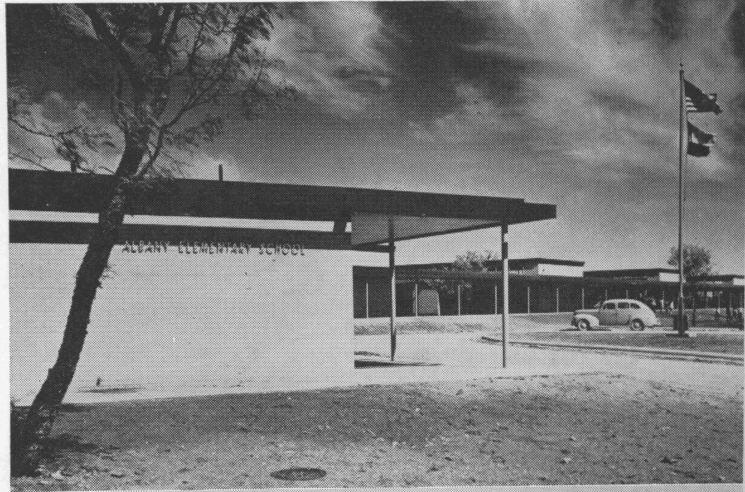


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• Rural Education • in Transition

A Study of Recent Trends in Education
in Five Texas Rural Counties



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R. D. LEWIS, DIRECTOR, COLLEGE STATION, TEXAS

DIGEST

Progressively more attention is being given to public school education in Texas. Particularly since the Gilmer-Aikin Act was passed in the summer of 1949, far-reaching changes have resulted in considerable improvement in the rural educational system. With 43.4 percent of all Texas youth in the compulsory school ages residing in rural areas, these changes will play an important part in the future progress of the State.

Through consolidation the number of rural schools declined by 66 percent since 1949. Some open country residents, however, do not approve of school consolidations. Since one of the most common arguments against school consolidations is that some children spend too much time riding a bus to and from school and are unable to take the fullest advantage of existing educational facilities, the validity of this assumption was tested. Although nontransported students had better attendance records and made slightly higher grades than transported students, no relationship was found between distance students were transported and their performances.

Since the adoption of the Gilmer-Aikin Act, school administrators have increased their efforts to enroll more students and to improve attendance records. Partly as a result of these efforts, enrollments in rural areas have remained relatively stationary despite population losses. The percentage attendance record of 92.2 achieved in 1952-53 will be difficult to improve in the future.

Curricula have been broadened and "special service" personnel such as school nurses, librarians and counselors, are now employed in schools serving rural areas.

Improvements in the quality of rural education are being obtained through several other means. Since the Gilmer-Aikin Act was passed, the average length of school term has increased, no rural school being operated less than 175 days in 1952-53. Pupil-teacher ratios have been reduced in rural areas to less than 25 students per teacher. Classroom teachers are better qualified, having more teaching experience and academic preparation. The average rural classroom teacher has 12 years of teaching experience. More than 20 percent have master degrees and an additional 72 percent have bachelor degrees. The Texas Legislature in 1954 raised average salaries of rural classroom teachers to well above \$3,000, based on a 9-month period.

The cost of rural education has increased in recent years. The State furnishes 61 percent of the total funds needed for rural education while the local school districts furnish 36 percent. The proportionate shares of the cost borne by the federal and county governments have remained relatively unchanged since the Gilmer-Aikin Act was passed. The State's proportionate share of the cost has become slightly less, while the school districts have assumed an increasingly greater share. Average expenditures per pupil in 1952-53 were slightly higher in rural areas than in the State as a whole, being \$242 and \$217, respectively.

Rural Education in Transition

A Study of Recent Trends in Education in Five Texas Rural Counties

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ONE HUNDRED YEARS AGO (January 31, 1854), the Fourth Texas Legislature set aside \$2 million in United States bonds for the support and maintenance of public schools. Since that time public education has grown consistently.

Few responsibilities have more far-reaching importance to people than the maintenance of a sound program of public school education. At present 43.4 percent of all Texas youth in the compulsory school ages of 6 to 18 reside in rural areas. Thus almost half of the State's citizens and future leaders will come from rural homes. The education and preparation of rural youth, therefore, will play an important role in determining the future progress of the State.

Texans have been aware of both the adequacies and shortcomings of their public school program. Through cooperative endeavor and careful planning on the part of the State Legislature, the official boards of education and professional and lay groups, a new set of statutes was adopted in 1949 which called for a complete revision of the system under which our schools were operating. These became known commonly as the Gilmer-Aikin laws. The test of any educational system lies in what is done for the pupils, however, and reliable studies still must be made to determine the effects of these laws upon rural education.

PURPOSE OF STUDY

The purpose of this study is to portray the effects of recent legislation upon rural education in Texas by comparing basic educational trends in rural areas with State trends. More specifically, its purpose is to determine the effects of the Gilmer-Aikin Act upon the following component parts of the rural educational system: school consolidation, enrollment, attendance, curriculum, costs and the quality of teaching.

