent of the reliability was, in part, determined by the familiarity with the problem of enrollment decline held by the individuals at both the state and local school division level who reacted to the problem areas.

A check of validity was, on the other hand, capable of being accomplished in the following manner:

1. Individuals at both the state and local school division were asked to respond to the problem areas with comparisons made of the responses given.
2. Individuals and school divisions were asked to supplement the tentative list of problems or areas of concern.
3. The investigator attempted not to come to closure in discussions without providing adequate opportunity for reactions to

the tentative list of problems and ample opportunity to formulate additional items for inclusion.

4. The investigator was aware of possible interviewer bias to discourage additional concern and problem areas due to the possibility of the extra work involved. An effort then was made to avoid this tendency and provide ample opportunity for respondents to include any other concerns.

Addressing the Four Basic Questions of the Study

Based upon research findings and the critical judgment of the investigator, the four primary respondents and the local division's responses, the four basic substantive questions were answered. Statements of associated problems and descriptions and explanations, including appropriate charts, were used to present the findings. The following questions, originally framed as a part of the problem statement, were addressed:

1. What are the central issues and their implications involved in the utilization or disposition of surplus space?
2. What issues and their implications are involved in the need to reduce staff?
3. If reduced state funding becomes a reality, what are the issues and their implications of the reductions?
4. If cutbacks in programs are necessary, what are the issues and their implications of such cutbacks?

Addressing the Additional Concerns

As additional concerns were raised in interviews and responses, each was discussed and recorded for distribution to other respondents

to insure maximum input in each added area. Additional issues raised in responses or interviews were added to the list for analysis if and when they were considered significant by a majority of respondents.

"Additional concerns" from the secondary respondents were supplied to the primary respondents for information and/or consideration if that concern appeared from a minimum of five divisions. The number of similar responses was set at five as a way of focusing on the most common areas of concern.

Responses and additional concerns were collected, recorded and summarized from the secondary respondents. These were then included in the information provided primary respondents for their reactions.

Analysis of the Findings

Upon completion of the summary of responses and concerns from the secondary respondents, the data was added to the information being provided to the primary individual respondents. From the reactions and recommendations provided from the primary interviews and responses of these individuals a consensus on associated problems and general agreement on the enumerated policy issues was obtained. The response sheets included the respondent's reaction to the identified problem and, further, a notation as to which respondent initiated additional concerns. No attempt was made to place the policy issues in a priority order nor was an attempt made to derive a one best answer, but rather the study sought to secure agreement that the policy reaction cited was, in fact, of fundamental importance.

Appendices E through H depict those forms which served the purpose of collecting data from secondary (division) respondents as well as the primary individual respondents. In large measure the questions posed provided the basic framework from which the policy issues could be derived and also the means through which conclusions and implications could be drawn for the purpose of this study.

Reporting the Research Findings

As this dissertation effort is intended to be policy focused, the conclusions and implications were framed in such a way as to be of direct benefit to state policy makers. Copies of the completed research were provided to members of the State Board of Education and to those individuals identified by the Board as most concerned with the issues.

Summary

The design of the research was concerned with five facets of the methodology: establishing the scope and magnitude of the decline both nationally and in Virginia, selecting the tentative associated policy issues, selecting the respondents, conducting the field work, and an analysis of the findings.

Information derived from the secondary respondents was used to validate the associated problem areas and to determine some of the possible reactive policies adopted by local divisions; and the information from the primary respondents was used to frame a summary of associated problems, possible policy reactions and the likely implications of the expected reactions.

Chapter IV

PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS

During the period 1967-68 through 1976-77, a majority of school divisions in Virginia experienced a noticeable shift in student clientele. Although the actual first through twelfth grade enrollment was characterized by a significant decline, expansion of the current programs as well as the creation of new programs under state and federal mandates introduced new clients to the scene in large numbers.

The Context

Added Programs and Requirements

Kindergarten programs in existence in 1967-68 were limited to a very few localities in Virginia, typically in the urban areas of the state, but by the beginning of the 1976-77 school year, practically every school division operating under a mandate from the state offered a kindergarten program. This mandate thus had the effect, particularly in the three years preceding the latest effective date of the mandate, of adding a full year of enrollment to the state public education system. This massive addition of clients might, in itself, mask a decline in enrollments which had already begun, and keep the schools "solvent" during the interim. But in addition to serving the needs of the kindergarten-age children, the state also changed the definition of "school age" by allowing younger children to enter school,

even at the first grade level. This action was accomplished over a period of three years, 1974 through 1976, by moving the permissible entry age one month further into the school year from September 30, 1973 through December 31, 1976. This mandate thus added approximately eight percent to the entering class in each of three years. While not an astounding figure, the new age entry law again helped to mask an actual decline that was already in progress. What appeared to be a growth of 28,000 students in total enrollments for the decade, when reduced by the new kindergarten enrollees, actually would reflect a loss of 35,000 students. When combined with the addition of the extra months of school enterers, the loss would be even more noticeable. As this addition of one extra month of students is "permanent" throughout the school life cycle of that grade upon the division, the impact of this new group is still being felt as the three year group moves through elementary and subsequently through secondary enrollment reports.

The impending malaise receded still further into the background with the state requirements to provide education for all handicapped children, as this again introduced heretofore unserved clients into the school. Both the types of handicapping conditions served and the number of children served with one or more of the handicaps increased significantly. From approximately 5,500 students identified and served as handicapped students in 1967-68 that number had more than doubled to over 11,000 students by 1976-77. As school divisions continue their efforts to comply with Public Law 94-142, these numbers continue to grow.

The Elementary Secondary Education Act, though passed in 1965, continued to have an incremental impact on resources, if not on enrollments directly. This infusion of federal money, with the stipulation that it supplement rather than supplant State and local funding, had the effect of stabilizing, and in most cases, increasing the total dollar resources available to school divisions. Even though this was special program money, earmarked for specific target groups, both "spillover effects" to the general programs and the "creative use" of federal funds served to make additional resources available.

Finally, the last year of the period under question, 1976 through 1977, witnessed another mandate which, not associated with decline, had much to do with the management of decline. Specifically, this was the policy designed to reduce pupil-teacher ratios in the early years of school. This policy established a maximum number of children per teacher, thus forcing the employment of additional staff or retraining staff that might otherwise have been relieved of duties.

Although the mandate to reduce elementary school pupil-teacher ratios was in effect for only one year of the study, the real impact of both staff and facilities demands would not be fully realized until 1982-83 as the mandatory ratio continues to decline through that year and stabilizes at 22:1.

State Department personnel indicated the continued reduction from 26:1 to 22:1 would cost an additional \$20.9 million in staff and in many cases additional capital expenditures to provide the additional classroom space required by this mandate. Through action by the

General Assembly the ratio may be temporarily, even permanently, frozen at a higher than anticipated level, but even the present 26:1 ratio has had the effect of increasing expenditures. If the estimate of a statewide increase of \$20.9 million in expenditures to achieve the mandate is valid, and it can be assumed that the reduction of pupil-teacher ratio by one pupil would cost approximately \$5 million dollars, it can be estimated that this mandate has already cost \$15 to \$20 million to reduce the ratio from 29 or more children per teacher, to the present 26:1 ratio.

In sum, the full impact of the kindergarten has run its course and is thus a calculable factor, though the impact of the altered school entry age will continue to be felt through the 1980's, this is also a calculable factor. The impact of both the reduced pupil-teacher ratio and the expanded services for handicapped students is, however, currently operating under fluid and uncertain conditions, leaving the final impact on school divisions very much an estimate.

