

CHAPTER IV
THE CONSOLIDATION YEARS: 1955-1960

The Setting

Americans have viewed the 1950s nostalgically as good times in American history; however, much was underway in the late 1950s that would eventually lead to the radical 1960s. Communism was squaring off against democracy around the world. Korea was not going to be the only area of physical conflict as guerrilla warfare spread through the Third World. Technology was racing to change the face of knowledge. The United States was not only growing in size with the addition of two new states, but the enfranchisement of the black American of nearly a century before was about to become more of a political reality.

The World and the United States

Communism remained a threat to the world. Anti-Soviet risings in Poland and Hungary were severely crushed. Communism came closer to home with the rise to power of Castro in Cuba. With the launching of Sputnik in 1957 by the Soviet Union, the space race began.

President Eisenhower was reelected. The first civil rights legislation for blacks was approved by congress, however, federal troops were required in Little Rock, Arkansas, to enforce desegregation of the public schools. Rosa Parks started the Montgomery bus boycott and Martin Luther King, Jr. became a

household name.¹ American troops were sent to Lebanon in yet another attempt to save democracy. In 1959, Alaska and Hawaii become the forty-ninth and fiftieth states respectively. The 1960s began with a presidential election between Richard M. Nixon and John F. Kennedy to replace a frequently ill President Eisenhower.²

Technology entered peoples' daily lives with the threat of intercontinental ballistic missiles, the development of the video recorder and the transistor radio, the marketing of stereo records bringing pop culture into American homes, and the invention of the first microchip. The latter would eventually change the American way of life and education forever.³ The launching of Sputnik caused Americans to question the education system's abilities to teach science and technology. The growth of gifted programs began and students suddenly found themselves in a serious and intense academic environment. The United States Office of Education recommended that every secondary student take a foreign language. The first general education law since the Morrill Act that had started land grant colleges was enacted. This legislation, called the National Defense Education Act, authorized the spending of over one billion dollars between 1958 and 1962. The act had as its focus math, science, and foreign language but impacted all levels and areas of public education.⁴

Nebraska and Millard

The rural to urban population shift in Nebraska of the immediate

¹Rebecca Brooks Gruver, An American History, 2d ed., vol. 2. (New York: Addison-Wesley Publishing Company, Inc., 1976) 939-940.

²Richard Tames, The 1950s (New York: Franklin Watts, 1990), 47.

³ibid.

⁴Robert Kelly, The shaping of the American past from 1865 to the present [sic] (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1975), 868.

post-World War II years continued as did the declining number of school districts. Between 1955 and 1960, Nebraska went from 5,340 school districts to 3,777.⁵ Much of this reduction in the number of school districts was the result of Class I districts that only offered an elementary education in grades K-8 consolidating with Class II, III, IV, or V districts. In a little over eighteen months, thirty-nine school districts in Sarpy County became ten, and fifty in Douglas County became thirty-eight.⁶ Such consolidation was to be the case of seven Class I districts surrounding the Millard School District.⁷

Not only was the general consolidation trend of the times to play a role in the growth of Millard Public Schools but so was the changing of the small village of Millard. On March 1, 1956, Western Electric announced it would build a multi-million dollar Omaha Works across the intersection of what is now "L" Street north of present old town Millard. In a news clipping of the day, great employment opportunities were predicted because "aside from war-time Martin Bomber Plant, starting employment will be the largest of any firm ever to build here."⁸ Predictions of growth were incredible--a population increase to 11,840 and more than 2,040 school-aged children. Growth was imminent, there were eight realtors in the area the day after the plant was announced.⁹ Millard Lumber, owned and operated by the George Russell family, became a leader in

⁵Angela J. Strong, ed., Nebraska Blue Book 1994-95 (Lincoln, Nebraska: Joe Christensen, Inc., 1994), 919.

⁶Millard Public Schools George Russell Scrap Book File, (Douglas County District 17), Don Stroh Administration Center, Omaha, Nebraska.

⁷*Ibid.*, 821.

⁸Millard Public Schools George Russell Scrap Book File, (Douglas County District 17), Don Stroh Administration Center, Omaha, Nebraska.

⁹*Ibid.*

housing development along with local banker Grove Nelson. An advertisement for new home development by Pleasant Homes Company of Millard partially read that the

outstanding feature of the new home is the complete General Electric Kitchen with combination washer and dryer, disposal, dishwasher, wall hung refrigerator with freezing compartment, built-in range and oven, and built in radio.¹⁰

Millard was quickly becoming an expanding suburb of the 1950s.

Within a few months, members of the local government, both village and school district, would be off to visit an Indiana community that had experienced a similar building of a large new industry in its midst. Over the next few years a new post office would be built, the community became connected to the greater interstate transportation system through the "L" Street interstate exchange, a 132nd and Center Shopping Center in what once had been cornfields was started, and the building of a new junior-senior high school took place. By 1960 the population of Millard had increased from 391 to 1,012.¹¹ The impact of the growth was immediately felt by the school district. In October of 1956, the grade school had increased from 94 students to 127. Superintendent Stroh stated, "We are going to have to start building within two years."¹² In addition to the immediate growth, the building of Western Electric was to have a long term impact on Millard Public Schools through the development of the Millard area's infrastructure. Western Electric and the village of Millard both built their own sewage and water systems, that, along with other developments such as the

¹⁰Ibid.

¹¹Ibid.

¹²Ibid.

interstate in the immediate area allowed for the first real growth west of seventy-second street in the greater Omaha area.¹³

Research Sources

Sources of information to write the history of Millard Public Schools during this time were limited. Written sources include hand-written board minutes which were kept by the Board and yearly reports filed with the Douglas County Superintendent's office. The latter are also found in the Board's official minutes. In addition, some documentation was found in the generic history file maintained by the district. Finally, a personal interview with Wilma Upchurch, a teacher who taught in the district from 1947 to 1977, was conducted. In addition, comments from a personal interview with Dr. Don Stroh, who became the superintendent in 1955 were used. The latter interview was conducted in the K-12 building used by the district when Dr. Stroh was employed in 1955.