The people of Texas are increasingly conscious of the need for education and for planning an educational program for the future. In such planning, past experiences should be examined carefully so that a clearer view of the direction and implication of rural educational trends can be obtained. Adapting the school program to changing conditions in our society has been a persistent problem. Through the information obtained in this study, state, county, and local planning

agencies, as well as professional and lay individuals, should be better equipped to determine the defects and virtues of our system. They also should be better equipped to plan more effective rural education in Texas for the future.

SCOPE AND METHOD OF STUDY

This study is confined largely to an analysis of trends in rural education in Texas. Rural education was studied for each school year from 1945-46 through 1952-53. This information was compared with trends over the State. Five counties in which all residents were classified as rural by the Bureau of Census at the time this study was inaugurated were chosen. Those selected were: Burt county in East-Central Texas; Castro and Lynn counties on the High Plains; Schleicher county on the Edwards Plateau; and Tyler county in East Texas (Figure 1). The counties were chosen to include two in the more densely populated eastern section; two in the less densely populated High Plains region; and one on the Edwards Plateau.

Data for each school year from 1945-46 through 1952-53 were obtained from the office of the county school superintendents in each county and from annual reports and records collected by the Texas Education Agency.

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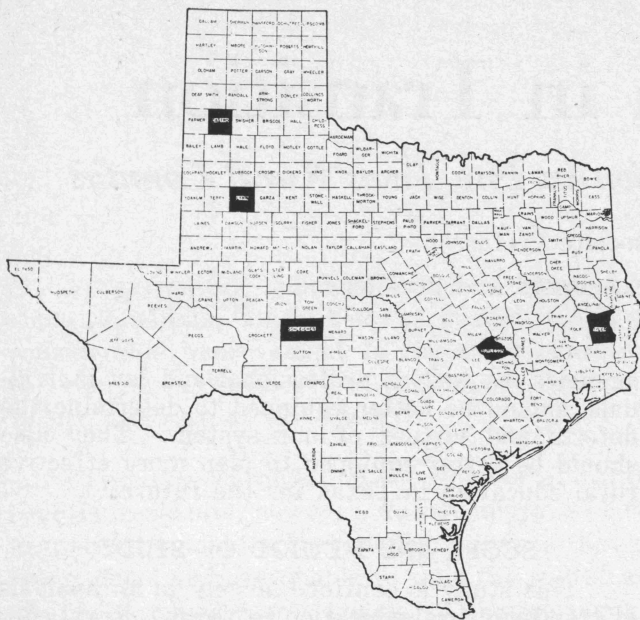


Figure 1. Location of the study counties. From left to right—Castro, Lynn, Schleicher, Burleson and Tyler.

To understand the effects of fairly recent legislation upon rural education in the sample counties, the data were divided into two separate periods for analysis. The first period, comprising the 4 school years 1945-49, just preceded the Gilmer-Aikin legislation. The second period, comprising the 4 school years 1949-53, was immediately after the Gilmer-Aikin laws were adopted.

SCHOOL ORGANIZATION

Since 1927, when the consolidation laws were first passed, the number of schools in Texas has declined steadily. Most of the decrease has been in common schools. In 1945-46, there were 67 common schools operating in the five counties studied. By 1952-53, their numbers were reduced to 17, or by 75 percent during the 8-year period (Table 1). A similar trend was underway over the State, common schools decreasing by almost 70 percent. The number of Negro and white common schools declined in about the same proportions in rural areas as in the State.

In rural areas and in the State, the number of common schools decreased at a faster rate af-

ter the Gilmer-Aikin Act was passed. This trend can be expected to continue until there will be only a handful of common schools left in the State. In some Texas counties there are no common schools in existence at present.

The greatest decrease in the number of common schools during any year in both rural areas and the State occurred immediately after the Gilmer-Aikin Act was passed. Between the school years 1948-49 and 1949-50, their number was reduced by 36 percent in the five rural counties and by 28 percent in the State. Decreases in Negro and white schools were about the same.

Since mechanization has increased rapidly during the last decade less labor is required on farms. Consequently, many people formerly employed in agriculture have moved to cities, and fewer nonfarm residents are needed to work seasonally in agriculture. These factors have resulted in a loss of rural population in more than half of the counties in Texas. Between 1940 and 1950, the five counties included in this study had a combined loss of more than 6,000 population, or 13 percent. Fewer pupils to serve in open country areas has resulted in the consolidation of many common schools with larger ones. The construction of many miles of farm-to-market roads and an increased desire for more education by rural people have further facilitated this movement.