Finance

From a national per pupil expenditure of \$553.95 in 1967-68 to a \$1394.54 expenditure in 1976-77 shown in Figure 3 and compared to the consumer price index increases for the same period, it is obvious that although inflation has taken its toll, more real dollars have gone into education with a higher per pupil cost in regular programs and significantly higher costs for the more expensive special

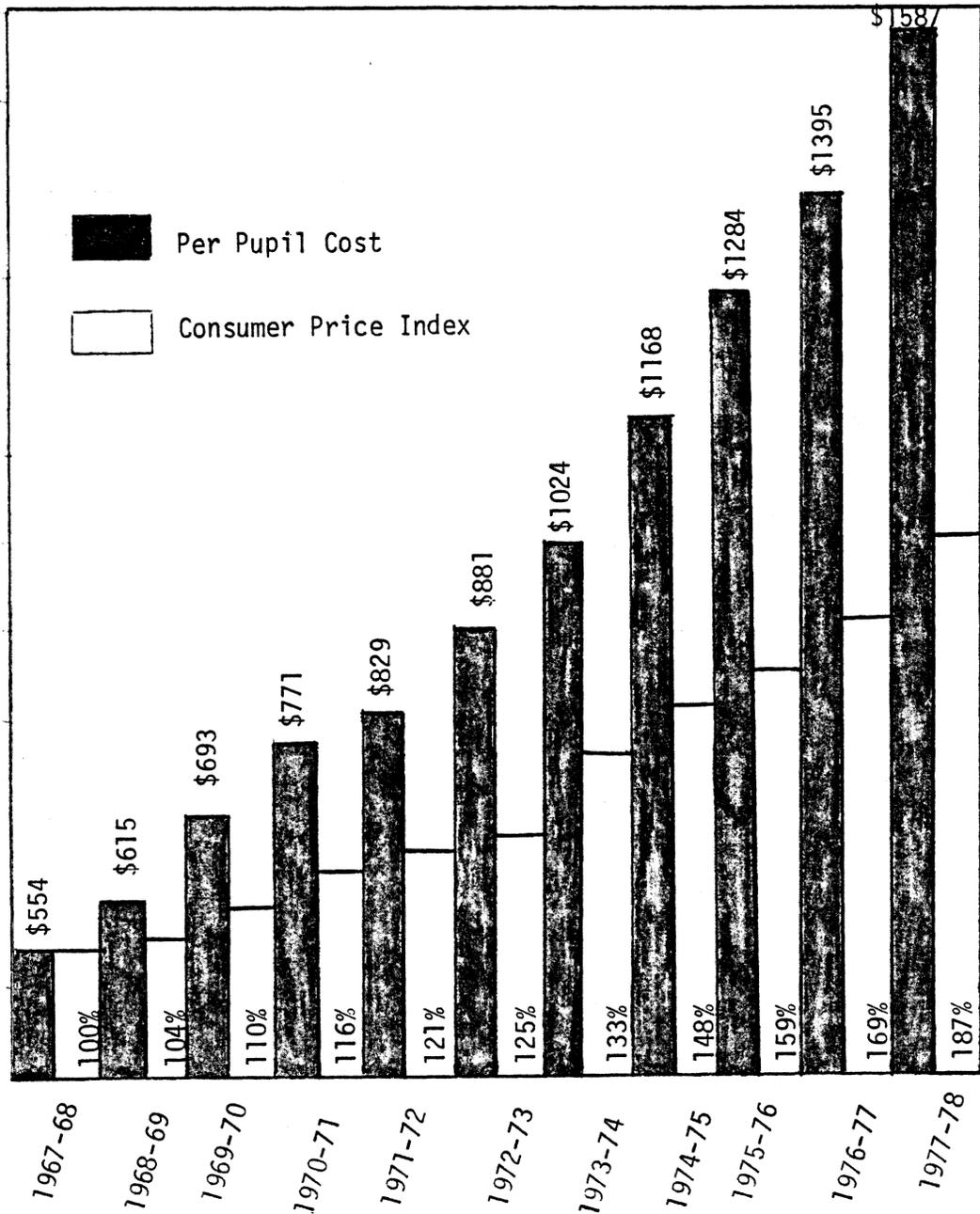


Figure 3. Increases in per pupil cost versus increases in Consumer Price Index, 1967/68 - 1977/78. (Digest of Education Statistics 1977-78, National Center for Education Statistics, Washington, D.C.)

programs.⁸² In Virginia, a per pupil expenditure of \$504 in 1967-68 had increased to a figure of \$1335 by the 1976-77 year.⁸³ Although both state figures are slightly lower than national expenditures the growth closely paralleled the national figures and are subject to the same inflationary adjustment.

Certainly financial support for education has shown increased amounts of money flowing into the various programs. Local divisions have been responsible for slightly higher percentages of funding, while state sources provided slightly less and the federal contribution has remained almost constant. The 1967-68 edition of the Report of the State Superintendent of Public Instruction indicated \$672 million was appropriated for public elementary-secondary education, 9.4 percent from federal sources, 29.4 percent from state sources, and the remaining 61.2 percent from localities.⁸⁴ By 1976-77 total appropriations had increased to \$1,697,000,000 with a similar percentage from the federal government (9.3%) a decline of almost two percent from the state (27.6%) and the remaining 63.1 percent being contributed by localities.⁸⁵ While total expenditures for education increased 40 percent, localities were required to supply an additional 1.9 percent of that total.

⁸²Digest of Education Statistics 1977-78, National Center for Education Statistics, Washington, D.C.

⁸³Virginia State Department of Education, Superintendent's Annual Report, Richmond, VA.

⁸⁴Ibid.

⁸⁵Ibid.

This increased demand on localities to provide both more funds and a greater percentage of the total highlights a classic problem in financing public education. Localities remain largely dependent on the property tax for the bulk of their tax revenue while the state has greater flexibility in both the sources and amounts of taxes levied on residents. Both state income and state sales taxes have considerably more elasticity than local property tax and can be increased with considerably less contumacious results.

Since the state's ability to provide financial support for education and other services is determined by the amounts of money received from state tax revenues, the continued economic growth of the state as a whole has provided additional funds that can be used to offset inflationary trends and expansions. However, since state growth is a composite of the growth of all its political subdivisions, approximately one-half the divisions are not so fortunate. Localities experiencing less than the state's average growth, the "poorest" half, are least able to provide additional funds and the required "match."

A case in point was the 1979 General Assembly action to re-appropriate "surplus funds" available due to the over-projections of pupil population for the preceding year. Although the \$931 to \$960 per pupil increase is desirable and more realistic in terms of the mandates covered by that funding, increased pressures for the "local match" is built in.

Local School Division Findings

Enrollment

Table 6 lists the results of the surveys of local divisions experiencing decline. Twenty-two divisions of the 25 surveyed indicated reduced birth rates were primarily responsible for their decline in students. One division indicated its student loss was due to annexation of a part of its service area by another division. Six divisions indicated they had an out-migration of young adults who would normally be producing the potential students. Specifically, lack of employment opportunities for the parents were noted as responsible for the out-migration.

Four school divisions listed desegregation as responsible for a part of their pupil loss. This desegregation impacted divisions in two ways: some divisions "gave back" students for whom they had been providing schooling. The students were generally black children attending school out of their home district under the segregation law. On the other hand, numerous private schools received additional, overwhelmingly white students as they fled the public school to avoid the integration of schools.

Arlington and Norfolk specifically noted population shifts and developing housing patterns as responsible in part for the numbers loss. Special housing conditions in urban areas often forced young couples with children to seek housing in other areas.

Two responses were unique to a single division. Cape Charles specifically mentioned the loss of migrant workers and their families

Table 6

DIVISION SURVEYS: Reasons Cited for Decline

Division	Reason(s) Cited
Arlington	Reduced birth rate--Out migration of young adults
Brunswick	--Out migration of young adults
Cape Charles	--Loss of migrant workers
Covington	Reduced birth rate--Out migration of young adults
Danville	Reduced birth rate
Dickensen	Reduced birth rate
Falls Church	Reduced birth rate--Restricted housing for parents
Franklin City	Reduced birth rate
Grayson	Reduced birth rate--Loss of land
Greenville	Reduced birth rate
Halifax/South Boston	Reduced birth rate
Highland	Reduced birth rate--Out migration of young adults
Lexington	Reduced birth rate
Luenberg	--Private schools
Lynchburg	Reduced birth rate--Annex
Martinsville	Reduced birth rate
Mecklenburg	Reduced birth rate
New Kent	Private schools --Out migration of young adults
Norfolk	Population shifts --Private schools
Northumberland	Reduced birth rate
Nottoway	Reduced birth rate--Desegregation
Richmond	Reduced birth rate
Roanoke	Reduced birth rate
Smyth	Reduced birth rate
Sussex	Reduced birth rate--Desegregation

while Grayson County responded that much of the usable land in the county had been purchased by a power company for the storage of water behind a new dam planned near their area. This loss of land and housing, coupled with additional property losses to natural forest land, forced numerous family units to move out of the school division.

Without question, however, the single greatest cause contributing to the decline of student population in regular programs was that of a lower birth rate, decisions, for whatever reason, made to delay or to have smaller families.

Facilities

In the survey of the 25 divisions regarding the disposition of facilities, ten divisions indicated no major adjustments were required. A major adjustment was viewed as the closing of a school due to enrollment decline (see Table 7). Although 15 of the 25 divisions reported actual closings, five divisions explained larger, newer, and more desirable facilities replaced those facilities closed. These five divisions actually consolidated two or more older facilities into a single newer unit.