Governance and Administration

The leadership of the Millard Public Schools from 1955 to 1960 was challenged to make many decisions about the future of the school district. The previous several years of planning resulted in many benefits for the district. During this time, Don Stroh remained as the superintendent. With the start of the 1960-61 school year and the opening of the new Millard Junior-Senior High School, a secondary principal was added to the administrative staff. The first such principal was Dick Lewis who came to Millard from Doniphan, Nebraska.

The board of education continued to be elected by a community caucus. The addition of a home economics room to the school building did cause the

¹³Dr. Don Stroh, interview by author, Tape recording, Omaha, Nebraska, 28 October 1995.

board of education to pay the office of director, by now referred to as the secretary, \$250.00 a year starting in the summer of 1955.¹⁴ By 1957, with the growth of the district under way due to beginning consolidation and planning for a new school, the board decided to hire its first secretary, Thelma Dahmke, for \$350.00 a year.¹⁵ By 1960, a new secretary was hired on a monthly basis to handle the school district's records and finances. She was selected by drawing a name out of a hat.¹⁶ Finances were becoming more complicated also, and by 1959, the school board was hiring an outside auditor to review the books of the district.¹⁷ Further growth in the district due to consolidation caused the district to petition the State Department of Education to become a Class III district in 1958. This classification was granted in 1959.¹⁸ With the change in classification size, Millard Public Schools decided to end its annual meetings, thus from this time on only the board of education set the budget for the following year and elected its own officers.¹⁹

Policies for the district were prepared during the fall of 1956 by the school board as previously promised in a state accreditation visit. The only specifics referring to policies in the records was a rule not allowing high school students to use their cars at noon, and the beginning of a long standing practice in the Millard Public Schools of allowing community groups to use school

¹⁴Millard Public Schools Board Minutes (Douglas County District 17), July 2, 1955, Don Stroh Administration Center, Omaha, Nebraska.

¹⁵ Ibid., July 1, 1957.

¹⁶Ibid., July 5, 1960.

¹⁷Ibid., June 3, 1959.

¹⁸Ibid., January 20, 1959.

¹⁹Dr. Don Stroh, interview by author, Tape Recording, Omaha, Nebraska, 28, October, 1995.

facilities. In the latter case, Western Electric was allowed to use school gym facilities for volleyball and basketball leagues.²⁰ Most policies that were written at the time were written on an as a reaction to a problem or situation and were simply put into a policy book in the order in which they had been written as there was no codification system.²¹ The changing size of the district was further evident in Superintendent Stroh's recommendation in 1958 that the board consider a written salary schedule for the teachers.²²

In 1957, the board of education conducted another study in conjunction with the Nebraska State Department of Education and the University of Nebraska-Lincoln to determine the needs of the school district.²³ This study called for the design of a new secondary building, presently Central Middle School. The selection of everything for the new school building, from architect, to floor coverings, to the need for special electrical wiring for the popcorn machine dominated much of the board meetings during the late 1950s. Dr. Don Stroh indicated that he saw the board become active in the building program, but at the same time leaving the day-to-day operation of the schools to the administrator.²⁴

If the latter years of the decade were dominated by the building of a school, the 1957-59 years were dominated by school consolidation. Two

²⁰Millard Public Schools Board Minutes (Douglas County District 17), October 6, 1958, Don Stroh Administration Center, Omaha, Nebraska.

²¹Dr. Don Stroh, interview by author, Tape recording, Omaha, Nebraska, 28 October 1995.

²²Millard Public Schools Board Minutes (Douglas County District 17), November 3, 1958, Don Stroh Administration Center, Omaha, Nebraska.

²³Ibid., October 7, 1957.

²⁴Millard Public Schools Board Minutes (Douglas County District 17), July 2, 1955, Don Stroh Administration Center, Omaha, Nebraska.

members during this period left the board of education to allow school representation on the board of education from rural districts that had consolidated with the Millard school district.²⁵

Rural Growth into Suburban Growth

The 1955-56 school budget for tax purposes was \$43,700.00 with an evaluation of \$1,288,468.00.²⁶ Annual daily membership was 94.8 and 57.3 for the elementary students and the secondary students respectively for the 1955-56 school year.²⁷ By 1960, the budget grew nearly eight times to \$346,648.00 and the assessed evaluation fifteen times to \$19,782,328.00. The annual daily membership during the same time had increased to 284.1 for the elementary students and 149.1 for the secondary students.²⁸ The growth of the number of elementary students was even more significant considering that in 1955 the elementary was considered grades kindergarten through eighth grade, while in 1960 it was only kindergarten through the sixth grade. Another factor that reflects a growth of students during this time was the need for the district to build two temporary classrooms for elementary classes in both 1958 and 1959.²⁹ These temporary classrooms were actually small homes that were later resold as populations shifted or elementary schools were built to handle the number of

²⁵Ibid., August 19, 1957.

²⁶Ibid., June 13, 195.

²⁷Ibid.

²⁸Ibid., June 5, 1961.

²⁹Ibid., May 5, 1958 and June 6, 1959.

students in the area. This practice of holding classes in houses temporarily was to be used over and over in the Millard Public Schools as growth occurred.³⁰

The 184% increase in student population during this time, however, should not be credited totally to the building of Western Electric's facility north of Millard. During this time, the early plans for expansion laid during the late 1940s and the early 1950s came to completion in a two year period, in which seven rural school or portions consolidated with Millard Public Schools. The school board minutes for years 1955 and 1956 indicate continued county and state level meetings on the topic of consolidation. In February 1956, however, the board minutes report "reorganization had been tabled indefinitely."³¹

Because there was no immediate legal or economic impetus to consolidate, most of the schools in the county had decided to terminate consolidation plans.

In less than one month after the foregoing decision to table consolidation plans, the opening of the Western Electric plant was announced. The development of the plant resulted in a large addition to the valuation of a tax base for the Millard Public Schools. By September, 1957, Douglas County District 45, commonly referred to as Willowdale, merged with Millard Public Schools and one board member from District 45 was placed on the board of education in Millard replacing a member who voluntarily resigned.³² On October 15, District Number 39 also merged with Millard. The following day another board member of the Millard Board of Education was asked to resign by the Millard Board of Education to create a board seat for a District Number 39, or

³⁰Dr. Don Stroh, interview by author, Tape recording, Omaha, Nebraska, 28 October 1995.

³¹Millard Public Schools Board Minutes (Douglas County District 17), February 4, 1956, Don Stroh Administration Center, Omaha, Nebraska.