Implications of Reorganization

Although it is difficult to ever emphasize the importance of improvements in educational services through reorganization, some open-country residents do not approve of school consolidations. They contend that when their schools are consolidated with larger ones an institution which holds them together as a social unit is lost. A check on school buildings in districts which have been consolidated disclosed that they were either sold and torn down or moved to the larger school in the district. It often would be more desirable when a school is consolidated with another not to remove the school building. Instead it could be turned into a community or neighborhood center. This has been done in many Texas communities with farmers feeling that they retained the cohesive element their community needed. At the

Table 1. Number of common schools in five Texas rural counties and in the State, 1945-46 through 1952-53

| Area and race | School years | | | | | | | |
|----------------------------|--------------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| | 1945-46 | 1946-47 | 1947-48 | 1948-49 | 1949-50 | 1950-51 | 1951-52 | 1952-53 |
| | Number | | | | | | | |
| Five rural counties | | | | | | | | |
| White | 45 | 38 | 32 | 27 | 18 | 19 | 15 | 11 |
| Negro | 22 | 28 | 26 | 23 | 14 | 13 | 8 | 6 |
| Total | 67 | 66 | 58 | 50 | 32 | 32 | 23 | 17 |
| The State | | | | | | | | |
| White | 2786 | 2537 | 2169 | 1823 | 1357 | 1182 | 1017 | 1 |
| Negro | 1096 | 1039 | 867 | 725 | 473 | 417 | 367 | 1 |
| Total | 3882 | 3576 | 3036 | 2548 | 1830 | 1599 | 1384 | 1167 |

¹ Breakdown by race not available at time of publication.



Figure 2. A school building no longer needed for that purpose can remain a cohesive element for a community by turning it into a community center.

same time their children obtained the advantages of attending a larger school.

Consolidations should be encouraged only to the extent that a reasonable balance is reached between better educational facilities and the integration of a larger community. Some of the open-country residents who live long distances from schools feel that the school is too far from the homes of its patrons and that too often there is little or no participation in its control or operation by these parents. They feel out of contact with the teachers, and the teachers know little of the home life of the children. Hence the school institution plays little or no part in the life of the neighborhoods in which some of its children reside.

One of the most common arguments against school consolidation is that some children spend too much time riding a bus to and from school and are unable to take the fullest advantage of existing educational facilities. Since this opinion was voiced so frequently among rural people, the validity of this common assumption was tested.

The records of 812 white high school students in two of the sample counties — Burleson and Tyler — were obtained to investigate the relationship between transportation and student performances in school.¹ The specific items considered were attendance records, grade performances and participation in extra-curricular activities.

¹The surveys upon which this section of the study is based were conducted by two graduate students, Robert J. Edwards and Gerald McEntire, under the author's supervision.

Students who rode a private conveyance to school were not considered. Data for the fall semester were obtained from permanent school records and from questionnaires filled out by all other high school students.

Of the group studied, 326, or 40.1 percent, lived close enough to school so that they did not commute, whereas 486, or 59.9 percent, rode school buses various distances (Table 2). Slightly more than 10 percent of the pupils rode a bus to school more than 13 miles each way.

Nontransported students were absent less frequently and received higher grades than transported students but there was no difference in their participation in extra-curricular activities.



Figure 3. Modern fleets of buses transport 60 percent of all students in Burleson and Tyler counties.

Table 2. Distribution of 812 transported and nontransported white high school students in Burleson and Tyler counties, Texas, 1952-53

| Transportation categories | Distribution of students by sex | | | | | |
|---------------------------|---------------------------------|-----|---------|-------|-------|-------|
| | Boys | | Girls | | Total | |
| | Number | | Percent | | | |
| Nontransported | 174 | 152 | 326 | 39.9 | 40.5 | 40.1 |
| Transported | 263 | 223 | 486 | 60.1 | 59.5 | 59.9 |
| 1.0 to 3.9 miles | 70 | 64 | 134 | 16.0 | 17.1 | 16.6 |
| 4.0 to 6.9 miles | 42 | 36 | 78 | 9.6 | 9.6 | 9.6 |
| 7.0 to 9.9 miles | 56 | 36 | 92 | 12.8 | 9.6 | 11.3 |
| 10.0 to 12.9 miles | 53 | 44 | 97 | 12.1 | 11.7 | 11.9 |
| 13.0 miles and over | 42 | 43 | 85 | 9.6 | 11.5 | 10.5 |
| Total | 437 | 375 | 812 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 |

The differences in grades and attendance of the two groups were almost negligible. For example, nontransported students were absent an average of 3.3 days per semester and transported students 4.1 days. The grade average of all transported students was B—, and those who rode buses to school had a grade average of C+.

There apparently was little relationship between distance students traveled to school and their performances. Girls who traveled the farthest made better grades than girls who rode shorter distances or did not ride a bus, even though the intelligence quotient scores for this group were not higher than for other girls. Attendance was not related directly to distance traveled to school. Among the boys, attendance records were better for some of the groups farthest from school than for those who traveled shorter distances. Distance traveled to school also did not appear to be a factor in either club membership or election to an office in school-sponsored clubs.

While it is apparent that the consolidation of schools sometimes has an adverse effect upon neighborhood and community relationships, it also appears that transportation is not an important factor in the performances of high school students.