In those 10 divisions reporting no closures, responses indicated surplus spaces generated by student population loss was assigned to "better use." Examples of special programs moved to better instructional spaces were common reactions. Other examples of adjustment noted, included space reallocated for the originally intended purposes, such as many spaces that were not designed for instruction

Table 7

DIVISION SURVEYS: Have You Closed Schools Because of Decline?
Response Summaries

Division	Closed	Converted to Other Use (list)
Arlington	yes	no
Brunswick	yes	no
Cape Charles	no	no
Covington	no	no
Danville	yes	no
Dickenson	no	no
Falls Church	yes	no
Franklin City	yes	no
Grayson	yes	no
Greenville	no	no
Halifax/South Boston	no	no
Highland	yes	no
Lexington	yes	no
Luenburg	no	no
Lynchburg	yes	no
Martinsville	yes	no
Mecklenburg	no	no
New Kent	no	no
Norfolk	yes	no
Northumberland	yes	no
Nottoway	yes	no
Richmond	yes	no
Roanoke	yes	no
Smyth	no	no
Sussex	no	no

had been used for classes when enrollments were higher. Work areas, guidance rooms and libraries were specifically cited as reverting back to their original intended use.

During the time period under review none of the 25 divisions indicated a totally different use other than special or traditional educational purposes. In facilities where surplus space existed special programs expanded to fill that space or the space was diverted to other school usage. None of the responding divisions indicated sharing facilities as a reaction to their declining numbers.

Reduction in Staff

From the 25 divisions responding, 13 reported actual reductions in staff (see Table 8). Nine divisions reported they were able to accomplish this cutback through normal attrition. Three divisions reported their "reductions" were handled by transfers to other programs or schools which, under our broader definition, would not constitute a reduction.

Only one division, Arlington, reported cutbacks that required actually releasing personnel. A detailed policy, based primarily on seniority, had been developed and adopted earlier, thus they were able to release a total of 244 instructional personnel during the time period being reviewed.

In comparing the survey responses with data from the State Superintendent's Annual Report for 1966-67 and 1975-76, some

Table 8

DIVISION SURVEYS: Staff Reductions Due to Declining Enrollments,
Division Summaries

Division	Reduced Staff	How Was Reduction Accomplished?
Arlington	yes	Attrition and releases
Brunswick	yes	Attrition
Cape Charles	yes	Attrition
Covington	no	Transferred to other programs
Danville	yes	Attrition
Dickenson	no	
Falls Church	yes	Attrition
Franklin City	yes	Attrition
Grayson	no	
Greenville	no	
Halifax/South Boston	no	
Highland	yes	Attrition
Lexington	yes	Attrition
Luenburg	no	
Lynchburg	no	
Martinsville	no	
Mecklenburg	yes	Attrition
New Kent	no	
Norfolk	yes	Attrition and transferred
Northumberland	yes	Attrition
Nottoway	yes	Attrition and transferred
Richmond	yes	
Roanoke	no	
Smyth	no	
Sussex	yes	Attrition

inconsistencies were noted.⁸⁶ Three divisions, Arlington, Falls Church, and Highland did in fact decline in the number of "total instructional personnel" employed, while the remaining 22 of the 25 divisions reported an increase in the number of instructional personnel.⁸⁷ Although nine other divisions indicated on the survey that they had reduced personnel during the time frame of the study, the data from the annual reports did not reflect this fact. To the contrary, increased numbers of instructional personnel were reported.⁸⁸ Additionally, two divisions reported "no reduction in personnel" on the survey, but their data line in the superintendent's annual report indicated a reduction in numbers had been made.⁸⁹ Thus, all 25 divisions admitted and confirmed a decline in regular program clients, but in several cases did not accurately report their corresponding action in the area of staff.

All divisions indicated new and expanded programs, specifically, kindergarten, special education and Title I, all of which allowed flexibility in absorbing staff that might have otherwise been unneeded. Thirteen divisions reported they took advantage of natural attrition to reduce the surplus staff. None of the reporting divisions indicated early retirements played any part in reducing staff.

⁸⁶Virginia State Department of Education, Superintendent's Annual Report, Richmond, VA.

⁸⁷Ibid.

⁸⁸Ibid.

⁸⁹Ibid.

Three divisions indicated personnel were transferred to other programs and other schools in the division. None of these three divisions show a decline in personnel, thus these transfers became internal reassignments.

Special program requirements generally mandated lower pupil-teacher ratios, thus not only absorbing surplus staff from regular programs, but also requiring additional personnel in these special areas. Examples of new programs with reduced pupil-teacher ratios were kindergarten with a 25:1 maximum and special education with ratios as low as 6:1.

Finances

All 25 divisions indicated budgets have increased significantly during the period in question. Higher costs caused by inflation were cited, but all divisions reported increased spending as measured in constant dollars. Special programs typically carried higher price tags in pupil-teacher loads, special services and spatial requirements. Over one-half the divisions indicated local spending had increased more than the state and federal share. These divisions noted the significant increases in the per-pupil costs and indicated that much of the increase had been the result of expensive special programs. Examples of reduced pupil-teacher ratios in kindergarten and classes for the handicapped were particularly specified as "expensive."

Although divisions were not asked to document increased costs and spending, the feeling that local spending specifically,

and total expenditures, in general, were increasing is documented in the data cited earlier.

Programs

All divisions indicated no program cuts had been made, though minor changes attributed to the fluid demands of students were often mentioned. These situations were viewed, most often, as normal changes.

On the other hand, all 25 divisions reported program additions. Compliance dates for kindergarten and added services for the handicapped fell within the time period studied, thus new programs were expected to be reflected in each division. In addition to the mandated program areas, however, two divisions reported adding elementary guidance personnel and three divisions reported adding elementary physical education programs. Each of these five divisions specifically noted personnel added in these programs minimized the need to otherwise reduce staff.

Other

When given the opportunity to comment on other adjustments made to accommodate the fewer students in the division all 25 divisions re-emphasized their expanded special programs, while 12 noted lower pupil-teacher ratios in regular programs.

No division reported any adjustment not previously covered in some other area of the survey, although they used the area to emphasize the two areas of reduced teacher-load and special program additions.

State Level Findings

Enrollments

Total enrollment figures for the state as a whole indicate a slight growth during the period under review in this study. Reflecting an apparent increase of 100,000 students during this period, 75 percent of the growth can be traced directly to growth in kindergarten enrollments.⁹⁰

In a discussion with State Department of Education personnel, notably the Assistant Superintendent for Program Development and the Assistant Superintendent for Field Services, it was stated that new and expanded programs had indeed masked the beginnings of a rather significant decline.⁹¹ These Department personnel mentioned the same new and expanded programs cited by local educators as substitutes and replacements for shrinking numbers of students available for regular programs.

The major reason cited by department personnel for the decline in student numbers was the decline in birth rates.⁹²

Except for losses directly to non-public schools, transient moves such as annexations, suburban growth, and exchanges of students

⁹⁰Virginia State Department of Education, Superintendent's Annual Report, Richmond, VA.

⁹¹Statements by Dr. R. L. Boyer and Dr. E. B. Howerton, Jr., in telephone conversation (Richmond, VA: February, 1979).

⁹²Ibid.

due to segregation would not impact total state enrollments. Four divisions reported some loss of students in desegregation situations in which students were withdrawn from public schools and enrolled in private schools. This would, of course, impact the total state enrollments.

Facilities

In reviewing surveys completed by State Department personnel and selected members of the State Board of Education all respondents indicated that surplus spaces would be available for use by school personnel. All of the individuals questioned indicated rehousing or re-allocating space on a more satisfactory and/or permanent basis was "very probable" and "desirable." Each respondent viewed the impact of this move as "medium."

When asked about the possibility of sharing facilities with other governmental and/or non-profit organizations, an equal split in responses was received. One-half the respondents indicated the likelihood as "probable" while the other one-half indicated this possibility was "improbable." Board members and Department personnel split evenly in their response. As to the desirability of this sharing of facilities, all respondents indicated the concept was "desirable" but reported the impact would range from "moderately low" to "moderately high."

Respondents agreed that new legislation might be needed to clarify rentals, leases, or property transfers. Although Section 22-161 of the Virginia School Law allows the "sale, exchange or lease

of property" under supervision of the court, respondents all felt the law might restrict such cooperative arrangements.⁹³

Responses on the closure and/or disposal of facilities were also varied. Three respondents responded that the option could go "either way," and split evenly on the desirability of the option. Responses reflected that closures or disposals would be desirable from an economic standpoint, but undesirable from a political or public relations standpoint. Again, under comments, regional utilization for handicapped or alternate educational offerings were listed as potential uses. Three-fourths of the respondents viewed regional use as a possible option. All respondents indicated existing legislation would probably permit regional use. One respondent indicated the lack of prohibitive legislation would allow such cooperative efforts.

Reduction in Staff

Respondents at the state level all indicated a reduction in staff was "very probable," "desirable" from a financial standpoint with the potential impact noted as "moderately high."