³²Ibid., September 16, 1957. (See Appendix I.)

Lane School, representative.³³ Between the foregoing two mergers, another rural district to the southwest of Millard Public Schools in both Douglas and Sarpy County asked to merge with Millard Public Schools at the end of the 1957-58 school year. This merger with District J-2 is somewhat different in that the rural district split between Millard Public Schools and District Number 37 in Sarpy County.³⁴ The first two mergers brought a need for 325 each of apples, oranges, and candy bars for the Christmas bags at the close of the 1957 calendar year.³⁵ The effect of the growth was immediately felt beyond holiday bags of treats. In February of 1958, a full-time kindergarten teacher was hired for the next year. A new architect was contracted to begin plans for a new junior-senior high school. Also, two homes built by Pleasant Homes were used as temporary facilities. By May of 1957, Douglas County District Number 18, Bloomfield, asked to split and merge with both Millard and Ralston Public Schools respectively.³⁶ This request was formally accepted in June of the following year (1959), when the rural school building was sold and proceeds divided between Millard and Ralston Public Schools.³⁷ At the start of the 1958-59 school year, Sarpy County District Number 25, Chalco, asked for a merger with Millard Public Schools. During the same month of September, the Millard Public Schools Board of Education formally entered into a contract with Wachob-Bender Corporation a bond company in preparation for a \$750,000.00

³³Ibid., October 16, 1957. (See Appendix I.)

³⁴Ibid., October 7, 1957. (See Appendix I.)

³⁵Ibid., December 2, 1957.

³⁶Ibid., May 5, 1957. (See Appendix I.)

³⁷Ibid., September 2, 1958.

bond issue to build a new junior-senior high school.³⁸ On Tuesday, October 28, 1958, a special election was held for the bond issue. The vote was 313 votes yes, and 33 votes against.³⁹ The brochure produced by the school district in 1957 outlined the need for such a facility based on a joint study between the University of Nebraska Teachers College and the State Department of Education.

In any project of this nature the future, in so far as possible, must be considered; but this is not a program based solely on future needs--the need is here NOW! The children are here now; there is not enough room in the school for them now. However, the buildings contemplated are also designed to assume the rapid growth which prevails in our District. Presently there are 221 children in the grade school and 76 students in the High School. Of these, approximately 100 students must be taught in temporary school facilities due to the lack of space in the main school building. Next year there will be an additional two classes required. These children must also be taken care of in temporary facilities. But it is not just a problem of lack of space. Many essential facilities are lacking in our current program. There is no shop program being offered. Our science facilities are very inadequate. As of now there is no equipment with which to conduct science experiments. We have no hot lunch program and this is especially important when the number of rural students attending the school is considered. The school has limited music facilities, hence, no school band. The library is too small and does not meet the State Department of Education standards. During the winter months our Phys Ed [*sic*] program is non-existent due to lack of space and facilities. All of these deficiencies constitute a grave threat to our ability to furnish the children of the district the complete education to which they are entitled.⁴⁰

Thus plans for a two-story, three-wing building that would include a gym with

³⁸Ibid. (See Appendix I.)

³⁹Ibid., December 1, 1958

⁴⁰Dedication Brochures File for Millard Public Schools, (Douglas County District 17), Don Stroh Administration Center, Omaha, Nebraska. (This document was not a school opening brochure, but rather information for the first bond issue. The document, however, is stored with the school opening brochures.)

bleachers for over one thousand people, rooms for instrumental music programs, a cafeteria for a hot lunch program, a large library area, and academic classrooms at an estimated cost of \$17.00 per square foot was presented to the voters. In addition to all of the benefits, this proposed building was billed as a possible tax reduction due to the pending merger with Douglas County District Number 25 and the increased assessed valuation with the completion of the Western Electric plant.

By February of 1959, Douglas County District 25 merged with Millard Public Schools. This was finalized in July of the same year.⁴¹ During the fall of 1959, the final merger that created most of the present boundaries of the Millard Public Schools took place with Douglas County District Number 12. The latter addition was a three-way split of the district with Millard, Elkhorn, and Sarpy County District Number 37.⁴²

School district size and student population were not the only signs of growth taking place in the Millard Public Schools. A building addition in 1956 and 1957 added on the space necessary to start a home economics program and another classroom. No room was added, however, for a practical arts program for the boys; thus by the time the home economics room was ready state reports on accreditation were calling for an industrial arts program.⁴³ Within a little over a year, however, the new secondary building was under

⁴¹Millard Public Schools Board Minutes (Douglas County District 17), June 6, 1959, Don Stroh Administration Center, Omaha, Nebraska.

⁴²Millard Public Schools General History File, (Douglas County District 17), Don Stroh Administration Center, Omaha, Nebraska.

⁴³Millard Public Schools Board Minutes (Douglas County District 17), May 24, 1957, Don Stroh Administration Center, Omaha, Nebraska.

construction, and the space necessary was provided for in the new school plans.

In addition to the building that was taking place, there was planning for a new building. In 1956, more land was purchased for a new secondary building.⁴⁴ Another tract of land was purchased in November of the same year.⁴⁵ The latter purchase caused the district to ask for moving of Maple and Walnut Streets in Millard to better make use of the land set aside for a new secondary building.⁴⁶

The Millard Public School's growth can also be seen at this time in the addition of a transportation and hot lunch program. The bus program started in 1958 with the purchase of two school buses.⁴⁷ Additional buses were added in 1959 and 1960. The hot lunch program was planned in May, 1960, in preparation for the opening of the new junior-senior high school when a head cook was hired.⁴⁸ First year lunch prices were set at ten student lunches for \$2.50 or \$.30 for a single lunch, while adults paid \$.35 per meal.⁴⁹ Elementary students were bused to the new secondary building for lunch.⁵⁰

⁴⁴Ibid., September 26, 1957.

⁴⁵Ibid., November 8, 1957.

⁴⁶Ibid., December 3, 1956.

⁴⁷Ibid., June 19, 1958.

⁴⁸Ibid., May 2, 1960.

⁴⁹Ibid., July 5, 1960.

⁵⁰Dr. Don Stroh, interview by author, Tape recording, Omaha, Nebraska, 28 October 1995.