SCHOOL ENROLLMENT AND ATTENDANCE

One of the most important trends in rural education is in school enrollment. Prior to the Gilmer-Aikin Act public school funds were apportioned on the basis of the census of children of scholastic age residing in each district, without

reference to their attendance. This system provided no incentive for school administrators to encourage children to enroll in school. The new laws, however, provide that a part of the money apportioned to individual districts can be collected by a school only if the student is enrolled and in attendance. This provision stimulated educators to see that children enroll and attend school regularly.

School enrollment in the five rural counties studied has remained relatively stationary for the past 8 years. Between 1945-46 and 1952-53 the total enrollment increased less than 2 percent. Thus it has not kept pace with the large increases registered in the State, where a gain of about 22 percent was achieved (Table 3). Although the Gilmer-Aikin Act caused administrators to increase their efforts to enroll more students in public schools, this factor has been offset in rural areas by population losses.

While rural areas have been losing population, the State as a whole has had a tremendous population increase since 1940. This increase, which was proportionately greater than the gain in the United States, is reflected in the public school enrollment trends (Table 3).

The average enrollment in schools in the State has increased every year since 1945. At the beginning of the 1952-53 school year, over 41,000 more students were enrolled than at the beginning of the preceding year.

Enrollment has increased about 7 percent in white schools in the rural areas of Texas during the past 8-year period. The average membership has been leveling off during the past 3 years, how-

Table 3. Average enrollment in public schools in five rural counties and in the State, 1945-46 through 1952-53

| Area and race | School years | | | | | | | |
|---------------------|--------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| | 1945-46 | 1946-47 | 1947-48 | 1948-49 | 1949-50 | 1950-51 | 1951-52 | 1952-53 |
| | Number | | | | | | | |
| Five rural counties | | | | | | | | |
| White | 7,112 | 7,227 | 7,243 | 7,244 | 7,450 | 7,605 | 7,615 | 7,601 |
| Negro | 2,218 | 2,164 | 2,177 | 2,129 | 1,983 | 1,936 | 1,913 | 1,889 |
| Total | 9,330 | 9,391 | 9,420 | 9,373 | 9,433 | 9,541 | 9,528 | 9,490 |
| The State | | | | | | | | |
| White | 969,991 | 978,744 | 990,118 | 1,022,403 | 1,073,442 | 1,119,807 | 1,168,196 | 1,209,316 |
| Negro | 180,887 | 183,816 | 184,903 | 187,744 | 186,684 | 193,795 | 194,109 | 194,165 |
| Total | 1,150,878 | 1,162,560 | 1,175,021 | 1,210,147 | 1,260,126 | 1,313,602 | 1,362,305 | 1,403,481 |

ever. For 5 years prior to this time, the enrollment increased steadily — reaching its peak in 1951-52, with the largest gain taking place immediately after the Gilmer-Aikin Act was passed.

The white population in the five study counties declined about 10 percent between 1940 and 1950. Enrollment trends for white pupils tend to support the contention of some demographers that most of the population decrease among rural white residents between 1940 and 1950 occurred during the first part of the decade and that it slowed down considerably during the latter part. At present, the migration to cities by the white segment of the rural population is apparently relatively small. This factor, coupled with the increased birth rate, accounts for the comparatively stable enrollment figures.

Average enrollment in Negro schools in the five study counties has been decreasing steadily for the past 8 years, dropping about 15 percent. This steady decline is reflected in the losses in Negro population in rural areas of Texas. In 1950 the five counties studied had about one-fourth fewer Negroes than in 1940. In view of this big decrease, school enrollment also should decline rapidly. As a result of the increased birth rate among rural Negroes, however, their age distribution has been favorable for maintaining enrollment.

The number of white pupils enrolled in the public schools of Texas increased nearly 25 percent within the past 8 years. Enrollment in Negro public schools increased only 7 percent during the same period. This difference lies chiefly in differing migration patterns. Negroes have migrated from Texas in proportionately greater numbers. More have also moved from farms to cities during the past decade and a half. The birth rate among Negroes declines sharply after they become urban residents. The combination of these factors also partially accounts for the fact that while the white population in Texas increased considerably between 1940 and 1950, the Negro population remained about constant.

The enrollment can be expected to increase considerably during the next few years as the effects of a greatly increased birth rate is felt in both rural and urban areas. Outgoing high school graduating classes, whose members were born

during the depression and a period of low birth rates, will be replaced by three or four times their number by first-year entering students who were born in a period of high birth rates. As a result of this trend, a vast majority of the school districts have felt the need to expand their building programs. Since the birth rate has remained consistently high since 1940, the problem of providing more buildings for an expanded enrollment can be expected to become more acute.

Length of school term and regularity of student attendance are significant features of any educational system. Prior to the Gilmer-Aikin Act, the minimum requirement for the length of school term in Texas was 6 months. Few public schools failed to exceed the length of term required by law, but most rural schools operated 7 to 9 months per year. Under new laws, however, all public schools are required to operate 9 months, exclusive of national holidays. In 1952-53 no rural school was operated less than 175 days, there being no difference between the length of school term in rural areas and in other public schools in the State.