As responses to the ways in which this reduction might best be achieved, mixed reactions were again reflected. Responses regarding placing a moratorium on leave policies were evenly split as "improbable" and "probable." All respondents felt this was a "desirable" reaction with a relatively low impact that would be permitted under current legislation.

⁹³Virginia School Laws, 1978, Sect. §22-161.

Respondents all felt offering one or two year termination contracts was both "improbable" and "undesirable." The impact of such an option was judged "moderate" and probably permissible under current legislation.

All respondents stated maximum utilization of natural attrition was "very probable," "highly likely," and "permissible under current legislation." Everyone agreed that early retirement program options were "probable," "desirable," and would carry a "high impact." In responding to the need for new legislation three-fourths of the respondents noted current legislation would permit conditional retirement, but noted under "comments" that existing legislation did not encourage early retirement because of benefit delay and reduction.

Reflecting on the possibility of releasing teachers under continuing contracts, all respondents indicated this option unlikely, undesirable and of medium impact. Although current legislation would allow this option according to all responses, it was still noted as unlikely.

In reactions as to the impact of staff reductions on affirmative action programs, all respondents remarked these programs should be affected in the same way as all other programs; thus staff hired under affirmative action programs would likely be released in the same manner. All respondents responded that this reaction would be "desirable" and of "medium impact." All respondents felt existing legislation would permit such action. Under comments, one-half the respondents noted that such reaction would tend to promote the last

hired-first fired seniority concept. Although no legal concern was expressed, comments indicated a concern for possible loss of "new blood" to the profession. Retention of older, more experienced teachers and the release of the majority of young, inexperienced teachers was noted as possibly causing a "stale staff" and requiring a new emphasis on in-service and retraining of the remaining staff.

All respondents indicated transferring teachers to other schools was "very probable," "very desirable," and of "medium impact." All respondents viewed this option as permissible under existing legislation, but one-half the respondents expressed a concern under the comments section for keeping teachers in their field of training and experience. One respondent pointed out that this option would only assist in balancing decline within a division.

The establishment of a seniority system was determined to be probable, desirable and to carry minimal impact by all those individuals responding. One-half the respondents noted a seniority system tends to protect weak but experienced teachers at the expense of good, but less experienced teachers. One respondent again expressed a concern for retaining teachers in their field and the possibility of a stale staff.

Written reduction-in-force policies spelling out the procedures for releasing surplus staff, was viewed as a "very probable" and "very desirable" option, and all respondents felt this option would carry a "high impact." Current legislation would permit application of such a policy according to all respondents.

Financing

All respondents agreed that financing public education in light of more funds for fewer students would be a major concern and carry a significant impact. In responding to a possible no-loss provision in the state funding formula to protect localities from fund losses due to fewer students, a majority of respondents reflected mixed feelings by responding in equal numbers: desirable/undesirable. The potential impact was noted as "medium" or higher by all respondents. All respondents agreed that new legislation would be required to employ this option in the state. One respondent noted under comments that several individuals and areas were very much interested in revising the existing formula for "other reasons."

In responding to a minimum quality standard to guarantee a basic program, considerable agreement was in evidence. All respondents indicated a "very probable" likelihood, a "very desirable" option and varied only in the impact analysis as one-half reported "medium" and one-half reported "high." Respondents all agreed that legislation was clearly available not only to allow, but mandate, this minimal program through the existing Standards of Quality legislation.

All respondents agreed that additional local funds would be required. One individual commented that existing legislation encourages local effort. Mixed responses were given when commenting on the desirability of additional local contributions. Seventy-five percent indicated the option was "desirable" while twenty-five percent responded it was "undesirable." Responses were unanimous in regard to the impact

of higher cost. Everyone agreed that a "high impact" would be felt. All respondents agreed that existing legislation would require change at the state level to provide additional funds or to reallocate funds in any significant manner. They noted, however, that localities could provide additional funds as they saw fit as there is not, at least not yet, a state mandated cap on local tax rates.

Program

Respondents displayed a range of feeling in regard to program cutbacks, although 75 percent agreed a cutback possibility was "probable," 25 percent indicated the likelihood was "very improbable."

When asked about cutbacks in accreditation standards, all respondents indicate relaxed standards were either "probable" or "very probable." All respondents indicated the relaxed standards would be "undesirable" and would carry a "medium" impact. None of the respondents anticipated any problem in relaxing standards under existing legislation.

When questioned about the possibility of relaxing or reducing Standards of Quality mandates, all respondents viewed this possibility as improbable, undesirable, and of medium impact even though two respondents indicated Standard #7 on class sizes in primary grades might be frozen.

All respondents felt specific course requirements would probably not be reduced, and such reductions would be "undesirable" carrying a medium impact. Elective courses were viewed by all respondents as an area likely to be reduced. Reducing the elective offering was viewed

by all as "undesirable," or "medium impact" but possible under existing legislation.

Reductions in extracurricular activities was viewed by all respondents as a likely area for cuts. Respondents were evenly divided as to the desirability of a cutback in this area. One respondent, when adding a comment under the extracurricular section, noted fine arts offerings would likely be reduced but athletics would not. The impact analysis likewise varied considerably from low to moderately high as 25 percent responded "low," 50 percent "medium," and 25 percent marked "moderately high." None of those responding felt any new legislation would be required.

Reductions in support services generally drew responses to reflect the area is vulnerable to reductions. Although all respondents viewed a cutback as "undesirable," they noted likelihood of reduced staff travel as a prime target. It was noted that a "medium" impact would be the result of cutbacks in this area and that existing legislation would allow reductions.

Other

When afforded the opportunity to include "other items or actions" likely to be associated with adjustments to declining pupil population respondents listed several direct and indirect adjustments that may be made. These concerns included:

1. lack of turnover among administrative personnel;
2. possible decline of public support of education since a smaller percentage of the adult population would feel they were

receiving direct or immediate benefits from schools;

3. possible decline in education related business such as construction trades, textbook publishing firms, equipment suppliers, etc.

Discussion

In the field work and related follow-up discussion with educators faced with adjustments to decline in traditional student numbers, the "positive consequences" were generally emphasized. Division representatives consistently referred to their opportunity to reduce class size, rehouse on-going programs in more desirable spaces, and to provide better opportunities for individualization of instruction. Although some divisions had consolidated two or more older facilities into one new building, the new, better facility was emphasized rather than the actual decline in numbers and the loss of a school to the system.

Some inconsistencies between survey responses and data reported by divisions through the superintendent's annual reports were noted. Several divisions reported staff reductions on the survey, but reported increased numbers of instructional personnel on their annual reports. Personnel frequently had been transferred to new or expanded programs as "internal" adjustments were made to compensate for the changing patterns in the whole of public education.

Recognizing the "shifting" patterns of teacher assignments, respondents expressed a concern for the importance of in-service training for teachers. Implying that decline in numbers of students

in regular programs might ultimately produce a "stale" staff in such programs, respondents did not, however, express a corresponding concern for the large numbers of staff being transferred into other special and mandated programs. Perhaps this practice is still so new that the concern is not yet manifest, but it appears large numbers of teachers have been reassigned to other areas. These teachers may very well be "out-of-field." The climate of the classroom and attitude of teachers toward this secondary field may, in itself, impact the learning environment of those students involved. Actual figures are not available on the extent of this practice of reassignment to other areas, but the program and financial problems of retraining are clear.

Financing of education, always viewed as a problem, continued to be a concern for all educators. In Virginia, state funding is tied directly to a formula and further tied to all other appropriations, thus respondents stated legislation would be required to change the state funding formula if significantly different amounts of money were to be allocated to localities.

The current funding formula for state funds in Virginia is based not only on average daily membership of students in the division, but also on a composite index that takes into consideration local true values, local personal income, and local taxable sales.

Few educators questioned the need for nor the desirability of the additional and expanded programs, but all complained about the increased local costs.

Respondents noted accreditation standards would likely be relaxed if real retrenchment became necessary. Since accreditation standards are a product of the State Board of Education, these seemed more likely alterable than the Standards of Quality which are statutory law. Standards of Quality seemed very unlikely to be relaxed, due, perhaps, to the complex interrelationship of the standards, funding, and minimum standards. The public relations aspect of the original "selling" of the need for minimum program standards would make it difficult to retreat from these minimums.

The issue of quality education becomes a serious consideration when schools are in fact forced to cut back. Fewer students in regular programs often generating less external revenue coupled with the need to comply with other mandates to expand, forces the locality to decide. Will they provide more funds retaining the regular program quality as well as providing the additional programs and expansions or will they reduce programs? The state's interest is guaranteed in that mandated programs will be provided and that standards will be met, but the locality must determine what must be pared if taxes are not to be increased. This situation places the locality in the position of being directly responsible, at least in the eyes of the public, for any reductions in programs or educational opportunities.