Curriculum and Instruction

Until the opening of the new secondary building in 1960, few major changes were made in the curriculum of the school district. Home Economics had been added in 1957, but the real secondary curriculum changes came with new facilities. "The elementary curriculum was really the textbooks. Scotts Foresman with Dick, Jane and Spot was what our teachers taught."⁵¹ School board meeting notes listed core courses for the seventh and eighth graders in English, social studies, math, and guidance. New high school courses included industrial arts, physical education in a full size gymnasium, business courses, music, drivers education, and physics.⁵² The building of the new secondary building allowed for a secondary curriculum that could not have been implemented in the old facility. There was a real desire on the part of the board of education and the community to develop a very strong secondary curriculum to meet a changing world.⁵³ Summer school programs were started in 1956 when Superintendent Stroh was given \$350.00 to run a summer activities program.⁵⁴ In 1957, the first trained music teacher was hired on a part-time basis.⁵⁵ The number of teachers, which had remained stable at seven during the 1946-1955 period, was raised to twenty-one for the 1960-1961 school year.⁵⁶ With the construction of the new secondary building almost complete,

⁵¹Ibid.

⁵²Millard Public Schools Board Minutes (Douglas County District 17), September 7, 1960, Don Stroh Administration Center, Omaha, Nebraska.

⁵³Dr. Don Stroh, interview by author, Tape recording, Omaha, Nebraska, 28 October, 1995.

⁵⁴Ibid., June 19, 1956.

⁵⁵Ibid., September, 1957.

⁵⁶Ibid., February 5, 1960.

the attention of the school board was directed to elementary issues in early 1960. Renovation of the old building was first discussed in March of that year.⁵⁷ The same architect used for the secondary building, Hollis, was hired to turn the old K-12 building into a K-6 facility. This remodeling project was covered in the regular budget of the school district.⁵⁸ Other school-related programs that were developing during this time included the formation of a Parent Teacher Organization in 1958. A foreshadowing of times to come was reflected in the formation of the Parent Teacher Organization. At the formation meeting of organization, a female was nominated for president. Much to the chagrin of the male accepting nominations, no further nominations were brought forth and the female was elected.⁵⁹ Early programs of interest held by this organization included new report cards, reorganization of the school district, and the new secondary building.⁶⁰

Finally, the addition of the Western Electric plant in the Millard area started one other curricular program. For the 1960-61 school year, the board of education set aside \$500.00 in the budget for adult education programs.⁶¹

Summary

The Sunday, December 11, 1960, dedication program and brochure for the new Millard Junior-Senior High School were simple in format; however,

⁵⁷Ibid., March 7, 1960.

⁵⁸Ibid., April 4, 1960.

⁵⁹Wilma Upchurch, interview by author, Tape recording, Omaha, Nebraska, 29 September 1995

⁶⁰Millard Public Schools George Russell Scrap Book File, (Douglas County District 17), Don Stroh Administration Center, Omaha, Nebraska.

⁶¹Millard Public Schools Board Minutes (Douglas County District 17), July 6, 1960, Don Stroh Administration Center, Omaha, Nebraska.

they represented the growing trend in Nebraska of rural consolidation. At the national level, the program represented the growth of urban and suburban areas. Many technological and political events were occurring in the world that would have a profound impact on education well into the next few decades. Administratively, the Millard Public Schools was beginning to develop policies and methods of handling growth that would be necessary for what was yet to come. The position of superintendent went from one of administrator, teacher, and coach to administrator only with the additional help of a secondary principal. The school district experienced change in its political structure as it grew to a Class III district. In addition, program changes occurred in the form of broadened curricular experiences, transportation and hot lunch programs, and the development of a K-6 and 7-12 organization. Through all of the change, the board of education developed flexible plans that would continue to accommodate growth as illustrated by the use of homes for classrooms that could be later sold and the design of the secondary building that was allowed enlargement with continued growth; rapid growth that the Millard Public Schools would experience in the next decade.

CHAPTER V

THE EARLY SUBURBAN YEARS: 1960-1970

The Setting

Americans typically think of the 1960s as a time of turbulence for the country, the world, and America's youth. The Cold War continued around the world with crises in Southeast Asia, the Middle East, and Cuba. Major political beliefs were tested on world battlefields and at home with assassinations of American leaders. The political and cultural power of the white male in American society was forever changed. Major legislation was enacted that not only altered the social fabric of the United States but also that of American education.

The World and the United States

Visual signs of the Cold War were found around the world. The building of the Berlin Wall in 1961, the Cuban Missile Crisis in 1963, and the Russian invasion of Czechoslovakia in 1968 served to remind Americans and people around the world that nuclear war could destroy the world in an instant. Real war brought conflict to many parts of the world such as the Six Day War between Israel and her Arab neighbors in 1967. Biafran images in the newspaper and on television startled the world as to what civil war in Africa could do. Theoretical battles waged within communism as Chairman Mao began the Cultural Revolution that was to a pit the Soviet Union against

Communist China. The United States won the battle to conquer outer space when man walked on the moon for the first time on July 20, 1969.

Much of the conflict that was found around the world was found in the United States itself. African Americans found a champion in Martin Luther King, Jr. who won a Nobel Peace Prize for his work in 1964, but whose life was cut short by an assassin's bullet in 1968. The civil rights movement played itself out in education with the Civil Rights Act of 1964 which withheld funds from states and school districts that failed to adopt reasonable or acceptable plans of racial integration.

Violence was not limited to the civil rights movement. On November 23, 1963, the youthful President John F. Kennedy was assassinated in Dallas, Texas. Five years later, his brother Robert Kennedy in a presidential election was to die by the assassin's bullet also. Violence was a part of daily life as Americans watched nightly on the television the War in Vietnam.

Youth and Education

Compounding the social changes taking place in America was a youth subculture. Societal norms were questioned on all fronts. Everything from clothes, to music, to sexual expression, to language, to drugs was tried and tested by the largest generation under the age of eighteen that the United States had experienced. The influence of this "baby boom" from the post World War II days continued to manifest itself in each succeeding decade, but in the 1960s it brought attention to youth like never before. The power of this generation of Americans is evident in the role it played in the ultimate pulling of American troops from the war in southeast Asia and the gaining of the right to vote for eighteen-year olds on June 22, 1970.