Although attendance regulations were not rigidly enforced in most school districts before 1949, attendance records were consistently high in rural schools in Texas even prior to that time. Since 1945 the percentage attendance for all rural students has never been lower than 90.2 for any school year. Since the Gilmer-Aikin Act was passed the lowest percentage attendance for any year was 92.2 (Table 4). This record compares favorably with attendance figures in other states and will be difficult to improve in the future.

Very little difference exists between attendance records of rural pupils and those of other public school students in the State. During most of the years since 1945 rural schools have had better attendance records than schools in the State as a whole.

CURRICULUM AND TEACHING PERSONNEL

The consolidation of schools has made possible broader course offerings for rural pupils. Such courses as vocational agriculture, home economics, industrial shop work and music now are found in almost all of the rural high schools in the State.

Table 4. Percent attendance in public schools in five rural counties and in the State, 1945-46 through 1952-53

| Area and race | School years | | | | | | | |
|---------------------|--------------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| | 1945-46 | 1946-47 | 1947-48 | 1948-49 | 1949-50 | 1950-51 | 1951-52 | 1952-53 |
| | Percent | | | | | | | |
| Five rural counties | | | | | | | | |
| White | 91.2 | 92.0 | 91.5 | 92.7 | 93.1 | 92.7 | 94.1 | 93.4 |
| Negro | 89.1 | 87.0 | 87.1 | 91.1 | 91.3 | 91.8 | 89.6 | 87.6 |
| Total | 90.2 | 90.9 | 90.5 | 92.3 | 92.7 | 92.6 | 93.2 | 92.2 |
| The State | | | | | | | | |
| White | 90.0 | 91.8 | 92.2 | 93.6 | 91.6 | 92.7 | 92.4 | 92.8 |
| Negro | 86.9 | 87.9 | 88.0 | 89.3 | 90.3 | 90.6 | 91.0 | 88.6 |
| Total | 89.5 | 91.2 | 91.6 | 92.5 | 91.4 | 92.4 | 92.2 | 92.2 |

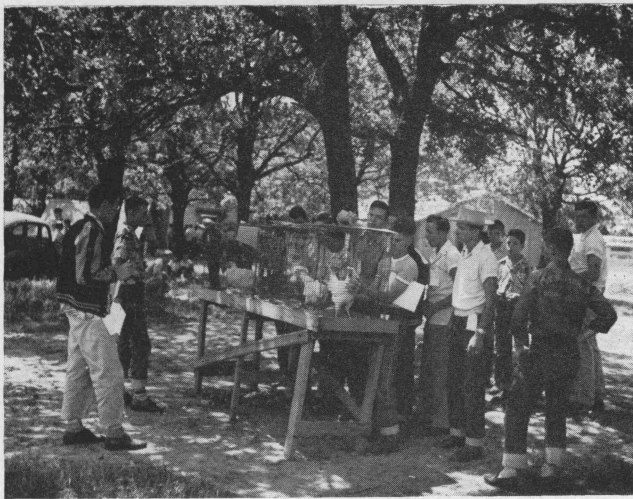


Figure 4. Courses in vocational agriculture are taught in all high schools in the five study counties.

In addition to a broader curriculum, specialized services are available to most rural pupils. The Gilmer-Aikin Act provides for the employment of "special service" teachers in addition to the regular classroom teachers. Prior to this time rural schools generally had no such personnel on their staffs. By 1952-53, there were four librarians, three school nurses, four itinerant teachers, and four special service counselors or supervisors in the five rural counties studied. Their services are not restricted to the larger schools. Since it is impractical for each small school to hire its own special service personnel, some of the county administrators have worked out cooperative arrangements whereby all small schools in a county have these benefits by sharing the costs. In Burleson county, for example, a school nurse works in all of the Negro schools in the common districts in the county. Similar arrangements are found in Negro and white schools in other counties. Through this method all of the school children in a rural area benefit



Figure 5. School nurses and other special service personnel usually are employed in Texas rural schools.

by the special services offered by the public school system.

Even though curriculum offerings and the employment of special service teachers are important in rural areas, the classroom teacher occupies the key place in any educational system. Improvements in the quality of education in rural areas, therefore, are related directly to the quality of teaching in rural schools. Such factors as the ratio of numbers of students per teacher, academic preparation for teaching, salaries and years of experience in the teaching profession are important auxiliary determinants of the quality of teaching.

Prior to the Gilmer-Aikin Act local school boards determined the average number of pupils per teacher in their respective districts. Under the new laws, the State assumes the financial burden in helping schools to reduce their pupil-teacher ratios to 25. In 1952-53, the ratio was 24.2 in the rural counties studied. Rural areas have consistently had lower ratios than other schools in the State, for the number of students per teacher has been less than 25 every year since 1945-46. This is accounted for at least in part by migration out of rural areas. At present the pupil-teacher ratio in the public schools of the State is 26.3 and has not been below 26.0 since 1945.