The dilemma of the locality is further compounded by the wave of sentiment to curb public sector spending. Increased spending for educational services for fewer students poses a potential target for advocates of this movement. The built-in higher costs for special programs could further add fuel to the movement to curb spending.

The potential for reduced quality in educational programs exists in possible program cuts, staff reductions and/or transfers, and increased costs for existing and new programs. Respondents expressed the feeling that support services would likely be an early casualty in an economy move.

Loss of clerical services, attendance personnel, and administrative and supervisory personnel all appeared likely areas for potential "savings." Reduction of maintenance and loss of support personnel as potential areas of savings would appear to be counter-productive, however, in that program quality and facilities could deteriorate rapidly. Such losses are further compounded as many of the tasks abandoned by these personnel would very likely go undone or be shifted to higher paid personnel. Teachers doing their own clerical and janitorial work, as an example, would impact both the quality of instruction and the maintenance of facilities.

Loss of support personnel for example, to encourage attendance could easily cause a further decline in average daily membership, which could be followed rapidly by further losses in financial support where much of that support is tied directly to that attendance level. Reductions in routine maintenance also carries the potential for ultimately spending more to correct major problems growing from the lack of preventative maintenance and routine servicing.

Should the locality be faced with cutbacks, standards and mandates tend to protect some areas, while exposing others as the most likely victims for those reductions. Those areas of vulnerability

would rather quickly and significantly impact the comprehensive program and the overall quality of education.

No one seemed overly concerned that existing legislation would not cover the majority of the most likely adjustments to decline. Although much of the existing legislation was enacted during a growth cycle, most people felt it would cover decline as well as growth.

The area of state funding of public education was noted as an area that would require revisions or new legislation. Although a basic funding formula exists, some of the component indices might need attention to prevent unfair penalties to localities experiencing decline in numbers.

Additional areas of legislation that might require revisions or new legislation could be those of surplus property disposal, releases of surplus staff in an orderly and fair manner, and additional support for non-mandated programs to provide more equal protection from cuts simply because these are not required. Some of the legislative attention needed may not necessarily be more legislation, but more awareness of the problems and the implications of both the problems and any reactive measures to those problems.

Summary

Although both state and local level educators seemed knowledgeable in regard to the loss of students from regular programs and equally knowledgeable about many of the solution sets often employed in reacting to decline, little evidence existed to support the

fact that localities had declined in the broad definition of the word. School divisions generally had in their employ more staff and were, without exception, spending more real dollars. Although a few buildings were closed, others were opened, often larger and more elaborate. Shifts of personnel from regular to special and new programs were very common. Few cutbacks, but several additions, in program were noted.

In general, little evidence existed to support the fact that divisions had reacted to decline by cutting back significantly in any area; instead the reaction to decline in regular program clients seemed almost without exception to have been handled by substitution. At the state level new or expanded programs were mandated closely paralleling the decline of regular program numbers. Local divisions responded to these mandates by transfer and reassignments of staff, facilities and resources.

As regular programs shrank in numbers, kindergarten programs grew under the mandate for all divisions to offer kindergarten. Expanded Title I programs, additional educational opportunities for the handicapped, and altered school entry ages all feed additional students into schools, while lower pupil-teacher ratio mandates in primary grades further reduced the need to cut back.

Little supportive evidence was found to indicate the growth in new and expanded programs was planned to match or offset the decline in regular program numbers. The decline on the one hand and the growth on the other seemed almost coincidental. Little evidence was noted to support the concept that planning had caused the "balance" that

occurred. Further, little evidence exists to indicate long-range planning has taken place to address the concerns some have in regard to the possible upturn in numbers of births which could be feeding additional numbers back into regular programs, perhaps as soon as the early 1980's.

If, in fact, the projection of numbers of births occurred, "substitutions" of the 1970's may require additional expansion and a growth cycle in the 1980's. Little discussion of the implications of this potential additional growth cycle was noted in the field work for this study.

Little evidence existed to support a charge that expansions were employed to offset declines simply to maintain a status-quo, or protect a large segment of the bureaucracy, although the corresponding expansions seemed to be conveniently coincidental. It appeared that much of this coincidental growth has not been viewed as a substitution.

If an awareness existed in the minds of educators that segmental decline was being offset by expansion in other areas, little evidence of that relationship was found.

Chapter V

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, IMPLICATIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary

The purpose of this study was to examine and describe some of the possible courses of action available to legislators and educators as they attempted adjustments to the problem of declining enrollments. Although not designed to provide specific answers, it was intended to review alternatives and to review some of the likely implications.

The focus of the study was directed to four basic questions:

1. What are the central issues and their implications involved in the utilization or disposition of surplus space?
2. What issues and their implications are involved in the need to reduce staff?
3. If reduced state funding becomes a reality, what are the issues and their implications of the reductions?
4. If cutbacks in programs are necessary, what are the issues and their implications of such cutbacks?

The study served as a catalyst for educational groups to address the problem before a potential opportunity to improve education turns into a negative, uncontrolled, unplanned for, and thus an unhealthy decline. By providing a review of the problem and attempting to supply information and analysis to appropriate decision makers

within Virginia, this study would be another source of information to state policy makers.

The methodology of the study centered around the following five segments: (1) establishing the context as well as the scope and magnitude of the decline; (2) selecting the tentative associated policy issues; (3) selecting the respondents; (4) conducting the field work; and (5) the analysis of findings.

Problems associated with decline were selected from the current literature on the basis of the frequency of their inclusion in the writings. The associated problems were termed "tentative" as respondents were allowed to include "other associated problems" if they wished.

Respondent groups were divided into two categories: individuals (primary) including selected state department personnel and selected members of the State Board of Education and school divisions (secondary) experiencing significant decline during the period of the study.

The findings of the study showed that total enrollments for the state as a whole had increased slightly, but significant changes within the components of the total were discovered. Due primarily to decreased birth rates within the state, the number of students in the traditional 1-12 classes had, in fact, decreased significantly. However, the introduction of new clients through kindergarten programs, expanded programs and services for the handicapped, increased federal funding through ESEA Title I, and altered school entry ages

"substituted" clients that were introduced in numbers slightly higher than the loss from traditional programs.

In a review of facility utilization, although some few schools were closed, others opened almost in equal numbers as older facilities were phased out and replaced with newer, often larger facilities. The number of actual closures was restricted by the fact that the new and expanded programs usually filled surplus space opened by regular program declines. Typically, the program expansions required more per-pupil space in that the programs were highly specialized, usually with reduced pupil-teacher ratios. Although a few divisions actually reported closures and consolidations, few facilities were diverted to "other than school use."

Staff reductions normally associated with the loss of students did not materialize to any extent. On the contrary, a high percentage of divisions surveyed actually reflected additional staff. Staff, like facilities, was transferred to other programs mandated by both state and federal legislation, often into the special programs with mandated pupil-teacher ratios lower than the regular programs.

Program cuts often associated with reduced student numbers did not materialize during the period covered by the study. Again, the opposite was true as divisions added kindergarten, expanded programs for the handicapped and ESEA Title I.

All evidence indicated that even though the traditional regular programs did in fact lose students, this loss was more than offset by the new programs and new clients introduced to the systems. These

new programs required retaining, in fact increasing, staff for instructional purposes and maintaining approximately the same or more instructional spaces. Financial support for educational purposes increased during the period at a rate higher than the rate of inflation. Evidence existed which indicated that mandated special programs often carry higher price tags than regular programs due to the lower ratios and special services required by the nature of the program.

All evidence indicated that Virginia has managed decline in numbers of students in regular programs by expanding existing programs, generating new ones and reacting to mandates from the state and federal governments. In summary, management of decline in Virginia has been managed by program expansion and substitution to the extent that the total number of students actually shows an increase in total students served.

Conclusions of the Study

Several conclusions can be drawn from the evidence of change in Virginia public education. From the information gathered, large numbers of staff have been transferred to other programs. With the decline in regular program numbers and the expansion of education for the handicapped, kindergarten education, and such federal programs as ESEA Title I, transfers and new staff hired altered the composition of the total instructional staff somewhat carrying several implications for staff development, in-service education, and for institutions of higher education. Further, staff needs have changed and will apparently continue to change as programs such as education for the

handicapped and Title I require more evaluation, both physical and mental, prior to placement of students. It may be concluded that school divisions have added personnel and may well have to continue to add personnel to provide evaluation, physical and occupational therapy and other similarly related services not formally viewed as a direct responsibility of the school system.

A second conclusion emphasized the high likelihood that the dollar costs for education will continue to rise rapidly. Both inflationary pressures and the mandates to provide higher priced special services will continue to force costs up.