By 1964, "seventeen-year-olds became the largest single age group in the country, and they increased in numbers for the succeeding seven years-and so did those aged eighteen to twenty-two."¹ With so many youth in America, education was also changed. Major changes can be found in the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 and the Bilingual Education Act of 1967. The Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 furnished local school districts with monies to help education children from low-income families. The Bilingual Education Act provided funds for those schools where large numbers of students whose main language was not English and thus instruction was needed in both English and the native language. The Bilingual Education Act of 1967 greatly extended students' rights.

Nebraska and Millard

The rural to urban shift of the late 1950s continued in Nebraska during the 1960s. By 1970, 60% of Nebraska's population was urban. This shift was recognized early in the state and in 1960 an amendment was added to the constitution that allowed cities and counties to acquire land to develop for leasing to private businesses. Many new firms moved to the state during the 1960s as a result of the state's program to attract industry, resulting in a 44% increase in industrial employment.²

Two very important pieces of state legislation were passed during the time. In 1963, the Nebraska Education Television Act was passed making Nebraska one of the first states to cover its land area entirely with educational broadcasting. In 1967, the legislature passed legislation that adopted sales

¹Robert Kelly, The shaping of the American past from 1865 to the present [sic] (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey; Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1975), 894.

²The World Book Encyclopedia, 1995 ed., s.v. "Nebraska," by D. R. Hickey and D. Wishart.

and income taxes to make up the revenue lost when Nebraska citizens modified the state property tax system in 1966.³

Millard was the fastest growing community in Nebraska during the 1960s. The population grew by 635% from 1960 with 1,014 people to 7,460 people in 1970. By 1960, Millard was no longer a village. A city water and sewer system was constructed along with a new city hall, fire barn, and police station. In addition, there were plans for an airport. Trouble, however, loomed on the horizon. In 1965, Omaha indicated it might annex Millard, and Millard did not surrender to annexation easily. An actual study for annexation began in 1967 that included both Millard and Ralston. The latter was removed from the annexation plan as Ralston's boundaries crossed county lines, thus exempting it from annexation. Ultimately, Millard fought the annexation as promised, and the case was decided in the courts. Plans for the airport moved ahead as a possible means to stop the annexation. A cemetery, Voss-Mohr, was annexed across county lines by Millard on the pretext of snow removal in the hopes of preventing Omaha from annexing Millard. Ultimately, Millard lost all attempts, including state legislation to keep its identity. Shortly after the time span covered by this chapter, Millard was officially annexed by the City of Omaha on April 20, 1971, ending the long struggle during the late 1960s to keep Millard's identity.⁴

Research Sources

Sources of information to write the history of Millard Public Schools

³The World Book Encyclopedia, 1995 ed., s.v. "Nebraska," by D. R. Hickey and D. Wishart.

⁴Millard Public Schools General History File, (Douglas County District 17), Don Stroh Administration Center, Omaha, Nebraska.

during this time were less limiting than in previous chapters. Written sources include type written board minutes which were kept by the Board secretary. The superintendent's secretary assisted the Board secretary in the keeping of the minutes. Major supporting documentation was kept along with the official minutes of the Board. This included monthly documentation on the financial status of the district, all letters of resignation, reports generated by the school administration regarding topics under consideration by the Board, reports from the Board's architectural firms regarding building progress, and, from time to time, articles of interest included in board reports on the part of the school district administration regarding issues in the field of education. Not only do the official minutes provide information regarding the period under study, they are written in such a fashion that they often reflect attitudes of the time. A good example of this is the way in which women are referred to at times in the minutes such as hired an "assistant secretary and office girl"⁵ or "Superintendent Stroh will get girls to do the census."⁶

In addition, some documentation was found in the generic history file maintained by the district. Of considerable help, was a new type of historical file started in 1963. This file was originally started as a scrap book of the school district. The scrap book format continued from 1963 to 1968. In 1969, the news clippings were simply filed and not placed into a scrap book. For the purposes of this study, the writer has reviewed all the clippings, and those clippings from 1968 to 1995 have been filed into four broad categories of Administration; Curriculum and Instruction; Local, State, and National Issues; and Sports,

⁵Millard Public Schools Board Minutes (Douglas County District 17), July 10, 1961, Don Stroh Administration Center, Omaha, Nebraska.

⁶Ibid., May 6, 1963.

Awards, Etc. In addition, Millard Public Schools began to monitor local, state, and national issues in education shortly after the community of Millard became embroiled in its judicial attempt to maintain its identity as a separate community from Omaha. Finally, personal interviews were held with Dr. Richard Corwine, Dr. Ron Witt, Richard Lewis, and Adeline Reis. Dr. Richard Corwine was the first Director of Educational Media and a business teacher in the early 1960s. Dr. Ron Witt was the first elementary principal, Director of Curriculum, and Assistant Superintendent hired in the district. He also served as the first Director of Curriculum. Richard Lewis was the first principal of Millard Junior-Senior High School. In 1970, he became the first business manager for the district. Adeline Reis was one of the early special education teachers, although she was originally hired as a sixth-grade classroom teacher in the late 1950s. She eventually became the Special Education Director for the district. Finally, Jim Wallace and Harlan Otte were interviewed by phone regarding the transfer of their land into the Millard Public Schools from the Portal District in Sarpy County.

Growth

The growth of a school district can be measured in many ways. There is the actual physical size of the district itself or its parameters. Within those parameters there are the buildings that the district owns. The budget that supports those buildings as well as the student population that fills them are other indicators of growth. In addition, there is the growth of the community that supports the school and the surrounding larger community such as the county.

The surrounding community for the Millard Public Schools was growing. The City of Omaha, the City of Millard's neighbor to the north and east, was

growing to the west as was the immediate neighbor to the east, Ralston. The City of Millard itself was the fastest growing community in the state being the eleventh largest city in the state. The City of Millard had grown from a 1960 population of 1014 to 1970 population of 7,263.⁷ The implications of the population growth and the ensuing litigation between Omaha and Millard was evident in the debate held in Larry Lamberty's government class as Mayor Henry Andersen of Millard and P.P. Benson of the Omaha City Planning Department presented the issues to the students.⁸

School District

Minor adjustments in the land area were finalizing the present boundaries of the Millard Public Schools. The Fred Voss Farm in Portal District (Sarpy County District Number 22) became part of Millard Public Schools officially in 1961.⁹ The Rudolph Otte farm became part of the Millard district about the same time.¹⁰ This property also came from the Portal District located in Sarpy County. A final addition from the Portal District was allowed into the Millard Public Schools by a hearing process before the Sarpy County Assessor, Treasurer, and Superintendent.¹¹

⁷Millard Public Schools News Clippings File, (Douglas County District 17) ,1970-1971 School Year, Don Stroh Administration Center, Omaha, Nebraska.