In the past, the classroom teaching profession in rural areas particularly was confined almost exclusively to females. Within recent years however, the number of male classroom teachers has increased steadily. In 1952-53, 30 percent of the total number of classroom teachers employed in rural schools were males. Although the number of male classroom teachers is increasing over the State as a whole, they comprise a smaller proportion (22 percent) of the total than in rural areas.

One of the main goals of the Gilmer-Aikin Act was to attract better qualified personnel to the teaching profession by setting up minimum wage scales for all teachers based in part on academic training.

A striking improvement in educational attainments of classroom teachers has occurred in rural areas (Table 5). The number of classroom teachers with less than 2 years of college preparation has been reduced from about 1 out of 6 in 1945-46 to less than 1 out of 100 in 1952-53. All classroom teachers now possess a high school diploma. There also has been a decided increase in the number of classroom teachers with college degrees. In 1945-46, fewer than half of the rural classroom teachers possessed degrees; by 1952-53, 93 percent had degrees. The numerical increase of classroom teachers with master degrees has been almost as great as for those with bachelor degrees.

Table 5. Percentages of classroom teachers by college training in five rural counties and in the State, 1945-46 through 1952-53

| Area and college training | School years | | | | | | | |
|---------------------------|--------------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| | 1945-46 | 1946-47 | 1947-48 | 1948-49 | 1949-50 | 1950-51 | 1951-52 | 1952-53 |
| | Percent | | | | | | | |
| Five rural counties | | | | | | | | |
| Master degree | 1.3 | 3.2 | 4.2 | 5.5 | 8.9 | 11.4 | 18.5 | 20.4 |
| Bachelor degree | 45.7 | 48.3 | 59.3 | 58.6 | 72.4 | 77.2 | 73.4 | 72.4 |
| 2 years but less than 4 | 37.4 | 36.7 | 32.3 | 32.2 | 17.1 | 10.0 | 7.5 | 6.6 |
| Less than 2 years | 15.6 | 11.8 | 4.2 | 3.7 | 1.6 | 1.4 | 0.6 | 0.6 |
| The State | | | | | | | | |
| Master degree | 10.6 | 11.0 | 12.4 | 14.3 | 16.2 | 20.2 | 25.5 | 30.4 |
| Bachelor degree | 60.8 | 61.5 | 65.9 | 69.3 | 74.0 | 74.0 | 70.2 | 65.7 |
| 2 years but less than 4 | 22.6 | 21.7 | 18.5 | 14.4 | 8.7 | 5.2 | 3.7 | 2.9 |
| Less than 2 years | 6.0 | 5.8 | 3.2 | 2.0 | 1.1 | 0.6 | 0.6 | 1.0 |

Although classroom teachers in rural areas still have less training than classroom teachers in the State, the gap between the two groups narrowed considerably since 1945-46. At present, 96 percent of the classroom teachers in the State possess college degrees. During 1945-46, the percentages of classroom teachers in the State and in rural areas having college degrees were 71 and 47, respectively.

Negro classroom teachers have shown more improvement in college preparation in recent years than have the whites. The percentage of Negro classroom teachers possessing degrees is also slightly higher in rural areas and in the State as a whole than it is for the whites. This is attributable to keener competition for teaching positions among Negroes than among whites.

In the past, rural teachers traditionally have been one of the most poorly paid occupational groups in the nation. In recognition of the fact that well-qualified personnel could not be attracted into the teaching profession if exceedingly low salaries prevailed, the Gilmer-Aikin Act provides that a minimum wage scale must be observed for all public school teachers. This scale is based mainly on academic preparation and years of experience in the teaching profession. If a school district desires, it may pay more than the minimum wage specified by law but it must raise the additional funds required locally. It is not uncommon for rural districts to pay more than the minimum wage.

Prior to Gilmer-Aikin legislation, each individual school board determined the salaries of its

teachers. With no minimum wage requirements at that time, salaries varied considerably from one district to another largely as a result of the relative difference in taxable wealth and the comparative supply and demand situations for teachers.

The average annual salary of classroom teachers in rural areas has increased steadily since 1945-46. During the 8-year period that followed, it more than doubled, increasing from \$1,320 to \$2,971 (Table 6). The trend of annual salary increases that occurred prior to Gilmer-Aikin legislation is expected to continue. The annual salary of classroom teachers in rural areas has increased an average of \$618 in the 4-year interval since the new laws were enacted. State legislation passed in 1954 will raise average annual classroom teachers' salaries in rural areas to well above \$3,000 in 1954-55.

Although the average annual salary of classroom teachers in rural areas is about \$350 less than for the State as a whole, the rate of increase since 1945-46 has been slightly greater in rural areas. Since the Gilmer-Aikin Act was placed in effect, however, the rate of salary increases registered by the two groups has been about the same.