State mandates such as Standard #7 of the Standards of Quality, if not revised or frozen, will require local divisions to reduce pupil-teacher ratios ultimately to 1:22 in 1982-83. This single mandate, estimated to cost \$20.9 million in staff, will eventually force most divisions to expend local funds for the construction of additional instructional space. This capital fund need would require significant local funding increases, in that localities currently provide almost all capital funds.

Although little evidence indicated that direct substitution of newer, and expanded programs were knowingly employed to simply perpetuate a status-quo or to resist retrenchment, the coincidence of expansions on one hand paralleling decline on the other was noted.

It was further concluded that the expansions of the 1970's would be more directly felt in the early and mid-1980's if an increase in birth rates predicted by some did materialize. Should more births

occur, for whatever reason, another wave of expansion may very well be required. Since the new and expanded programs of the 1970's absorbed much of the surplus staff and facilities, that staff and space could not readily be returned to the again expanding regular programs without replacements.

The new and expanded programs of the 1970's may well be considered a part of the "regular" program by that time. Once the definition of "regular program" is applied to those components, future reductions in those areas become unlikely. The staff, space, and financial support devoted to those programs would be difficult to re-allocate to regular programs under the earlier definition, if the number of clients did in fact increase. The number of births occurring in the near future could possibly fuel another growth cycle.

Implications

In concluding the research for this study, several implications for consideration appeared. These implications appear to be valid concerns based on the conclusions reached in this study.

Since major personnel shifts have taken place there exists a likelihood of spot shortages of certified specialized personnel. Since regular program staff were, in many cases, transferred to special programs, a corresponding lack of proper certification may exist. Specialized staff such as school psychologists, physical therapists, and occupational therapists perhaps will need to be added to the support staff of school divisions. If this need and trend continues, a new level of employee will appear. Implications exist for funding,

staffing, and supervising this new and different level of employee. The school seems destined to assume a new role by adding "medical" personnel.

Currently some demographers and planners are contending that births have begun to increase and will soon, perhaps as early as the mid-1980's, again feed additional students into regular programs. Because resources and personnel have been diverted to special programs in the 1970's, new staff, additional revenues, and additional spaces will likely be needed at that time. Should the "Proposition 13" type movement gain momentum in Virginia in the years to come, a major problem might be created by the need for another expansion with the related financing required based on a shrinking tax base.

Should those projections be accurate, new clients for regular programs would leave the schools in the state faced with more students entering under mandates limiting pupil-teacher ratios. Thus fewer students would need to return to impact school as significantly as the loss of larger numbers of a few years earlier. More simply stated, under existing mandates, fewer students would be required to necessitate hiring another teacher under a 22:1 mandate than under a 28:1 or 30:1 ceiling.

Some people have viewed recent legislation as "legislation of affluence," that is, legislation passed in a time when schools were faced with the choice of allowing decline or expanding into new areas. The option to expand now may have a built-in second cycle of expansion, tied to increases in the number of children today, thus the

maximum impact of today's decisions may not be realized until a clearer view of the validity of new growth and the magnitude and longevity of the increases in births is known.

An implication of tangential interest might be what impact "special considerations" in new programs might carry for regular programs. As examples, what happens when parents of regular program students request the same considerations as those being provided handicapped students such as support services and individualized educational plans? What happens when fourth grade teachers ask for a reduction in pupil-teacher ratios similar to Standard #7 ratios? Little, if any, evidence exists to indicate that ratios of more than 20:1 are better than 25:1 except possibly psychologically, thus their arguments for such a reduction could be supported by the same "evidence" as those presented by primary level teachers.

For divisions whose student members have actually declined in spite of new programs, and there were a few, the implications of reduced state funding as a result of a formula tied to average daily memberships and an index places those divisions in a vulnerable position. The "index" would work in such a way as to force more local funding as per this example: a division actually serving fewer students would likely show more wealth per child, thus that component of the index would require higher local effort. Little evidence exists to indicate divisions with fewer students could significantly reduce expenditures correspondingly, yet they could receive less state money both in ADM and index allowances.

Perhaps a serious implication exists in the lack of personnel assigned to the State Department of Education for long-range planning purposes. Long-range planning seems to be an added responsibility of personnel already assigned a primary job function, and thus, often reactive rather than pro-active. Educational planning often reflects the same support as industrial research and development, almost always viewed as desirable but not essential. A primary implication exists that educational programs can function without a formal, recognized planning component and carries an added secondary implication for "following" rather than "leading."

Since Virginia education has been impacted significantly in recent years by legislated programs and standards, the possibility that this trend will continue does exist. Although some persons have suggested we "pause" and allow the educational system to adjust to these legislative programs, and others have called for a "retrenchment" to the basics, the possibility of other legislated programs does exist. That is, it appeared from the impact of declining enrollments and statutorily mandated programs, both may well continue to have a profound effect on public education in Virginia.

If Virginia continues to follow a pattern of legislated standards and program quality, an implication exists from which education could profit greatly or suffer equally, depending on the course this trend takes. Improvements may come if the General Assembly remains involved and is adequately informed prior to imposing mandates and standards. Education needs public support and involvement at all

levels. Better understanding of the programs, processes, and goals of education, typically, has strengthened support for education not only in terms of funds but in other forms as well.

The danger in this implication is the other side of the same coin. Legislative bodies are by their nature political and subject to intense pressures from special interest groups. Although the strength of a body such as the General Assembly is typified by diversity of its membership, only a few professional educators are found in the group. The need to be informed weighs heavily on such a body when passing legislation, but perhaps more so when education of youth is involved. Extreme care must be exercised not to legislate trends and fads, but rather to base legislation on sound research based programs which will indeed improve education for all youth in the Commonwealth.

It seems imperative that not only the fiscal implications but also program implications, and the cause and effect should be a part of the background of all educational legislation. The need for planning, monitoring of demographic trends and other similar techniques should be an important part of decision making, especially decisions that so significantly impact the entire population for such a long period of time.

Recommendations

Recommendations based on the conclusions and findings of the study are presented in two sections: policy recommendations that includes suggestions relative to legislation and providing state

level leadership and recommendations for further research in the overall area of declining enrollments.

In the area of policy study the following recommendations are provided:

1. A diverse committee including educators and planners should be appointed by the State Board of Education to review the current enrollment data, birth rates and projected enrollments for special mandated programs and regular program clients. The typical school division probably cannot, given limitations of staff and time, explore the demographic trends without assistance and direction.

This committee could replicate some of the procedures and processes employed in the late 1960's and early 1970's by the Office of Evaluation and Planning of the State Department of Education which produced a descriptive report on each division in the state through the existing structure of the regional superintendents' groups.

2. The state funding formula should be reviewed in light of the problem created by declining enrollments. Since a review of the current formula is anticipated, one criteria for review could easily be the alleged decline and the corresponding substitutions of alternate special programs.

3. The State Board of Education should seriously consider establishing a legitimate planning department. Long-range planning is essential to public education. Accurate enrollments, trends, general demographic data, financial impact analysis are only a few examples of data needed to project and to anticipate. Planning should

be done by everyone, but everyone cannot be responsible for detailed comprehensive planning of the nature suggested here.

4. Either the General Assembly or the State Board of Education should provide adequate and accurate cost analysis of new and expanded programs as they are mandated. This information should be determined for all partners in the financing of education. As an example, Standard #7 of the Standards of Quality estimated to cost \$20.9 million in extra staff when the full impact is felt in 1982-83 carries the great likelihood of major capital expenditures for extra space, a tremendous impact on local funds.

In the area of recommendations for further research, the following are offered:

1. Continuing research in the demographics of the population of Virginia is needed. Studies of trends in births are sorely needed to project enrollments likely to feed the schools in time to allow for the financing of needed staff, facilities and programs.

2. Additional research is needed into the adequacy of the state funding formula including realistic cost analysis at all levels of funding.

3. Additional research into the changing staff needs of local divisions carries implications for localities, the state and teacher training institutions.

4. Additional research is likely needed in the area of teacher certification and training in that significant shifts of

student clients have forced corresponding shifts of personnel perhaps out of field or at the least out of their primary field or training.

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APPENDIX A

Cover Letter To Divisions

Division Survey

APPENDIX A

Cover Letter To Divisions

T0: School Divisions selected for responses

Dear

I am working with a research project in the area of policy implications arising from the problem of declining school enrollments. In reviewing the enrollments across the state for the years 1965-66 and 1975-76, I noted [county/city] reflected a significant decline in pupil population during that time.

I would very much appreciate you taking time to share some information with me on the causes and possible reactions, if any, the system had to make to compensate for these fewer students.

Please feel free to add remarks other than those specifically solicited on the enclosure. Again, I appreciate very much your assistance with this project.