⁸Ibid.

⁹Millard Public Schools Board Minutes (Douglas County District 17), October 23, 1961, Don Stroh Administration Center, Omaha, Nebraska. (See Appendix I.)

¹⁰Harlan Otte, interview by author, Written Notes, Omaha, Nebraska, 25 August 1997. (Incomplete records exist. The owner of the land was able to identify only the early 1960s.) (See Appendix I.)

¹¹Jim Wallace, interview by author, Written Notes, Omaha, Nebraska, 25 August 1997. (See Appendix I.)

Boundaries

The building of Cody Elementary School in 1963 presented boundary problems in that after the land for the school site was purchased, the Board and administrators discovered that a portion of the land was actually in the Omaha Public School District. Thus a petition to the Douglas County Superintendent was requested and obtained to alter the boundary between the two school districts.¹²

The growth of the neighboring Ralston school district was soon to present problems in the housing divisions of the two bordering school districts. Thus Millard proposed a straightening of the district boundaries from "Q" Street to "L" Street along "108th" Street.¹³ The Board approved of such a straightening of the boundary line and this was also approved by the Ralston Public Schools board of education. Even in the latter part of the 1960s, the board of education was still attempting to straighten its boundary by proposing an exchange with Gretna.

Motion by Norman Quist, seconded by Otto Cate, that the board go on record as being in favor of accepting land in the Gretna school district owned by Clarence Schroeder in exchange for the land in the Millard school district owned by Howard Kruse. Motion carried.¹⁴

Annexation

Beyond the boundary changes attempted or completed by the Board, like the City of Millard, the school district of Millard faced its first of many legal disputes to exist as an independent political entity. Reorganization of school

¹²ibid., March 4, 1963 and April 1, 1963.

¹³Millard Public Schools Board Minutes (Douglas County District 17), December 16, 1968, Don Stroh Administration Center, Omaha, Nebraska. (See Appendix I.)

¹⁴ibid., June 1, 1970.

districts remained a theme in Nebraska state government of the 1960s. Board records include a detailed letter from the Board to the members of the Subcommittee of the Legislative Counsel investigating proposals for school district organization. The latter was studying the expansion of the metropolitan area of Omaha.

It is the opinion of the Board of Education of the school District of Millard that the proposals for new legislation either permitting the involuntary annexation of neighboring districts by the School District of Omaha or by such legislation destroying existing districts and consolidating the same with the School district of Omaha is essentially an attempt by the School District of Omaha to dissolve local government and to force the residents of the several school districts affected to join the Omaha System against their will, merely for the sake of creating a larger district.

Historically, this is but the latest in many years of maneuvering by the School District of Omaha to obtain legislation which will permit the School District of Omaha to enlarge itself by forcible redistricting. Interestingly enough, the residents and voters in the Millard and Ralston Districts and in District 66, which are apparently the target of the Omaha School System, have refused throughout the years to voluntarily annex their districts into the Omaha School System although repeated efforts have been made by representatives of the Omaha District to create a petition drive for annexation and to persuade adjacent districts to join one of the three districts involved but, rather, to join the Omaha District. The residents and voters in these districts obviously agree with their Boards of Education that the school system should be locally controlled by residents of the area and that local money should be expended on a local level rather than from a central headquarters.¹⁵

The rest of the letter presented four major arguments against consolidation with the Omaha Public Schools. The first two arguments against consolidation included doubt cast upon the economical savings and efficiency in the administration of a larger district. Omaha Public Schools was compared

¹⁵Ibid., April 2, 1962.

to the growing problem with big government at the federal level. The third argument put forth by the president of the Omaha school board regarding the disparity of the mill levy among the four districts was labeled a “socialist attempt” to take away local government from Millard residents. The fourth and final argument also dealt with finances in regards to then present problems facing the financially strapped Papillion School District. Omaha Public Schools was agreeing to annex the Papillion School District only if school districts of Ralston, Millard, and District 66 were included. In summary, the Board of Millard Public Schools left themselves open to discussion with the legislative committee.¹⁶

School Population and Budget Growth

Two other measures of a school districts growth are its student population and the school district budget. At the start of the 1960-1961 school year, Millard Public Schools had an enrollment of 280 elementary students and 149 secondary students, with a total enrollment of 429 students.¹⁷ By the start of the 1970-1971 school year, Millard Public Schools was enrolling 3151 elementary students. Secondary school enrollment by the start of the 1970-1971 school year was divided between two secondary buildings, Millard Junior High School and Millard Senior High School. These enrollments consisted of 834 junior high students (Grades 7-9) and 628 high school students (Grades 10-12) for a total secondary enrollment of 1462. Thus the total enrollment for the school district by the fall of 1970 was 4,613.¹⁸ The total growth of the district during this time was almost ten-fold, with a 975% increase. The elementary

¹⁶Ibid.

¹⁷ Ibid., September 7, 1960.

¹⁸ Ibid., September 8, 1970.

enrollment had grown by 2871 students or 1025%, while the secondary enrollment had grown by 1313 students or 881%. Millard's enrollment corresponded to the youthfulness of the country at the time, and a study compiled for the Board towards the end of the decade predicted the district's enrollment would grow by 10% every three years. This growth rate was based on conservative growth projections.¹⁹ "In perspective, we were growing by several hundred students on a much smaller base than today," said Dr. Witt.²⁰ Thus, a great deal of time and energy was spent just keeping up with the growing number of students.