Negro classroom teachers in rural areas benefited more financially from Gilmer-Aikin legislation than did white teachers. With lower salaries to begin with, since its adoption the average annual salary of Negro classroom teachers has increased 38 percent while the salary of whites in-

Table 6. Average annual salaries of classroom teachers in five rural counties and in the State, 1945-46 through 1952-53¹

| Area and race | School years | | | | | | | |
|---------------------|--------------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| | 1945-46 | 1946-47 | 1947-48 | 1948-49 | 1949-50 | 1950-51 | 1951-52 | 1952-53 |
| | Dollars | | | | | | | |
| Five rural counties | | | | | | | | |
| White | 1,410 | 1,763 | 2,368 | 2,408 | 2,843 | 2,726 | 2,938 | 2,956 |
| Negro | 1,029 | 1,270 | 2,183 | 2,167 | 2,866 | 2,931 | 2,903 | 2,979 |
| Total | 1,320 | 1,650 | 2,325 | 2,353 | 2,848 | 2,770 | 2,931 | 2,971 |
| The State | | | | | | | | |
| White | 1,647 | 1,905 | 2,565 | 2,659 | 3,029 | 3,065 | 3,204 | 3,342 |
| Negro | 1,284 | 1,521 | 2,341 | 2,499 | 2,957 | 2,905 | 3,078 | 3,205 |
| Total | 1,594 | 1,848 | 2,532 | 2,636 | 3,018 | 3,038 | 3,186 | 3,323 |

¹All salaries are for a 9-month period.

creased 26 percent. Negro classroom teachers in rural areas now make more on the average than do white classroom teachers. This is largely the result of the former group possessing more academic training and more years of teaching experience.

For the State as a whole, white classroom teachers have a slightly higher average annual salary than Negroes. This probably is because more white teachers are located in districts where salaries are above the minimum wage scale.

In the past the rural teaching profession has had a high percentage of inexperienced classroom teachers. Because of salary differentials, inexperienced teachers often started in rural schools and after gaining experience moved to city schools. Under these conditions, rural schools were often referred to as "proving grounds" for future city teachers.

Now that the salary differentials are reduced, rural schools are better equipped to retain experienced personnel. Since the Gilmer-Aikin Act was adopted more experienced teachers have remained in rural schools. During the school year, 1949-50, about 14 percent of the classroom teachers in rural areas were in their first year of teaching (Table 7). By 1952-53 the percentage of new teachers was cut in half, or to slightly less than 7 percent. This rate of turnover is especially small since a large percentage of women teachers are in the marriageable ages. As they marry, many of them leave the teaching profession and have to be replaced by beginning teachers. The percentage of classroom teachers in rural areas who were teaching for the first time was lower in 1952-53 than for the State as a whole, since slightly more than 11 percent of all classroom teachers in the State were new in their occupation that school year.

The average number of years of teaching experience for rural classroom teachers has increased, reaching an all-time high of 11.9 years in 1952-53. This is almost 1 full year more than for the State as a whole.

Teachers frequently move from one rural school to another. In 1952-53, 21 percent of all rural classroom teachers who had previous teaching experience were in their first year at their present locations. High mobility apparently is characteristic of the public school teaching profession, for in the State during the same year, 23 percent of all classroom teachers who had previous teaching experience were new in their respective schools. Thus classroom teachers in the State apparently do not remain in one place quite as long as do rural teachers.

SCHOOL SUPPORT

The total cost of education in the five rural counties studied increased from approximately \$826,000 in 1945-46 to \$2,303,000 in 1952-53. The cost of education almost tripled in the 8-year period. Even so, the budget for the peak year, 1952-53, is not excessive if the cost of the school investment is measured in terms of school progress rather than in terms of dollars expended. During this peak year the people contributed approximately 1.6 percent of their income as their share in the total cost of education in their respective counties.

Since 1950-51, expenditures for education in rural counties have increased at a faster rate than for the State. Although the total cost has been going up since 1945, in terms of purchasing power of the dollar the increases noted in both expenditures and teachers' salaries are not as great as the dollar amounts indicate. The total income in the rural counties as well as in the State also

Table 7. Percentage of classroom teachers according to number of years of teaching experience in five rural counties and in the State, 1945-46 through 1952-53