Sincerely yours,

Jim D. Graham
Asst. Supt., Inst.

psr

DIVISION SURVEY

1. Please check the reason(s) for the decline in your student population:
 - a. reduced birth rates _____
 - b. annexation by another system _____
 - c. other _____ (please explain)

2. Has the decline been large enough to require adjustments, closure, or disposition of any buildings?

Yes _____ No _____

 - a. If yes, what disposition was made of these facilities?
 1. consolidated _____
 2. closed _____
 3. converted to other school use _____
 4. converted to other administrative use _____
 5. shared with other governmental agencies _____
 6. rented or leased _____
 7. sold _____
 8. other _____ (please explain)

3. Has the decline caused you to reduce staff?

Yes _____ No _____

 - a. If yes, please indicate how you have addressed the issue.
 1. normal attrition _____
 2. early retirement _____
 3. transferred to other programs _____
 4. transferred to other schools in the system _____
 5. other _____ (please explain)

4. With fewer students coupled with probably decreased state and federal funding have your local expenditures (a) increased _____, (b) decreased _____, (c) remained stable _____. Please comment on any problems encountered in this area.

5. Has the student decline and/or related loss of financial support caused any program cuts in the system? Yes _____ No _____

If yes, where have your cuts been made? (please add explanations as you deem appropriate).

- a. administration _____
- b. special programs _____
- c. transportation _____
- d. maintenance _____
- e. extra-curricular activities _____
- f. fine arts _____
- g. other _____

6. Have you made adjustments to the decline in ways other than those included in one through five above? If so, please indicate how you were required to react.

APPENDIX B

BACKGROUND INFORMATION FOR RESPONDENTS

APPENDIX B

BACKGROUND INFORMATION FOR RESPONDENTS

A situation is rapidly developing in public education which could have serious implications for society generally. Declining birth rates have placed public education in the position of having significantly fewer students, first at the elementary and gradually at the secondary level.

Current enrollments and projections predict an eleven percent decline nationally during the decade 1972-82. Following closely the national decline, Virginia enrollments appear likely to drop by 17% during the decade 1975-85.

Whether the decline will continue, reverse itself or stabilize in the future is not certain, but one fact is clear: public education is faced with at least a short term inevitable reduction in the number of its "traditional"--ages 5-18--students. Since student enrollments function as the major economic "generator" for education, the impact of the decline is likely to initiate a variety of changes throughout the school system.

If decision makers allow the decline to run a natural course with no appropriate counter measures, the inevitable scaling down would necessitate a number of decisions in regard to such issues as the level of financial support, surplus staff, surplus space, and the possibility

of reduced programs. In any of these or other cases, decisions will be forced by events and a course of action must be selected.

This study is intended to determine some of the most common problems associated with declining enrollments along with the most likely policy reactions.

From current studies the following four major problems appeared as the result of declining enrollments:

1. What are the central issues and their implications involved in the utilization or disposition of surplus space?
2. What issues and their implications are involved in the need to reduce staff?
3. If reduced state funding becomes a reality, what are the issues and their implications of the reductions?
4. If cutbacks in programs are necessary, what are the issues and their implications of such cutbacks?

On the following pages are several problem areas typically associated with declining enrollments. Included with these problem areas are several policy options exercised in other states and school divisions across the country. Please review these problem areas and react candidly to both the problem areas and typically associated reactions. Your reaction should be influenced by the likelihood of the same problem areas arising in Virginia and the applicability of the possible courses of action to that problem in Virginia. In determining the applicability of options in Virginia, one consideration would be whether existing legislation would permit the reaction or whether new enabling legislation would be desirable or needed.

The following descriptors are to be used in the survey and subsequent analysis: Likelihood, desirability, and impact. In order to allow a more specific response in these areas a scale is provided as appropriate using the following categories for your responses:

Likelihood

- Very probable--Almost certain to occur.
Strong indication of this happening.
- Probable--Less than a fifty-fifty chance of occurring.
Some indication of this happening.
- Either way--Fifty-fifty.
Could go either way.
- Improbable--Less than a fifty-fifty chance of occurring.
Some indication of this not happening.
- Very Improbable--Almost certain not to occur.
Strong indication against this happening.

Desirability

- Very desirable--Will have a positive effect and little or no negative effect extremely beneficial.
Justifiable on its own merit.
- Desirable--Will have a positive effect, negative effects minor-beneficial.
Justifiable as a by-product or in conjunction with the other items.
- Undesirable--Will have a negative effect.
Harmful.
May be justified only as a by-product of a very desirable item, not justified as a by-product of a desirable item.
- Very undesirable--Will have a major negative effect.
Extremely harmful.
Not justifiable.

Impact

Low impact--No measurable effect.

Moderately low--Impact not very significant.

Medium--Some impact.

Moderately high--Occurrence would have impact.

High impact--Selection would have significant impact.

In some cases a lesser number of scales was used where it was judged the category would be obvious or inappropriate. Appendix G is intended to allow you the opportunity to add additional concerns or problems as you deem appropriate. Scales are not provided for your use on that page, but the general headings of likelihood, desirability, and impact are with a space to write in the key word such as very probable, high impact, etc.

Your participation and assistance is very much appreciated, hopefully the results of this study will be of some value in your future deliberations in regard to the problem of declining enrollments. Two copies of the survey are provided for your use. One copy may be retained for your future reference.

Credit is extended to Murray Turoff for the basic scale used in likelihood and desirability segments.⁹⁴

⁹⁴Turoff, Murray. "The Design of a Policy Delphi," Technological Forecasting and Social Change, American Publishing Company, 1970, pp. 149-171.

The work of James F. McNamara provided the basis for the impact scale.⁹⁵

⁹⁵McNamara, James F. Trend Impact Analysis and Scenario Writing, unpublished paper, 1974.

APPENDIX C

ASSOCIATED PROBLEM NUMBER 1

FACILITIES

APPENDIX C

ASSOCIATED PROBLEM NUMBER 1

FACILITIES

What options for the utilization or disposition of surplus space does the school division have?

Likelihood of being a problem (concern) in Virginia.

Likelihood--very probable, probable, either way, improbable, very improbable.

1. Adjustments in usage such as rehousing or reallocating more satisfactory or more permanent quarters to special programs and other classes.

Likelihood--very probable

probable

either way

improbable

very improbable

Desirability--very desirable

desirable

undesirable

very undesirable

Impact--low impact

moderately low

medium

moderately high

high impact

COMMENTS:

2. Sharing facilities with other governmental and/or non-profit agencies.

Likelihood--very probable

probable

either way

improbable

very improbable

Desirability--very desirable

desirable

undesirable

very undesirable

Impact--low impact

moderately low

medium

moderately high

high impact

Would existing legislation permit utilization of this option? _____ or new legislation required? _____

COMMENTS:

3. Closure and/or disposal of facilities.
(Consolidation, lease, sales)

Likelihood--very probable

probable

either way

improbable

very improbable

Desirability--very desirable

desirable

undesirable

very undesirable

Impact--low impact

moderately low

medium

moderately high

high impact

Would existing legislation permit utilization of this option? _____ or new legislation required? _____

COMMENTS:

Other possibilities for consideration relating to this particular area.

APPENDIX D

ASSOCIATED PROBLEM NUMBER 2

SURPLUS STAFF

APPENDIX D

ASSOCIATED PROBLEM NUMBER 2

SURPLUS STAFF

What options are available to the locality faced with the need to reduce staff?

Likelihood of being a problem (concern) in Virginia--
very probable, probable, either way, improbable, very improbable.

Desirability

Very desirable, desirable, undesirable, very undesirable

Impact

low impact, moderately low, medium, moderately high, high impact

1. Place a moratorium on teacher leave policies in order to reduce the number of teachers returning to claim positions vacated when enrollments were higher.