Beyond the phenomenal growth of the school population was the continuous increase at the elementary level that necessitated the need for two additions to the Junior Senior High School completed in 1960 and the building of the new Senior High School located at 14905 Q Street. The latter meant that the 1960 secondary building became the district's junior high. The district's enrollment increase at the secondary level necessitated two athletic conference changes during the 1960-1970 time span. The first change occurred with the start of the 1965-1966 school year.²¹ The second occurred with the motion "by Norman Quist, seconded by Otto Cate, that the Board approve the new athletic conference consisting of Millard, Ralston, Papillion, Omaha Bryan, Beatrice,

¹⁹Millard Public Schools News Clippings File, (Douglas County District), 1968-1969 School Year, Don Stroh Administration Center, Omaha, Nebraska.

²⁰Dr. Ronald Witt, interview by author, Tape recording, Omaha, Nebraska, 24 October 1996.

²¹Millard Public Schools Board Minutes (Douglas County District 17), November 4, 1963, Don Stroh Administration Center, Omaha, Nebraska.

Columbus, South Sioux City, and Norfolk. Motion carried.²² Further growth at the secondary level was predicted when

Mr. Stroh submitted a report concerning the enrollment data for the Millard School district and the time and planning for a new Junior High School at which time Dr. Ackerman requested Mr. Stroh prepare an enrollment projection report for the entire district for the next three (3) years.²³

Such enrollment growth necessitated a budget growth. The 1960-1961 budget of 1960 was \$348,648.00.²⁴ For 1970-1971, the budget had grown to \$4,185,009.00 which included \$3,309,231.00 for the general budget and \$875,778.00 for bond redemption.²⁵ This was a \$2,960,583.00 increase in the budget or an 849% increase. The 1970-1971 budget allowed \$875,778.00 for bond indebtedness. The 1960-1961 budget had contained \$42,000.00 for bond indebtedness.²⁶ The reason for the dramatic growth in the bond indebtedness was the four bond passed by the public during the 1960-1970 time span. This included \$950,000.00 in 1962, \$1,800,000.00 in 1963, \$4,875,000.00 in 1966, and \$6,975,000.00 in 1968.²⁷

Buildings

During the 1960-1970 period, Millard Public Schools erected eight schools. "In those early years, growth was a positive kind of thing. I think we

²²Ibid., January 5, 1970.

²³Ibid., November 2, 1970.

²⁴Ibid., June 5, 1960.

²⁵Ibid., June 13, 1970.

²⁶Millard Public Schools Annual Meeting Minutes (Douglas County District 17), July 6, 1960, Don Stroh Administration Center, Omaha, Nebraska. (\$15,000.00 for interest on the bond indebtedness and \$27,000.00 for bond payment)

²⁷Millard Public Schools General History File, (Douglas County District 17), Don Stroh Administration Center, Omaha, Nebraska.

spent a lot of energy getting new buildings open," said Dr. Witt of this period.²⁸ On December 11, 1960, Millard Junior-Senior High School was dedicated.²⁹ Additions to this building occurred in 1965 and 1966 to accommodate the growing secondary population, as well as the construction of a stadium to handle larger numbers of spectators in 1964.³⁰ The building of three elementary schools quickly followed this with the dedication of Bryan Elementary on September 29, 1963, Norris Elementary on April 5, 1964, and William F. Cody (Cody) Elementary on November 22, 1964.³¹ Two other elementary buildings followed a few years later with Mari Sandoz (Sandoz) being dedicated on November 19, 1967, and Willa Cather (Cather) on October 20, 1968.³² The year 1970 contained two dedications, (1) Millard Senior High School on November 15 and (2) Hitchcock Elementary on December 6, 1970.³³ Besides the general construction of these eight buildings, many additions were completed, as the majority of the buildings constructed during this time were designed by Hollis and Miller of Overland Park, Kansas, with design features that allowed possible additions as enrollment dictated. Thus additions were constructed at Norris in 1965 and Bryan and Cody in 1970.

²⁸Dr. Ronald Witt, interview by author, Tape recording, Omaha, Nebraska, 24 October 1996.

²⁹Dedication Brochures File for Millard Public Schools (Millard Junior-Senior High School), (Douglas County District 17), Don Stroh Administration Center, Omaha, Nebraska.

³⁰Millard Public Schools General History File, (Douglas County District 17), Don Stroh Administration Center, Omaha, Nebraska.

³¹Dedication Brochures File for Millard Public Schools (Bryan, Norris, and Cody Elementary Schools), (Douglas County District 17), Don Stroh Administration Center, Omaha, Nebraska.

³²Ibid (Mari Sandoz and Willa Cather Elementary Schools).

³³Ibid (Millard Senior High School and Hitchcock Elementary School).

Growth Studies

Much of the construction done during this period was based on growth studies conducted by Dr. Stoneman of the University of Nebraska (later University of Nebraska-Lincoln). Such studies were done in 1960, 1963, and 1964.³⁴ Further evidence of the school district's growth is indicated in the Board pursuing a lease in downtown Millard for a central storage facility.³⁵ Such studies resulted in the Board purchasing land that could be used for new building sites in the future. Thus the 1964 Stoneman study resulted in the purchase of forty acres of the Horeis family farm for a future high school in 1964.³⁶ Even as the period under consideration was drawing to a close, plans were in place for future growth including the construction of Montclair Elementary, a seven-hundred student capacity junior-high school in the northern part of the school district, and another elementary school in Pacific Heights.³⁷

Despite the time and effort the Board devoted to planning for growth, projects did not always happen as anticipated. For instance, growth in the elementary grades necessitated the temporary rental of a five room duplex at 943 East Jackson for \$425.00 a month and the busing of kindergarten and first grade students to the junior-senior high school for the 1966-1967 school year.³⁸ A similar need to adjust was evident in the 1970 motion "by Houghston

³⁴Millard Public Schools Board Minutes (Douglas County District 17), November 21, 1963; December 7, 1964, Don Stroh Administration Center, Omaha, Nebraska.

³⁵Ibid., February 19, 1970.

³⁶Ibid., November 2, 1964.

³⁷Ibid., October 7, 1968.

³⁸Ibid., March 7, 1966.

Tetrick, seconded by Dr. Robert Ackerman, that the district hire Thompson Dressen and Dornier, Consulting Engineers and Land Surveyors for the purpose of studying traffic problems at Senior High School and a study of lighting the baseball field. Motion carried."³⁹

Governance and Administration

As a result of the rapid and constant growth, the Board had to develop new procedures and practices to contend with the threats and opportunities facing the Millard Public Schools. Major issues of concern during the 1960 to 1970 period include policies, administration and leadership, transportation, salary negotiations, public relations, business practices, and legal issues.