| Area and teaching experience | School years | | | | | | | |
|----------------------------------|--------------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| | 1945-46 | 1946-47 | 1947-48 | 1948-49 | 1949-50 | 1950-51 | 1951-52 | 1952-53 |
| Percent | | | | | | | | |
| Five rural counties | | | | | | | | |
| In first year | 11.4 | 9.7 | 7.9 | 7.1 | 13.9 | 13.5 | 5.4 | 6.9 |
| 1 to 5 years | 28.0 | 23.9 | 23.1 | 21.6 | 19.7 | 24.9 | 30.3 | 28.3 |
| 6 to 10 years ¹ | 17.0 | 23.1 | 25.2 | 21.9 | 28.4 | 23.8 | 21.7 | 20.7 |
| 11 to 20 years ¹ | 30.6 | 27.6 | 27.8 | 32.5 | 31.0 | 29.4 | 34.6 | 34.4 |
| 21 or more years ¹ | 13.0 | 15.7 | 16.0 | 16.9 | 7.0 | 8.4 | 8.0 | 9.7 |
| Average number years experience: | 9.9 | 10.5 | 10.8 | 11.3 | 11.1 | 10.9 | 11.5 | 11.9 |
| The State | | | | | | | | |
| In first year | 5.8 | 6.4 | 6.2 | 7.2 | 9.9 | 9.4 | 7.5 | 11.0 |
| 1 to 5 years | 20.1 | 19.0 | 18.1 | 17.4 | 17.1 | 19.8 | 21.7 | 31.3 |
| 6 to 10 years ¹ | 20.3 | 19.5 | 19.7 | 19.0 | 23.9 | 22.6 | 24.4 | 20.0 |
| 11 to 20 years ¹ | 32.9 | 33.0 | 32.9 | 32.5 | 35.2 | 34.2 | 32.9 | 16.9 |
| 21 or more years ¹ | 20.9 | 22.1 | 23.1 | 23.9 | 13.9 | 14.0 | 13.5 | 20.8 |
| Average number years experience: | 12.1 | 12.3 | 12.5 | 12.6 | 13.2 | 13.0 | 12.8 | 11.1 |

¹ Prior to 1949-50, teachers were grouped according to years of teaching experience in the following categories: 6 to 10 years; 11 to 20 years; 21 or more years. From 1949-50 and for each year thereafter, the group classifications were changed to: 6 to 12 years; 13 to 25 years; and 26 or more years.

Table 8. Percentage of total school funds by source of receipts for five rural counties, 1945-46 through 1952-53, and for the State, 1950-51 through 1952-53¹

| Area and source of funds | School years | | | | | | | |
|------------------------------|--------------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| | 1945-46 | 1946-47 | 1947-48 | 1948-49 | 1949-50 | 1950-51 | 1951-52 | 1952-53 |
| | Percent | | | | | | | |
| Five rural counties | | | | | | | | |
| Federal | 1.7 | 2.4 | 2.2 | 2.9 | 2.1 | 2.4 | 1.8 | 2.0 |
| State | 66.8 | 68.4 | 69.4 | 64.8 | 69.0 | 68.6 | 65.8 | 61.1 |
| County | 1.1 | 0.6 | 0.2 | 0.3 | 0.4 | 0.5 | 0.4 | 0.5 |
| Local | 30.1 | 28.6 | 28.2 | 32.0 | 28.2 | 28.5 | 32.0 | 36.4 |
| Philanthropic | 0.3 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.3 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 |
| Total | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 |
| The State¹ | | | | | | | | |
| Federal | — | — | — | — | — | 2.0 | 2.4 | 2.1 |
| State | — | — | — | — | — | 58.0 | 57.4 | 57.0 |
| County | — | — | — | — | — | 0.8 | 0.7 | 1.1 |
| Local | — | — | — | — | — | 39.0 | 39.5 | 39.7 |
| Philanthropic | — | — | — | — | — | 0.2 | 0.0 | 0.1 |
| Total | — | — | — | — | — | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 |

Figures for the State for years prior to 1950-51 are not available.

has increased considerably during the same period, and the relative ability of people to pay for higher costs of education has increased generally.

It has been accepted generally that rural schools expend less money per pupil enrolled than do other schools. Chiefly because of the improved income status of farmers and ranchmen since the beginning of World War II, however, the gap between the two not only has narrowed, but expenditures per pupil are higher in rural schools than in the State as a whole. Average expenditures per pupil in 1952-53 were \$242 in rural areas and \$217 in the State. Undoubtedly the cost of transporting children is the major factor accounting for this difference.

Public schools in Texas are state agencies which are conducted largely by local units of school administration; but the federal, state, county and local units of government as well as philanthropic organizations give financial assistance for school support.

The proportionate shares of the cost of public education in the five study counties coming from various sources have remained relatively unchanged since 1945-46 (Table 8). There has not been a shift toward an increased burden on the State in financing rural schools. The State's proportionate financial contribution has decreased slightly every year since the Gilmer-Aikin Act was passed. At the same time the proportion of funds coming from local taxes has increased a little every year.

The State consistently has furnished between 61 and 69 percent of the total funds needed in

rural areas for public schools, whereas the proportionate amount of rural school support coming from local taxes has varied between 28 and 36 percent. The proportion of funds contributed by the Federal Government for rural education also has remained relatively unchanged since 1945-46. During the 8-year period considered in this study, the Federal Government's contribution toward the total cost of rural education has been between 2 and 3 percent every year.

For the 3 years for which figures on costs of public education in Texas are available, it is evident that public schools in general depend a little more heavily on local taxes as a source of financial support than do rural schools. On the other hand, rural schools are a little more dependent on the State for financial support than are all public schools.

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