Likelihood--very probable

probable

either way

improbable

very improbable

Desirability--very desirable

desirable

undesirable

very undesirable

Impact--low impact

moderately low

medium

moderately high

high impact

Would existing legislation permit utilization of this option? _____ or new legislation required? _____

COMMENTS:

2. Offer one or two-year termination contracts to new teachers.

Likelihood--very probable

probable

either way

improbable

very improbable

Desirability--very desirable

desirable

undesirable

very undesirable

Impact--low impact

moderately low

medium

moderately high

high impact

Would existing legislation permit utilization of this option? _____ or new legislation required? _____

COMMENTS:

3. Make maximum utilization of natural attrition.

Likelihood--very probable

probable

either way

improbable

very improbable

Would existing legislation permit utilization of this option? _____ or new legislation required? _____

COMMENTS:

4. Early retirement incentive program.

Likelihood--very probable

probable

either way

improbable

very improbable

Desirable--very desirable

desirable

undesirable

very undesirable

Impact--low impact

moderately low

medium

moderately high

high impact

Would existing legislation permit utilization of this option? _____ or new legislation required? _____

COMMENTS:

5. Releasing teachers under continuing contract (tenure).

Likelihood--very probable

probable

either way

improbable

very improbable

Desirability--very desirable

desirable

undesirable

very undesirable

Impact--low impact

moderately low

medium

moderately high

high impact

Would existing legislation permit utilization of this option? _____ or new legislation required? _____

COMMENTS:

7. Transferring teachers to other schools.

Likelihood--very probable

probable

either way

improbable

very improbable

Desirability--very desirable

desirable

undesirable

very undesirable

Impact--low impact

moderately low

medium

moderately high

high impact

Would existing legislation permit utilization of this option? _____ or new legislation required? _____

COMMENTS:

8. Establishing seniority systems.

Likelihood--very probable

probable

either way

improbable

very improbable

Desirability--very desirable

desirable

undesirable

very undesirable

Impact--low impact

moderately low

medium

moderately high

high impact

Would existing legislation permit utilization of this option? _____ or new legislation required? _____

COMMENTS:

9. Local reduction in force policies.

Likelihood--very probable

probable

either way

improbable

very improbable

Desirability--very desirable

desirable

undesirable

very undesirable

Impact--low impact

moderately low

medium

moderately high

high impact

Would existing legislation permit utilization of this option? _____ or new legislation required? _____

COMMENTS:

Other possibilities for consideration relating to this particular area.

APPENDIX E

ASSOCIATED PROBLEM NUMBER 3

FINANCING

APPENDIX E

ASSOCIATED PROBLEM NUMBER 3

FINANCING

What options are available to the division faced with reduced financing?

Likelihood of financing being a problem (concern) in Virginia--very probable, probable, either way, improbable, very improbable.

Impact

low impact, moderately low, medium, moderately high, high impact.

1. Provide a no-loss provision in the state funding formula to protect localities.

Likelihood--very probable

probable

either way

improbable

very improbable

Desirability--very desirable

desirable

undesirable

very undesirable

Impact--low impact

moderately low

medium

moderately high

high impact

Would existing legislation permit utilization of this option? _____ or new legislation required? _____

COMMENTS:

2. Establish a minimum quality standard to guarantee a basic program.

Likelihood--very probable

probable

either way

improbable

very improbable

Desirability--very desirable

desirable

undesirable

very undesirable

Impact--low impact

moderately low

medium

moderately high

high impact

Would existing legislation permit utilization of this option? _____ or new legislation required? _____

COMMENTS:

3. Increased local support required?

Likelihood--very probable

probable

either way

improbable

very improbable

Desirability--very desirable

desirable

undesirable

very undesirable

Impact--low impact

moderately low

medium

moderately high

high impact

Would existing legislation permit utilization of this option? _____ or new legislation required? _____

COMMENTS:

Other possibilities for consideration relating to this particular area.

APPENDIX F

ASSOCIATED PROBLEM NUMBER 4

PROGRAM

APPENDIX F

ASSOCIATED PROBLEM NUMBER 4

PROGRAM

How may cutbacks in programs best be handled?

Likelihood of program cutbacks occurring in Virginia--very probable, probable, either way, improbable, very improbable.

1. Relax or reduce standards for accrediting schools in Virginia.

Likelihood--very probable

probable

either way

improbable

very improbable

Desirability--very desirable

desirable

undesirable

very undesirable

Impact--low impact

moderately low

medium

moderately high

high impact

Would existing legislation permit utilization of this option? _____ or new legislation required? _____

COMMENTS:

2. Relax or reduce Standards of Quality as mandated by the General Assembly of Virginia.

Likelihood--very probable

probable

either way

improbable

very improbable

Desirability--very desirable

desirable

undesirable

very undesirable

Impact--low impact

moderately low

medium

moderately high

high impact

Would existing legislation permit utilization of this option? _____ or new legislation required? _____

COMMENTS:

3. Reduce specific course requirements--either nominal or numerically.

Likelihood--very probable

probable

either way

improbable

very improbable

Desirability--very desirable

desirable

undesirable

very undesirable

Impact--low impact

moderately low

medium

moderately high

high impact

Would existing legislation permit utilization of this option? _____ or new legislation required? _____

COMMENTS:

4. Reduction of elective offerings.

Likelihood--very probable

probable

either way

improbable

very improbable

Desirability--very desirable

desirable

undesirable

very undesirable

Impact--low impact

moderately low

medium

moderately high

high impact

Would existing legislation permit utilization of this option? _____ or new legislation required? _____

COMMENTS:

5. Reduction of extra-curricular program offerings.

Likelihood--very probable

probable

either way

improbable

very improbable

Desirability--very desirable

desirable

undesirable

very undesirable

Impact--low impact

moderately low

medium

moderately high

high impact

Would existing legislation permit utilization of this option? _____ or new legislation required? _____

COMMENTS:

6. Reduction in support services (transportation, printing, consultation, medical services, clerical services, staff travel, maintenance staff, etc.).

Likelihood--very probable

probable

either way

improbable

very improbable

Desirability--very desirable

desirable

undesirable

very undesirable

Impact--low impact

moderately low

medium

moderately high

high impact

Would existing legislation permit utilization of this option? _____ or new legislation required? _____

COMMENTS:

Other possibilities for consideration relating to this particular area.

APPENDIX G

OTHER ASSOCIATED PROBLEMS POSSIBLE CREATED
BY DECLINING ENROLLMENTS

APPENDIX G

OTHER ASSOCIATED PROBLEMS POSSIBLY CREATED
BY DECLINING ENROLLMENTS

Please list other problem areas or concerns that you would consider as possible associated problems other than the four areas previously addressed. Please address the likelihood of the problem developing in Virginia and the compatibility of the course of action with existing legislation or the need for new legislation directions.

Please use the Likelihood, Desirability, Impact scales as appropriate to your concern using the same value scale as in preceding sections.

OTHER:

1.

Likelihood--very probable

Probable

either way

improbable

very improbable

Desirability--very desirable

desirable

undesirable

very undesirable

Impact--low impact

moderately low

medium

moderately high

high impact

Would existing legislation permit utilization of this option? _____ or new legislation required? _____

COMMENTS:

2.

Likelihood--very probable

probable

either way

improbable

very improbable

Desirability--very desirable

desirable

undesirable

very undesirable

Would existing legislation permit utilization of this option? _____ or new legislation required? _____

COMMENTS:

3.

Likelihood--very probable

probable

either way

improbable

very improbable

Desirability--very desirable

desirable

undesirable

very undesirable

Would existing legislation permit utilization of this
option? _____ or new legislation required? _____

COMMENTS:

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the scanned document**

DECLINING ENROLLMENTS IN VIRGINIA:
IMPLICATIONS FOR STATE GOVERNANCE

by

Jim D. Graham

(ABSTRACT)

The problem of this study was to examine and describe some of the courses of action available to legislators and educators as they attempt to face the problem of declining enrollments. Although the study was not designed to provide specific answers to the most common questions, it was intended to provide focus on the central issues and their attendant implications. Specifically, the study was designed to determine the state level policy implications of declining enrollments in Virginia.

The design of the research was concerned with five major segments of methodology. These segments included: (1) establishing the scope and magnitude of the decline, (2) selecting the tentative associated policy issues, (3) selecting the respondents, (4) conducting the field work, and (5) the analysis of the findings.

Survey instruments were provided to certain members of the State Board of Education, selected individuals within the State Department of Education and 28 school divisions within the state that had experienced significant decreases in pupil population during the time

period covered by the study. Individuals were selected to respond based on their knowledge, interest and/or involvement with the problem of declining enrollment. In addition, there were over 30 follow-up interviews with state and local personnel.

Analysis of the data were made by simple tally, by recording comments as received and by probing and recording insights into the problems as revealed by administrators. There was no attempt to quantify or otherwise manipulate the data from the interviews as these tended to be repetitive and self-reinforcing concerning the issues.

The major conclusions of the study were:

1. To compensate for the decline in numbers of clients for regular programs, new and expanded have been added requiring major shifts in personnel.

2. Increased funding for public education will be required to compensate for inflation and the higher costs associated with special programs.

3. Mandated new and expanded programs may require significant additional expenditures both in program and in capital outlay funds.

Some of the recommendations based on the findings of the study were:

1. A diverse committee of educators and/or planners should be appointed by the State Board of Education to review current enrollments, current program mandates, and future trends in growth and trends.

2. The State funding formula should be viewed in light of the unique problems created by declining enrollments.

3. The State Board of Education should seriously consider establishing a long-range planning and policy analysis department.

4. Either the General Assembly or the State Board of Education should provide adequate and alternate cost analyses of new and expanded programs as they are mandated. This information should be determined for all partners in the financing of education.