The Board of Education

To implement the plans for growth, the Board developed six subcommittees including Teacher Selection, Purchasing, Finance, Music, Auditorium, and Building and Grounds for the 1963-1964 school year.⁴⁰ By 1967-1968, the Board's standing committees were Finance, Transportation, Building and Grounds, and Teaching and Citizenship.⁴¹ The Board's further changing role is apparent in the inclusion of articles on educational issues in the board packet⁴² starting late in 1966.⁴³

³⁹Ibid., November 16, 1970.

⁴⁰1963-1964 Millard Board of Education Policies.

⁴¹Millard Public Schools Board Minutes (Douglas County District 17), May 1, 1967, Don Stroh Administration Center, Omaha, Nebraska.

⁴² The board packet consisted of materials sent to school board members a few days prior to the board meeting to prepare the Board for issues to be discussed. The packet included copies of bills to be paid, various reports, and administrative recommendations.

⁴³Ibid., December 5, 1966.

Although the Board had to deal with unusual issues such as a tornado that damaged into Millard Junior-Senior High School delaying the opening workshop so time could be spent drying books; or, the construction halt that stalled the move to the new senior high school due to sheet metal workers on strike, causing a sixty-three day delay.⁴⁴ The Board's role was changing. This role changer was most evident in the policy development and the recommendation by Dr. Ackerman, a board member, to consider consulting with a "selection and appraisal"⁴⁵ service regarding administrative evaluation. The growing Millard school district was beginning to consider the greater use consultants for services. The mobile society of the suburb necessitated in mid-1969 that the Board appointed a replacement for a board member who was moving from the community. The same year registered official opposition to political actions at the state level of government were recorded in the Board's minutes.⁴⁶ Many of the roles formerly filled by the members of the Board during this time were assigned to new personnel or groups. For example, the yearly audit which had been performed in earlier years by the Board was now regularly done by accounting firms such as Haskins and Sells.⁴⁷ The census, another traditional role of the Board, was completed by the Parent Teacher

⁴⁴Millard Public Schools News Clippings File, (Douglas County District 17) ,1968-1969 and 1969-1970 School Years, Don Stroh Administration Center, Omaha, Nebraska.

⁴⁶Millard Public Schools Board Minutes (Douglas County District 17), December, 7, 1970, Don Stroh Administration Center, Omaha, Nebraska.

⁴⁶Millard Public Schools Board Minutes (Douglas County District 17), May 1, 1969 and May 5, 1969, Don Stroh Administration Center, Omaha, Nebraska.

⁴⁷Ibid., July 5, 1960.

Organization. This group in turn was paid for their services benefiting both the school district and the organization.⁴⁸

Administration

Not only was the Board changing but so was the administration. The superintendency continued to be filled by Don Stroh. Mr. Stroh speaking on his leadership during this time stated, "A person must develop good work habits and be consistently on the job in order to succeed."⁴⁹ Mr. Stroh's acceptance by the Board and the community can be found in the Board's approval for a major raise for the superintendent who was "rehired at a sizable increase in salary of 10,500 up from 8,800."⁵⁰ The Board felt Mr. Stroh had done a tremendous job considering the district's growth.

A secondary principal had been added in 1960 with the opening of Millard Junior-Senior High School. Eventually, an assistant principal was employed at Millard Junior-Senior High School when John A. Lammel was hired. In anticipation of the new high school to open in the fall of 1970, new assistant principal positions at the high school and junior high school were created for the 1969-1970 school year.

The first elementary principal, Ron Witt, was hired for the 1962-1963 school year. He was hired at a salary of \$6,000.00 on a ten month contract.⁵¹ At the time, elementary classes were still housed in the old K-12 building under the name of Central Elementary School and in several cottages built by the

⁴⁸Millard Public Schools News Clippings File, (Douglas County District 17) ,1963-1965 School Years, Don Stroh Administration Center, Omaha, Nebraska

⁴⁹Ibid.

⁵⁰Ibid.

⁵¹Millard Public Schools Board Minutes (Douglas County District 17), April 2, 1962, Don Stroh Administration Center, Omaha, Nebraska.

Board about the Millard community. As elementary buildings opened, the cottages were sold and the students were moved into the new buildings. Superintendent Don Stroh liked Central Elementary School because it became a testing ground for elementary administrators. Often an elementary principal would teach half-day at this building and be an administrator for a half-day.⁵²

Administrative Structural Plan

In 1967, an administrative structural plan was outlined for the school district in the form of a needs plan. The plan called for three assistant superintendents. These assistant superintendents were to be in charge of business affairs, instruction, and personnel. With an structural plan in place, Ron Witt was hired as the Assistant Superintendent for the 1966-1967 school year with major responsibilities in curriculum and instruction.⁵³ The success of this administrative addition was recorded the next year when Mr. Witt was reelected by "unanimous vote."⁵⁴

Other semi-administrative positions were added along the way. For example, the Millard Jaycee's Outstanding Young Educator for the 1967-1968 school year was Richard Corwine, the district's media coordinator.⁵⁵ Although this position was in existence for some time, the media coordinator was not given official administrative status until 1970, when it first appeared on the administrative salary schedule as the media director. Mr. Cox, the secondary

⁵²Dr. Don Stroh, interview by author, Tape recording, Omaha, Nebraska, 28 October 1995.

⁵³Millard Public Schools Board Minutes (Douglas County District 17), February 7, 1966, Don Stroh Administration Center, Omaha, Nebraska.

⁵⁴Ibid., January 5, 1967.

⁵⁵Millard Public Schools News Clippings File, (Douglas County District 17), 1967-1968 School Years, Don Stroh Administration Center, Omaha, Nebraska.

band director was employed as director of music education, and a position of activities director was designed in conjunction with football coach in 1966.⁵⁶ In the case of the director of music, the position never became an administrative position rather it eventually would grow into a curricular leadership role in the 1970s. Juxtaposed against the foregoing is the position of activities director, which began as a part-time teaching position and part-time administrative assistant position. Eventually, in the 1970s this position became an administrative position.

The growth of the administrative team is best summarized in the proposed salary schedule for administrators for the 1970-1971 school year. This proposal contained five levels of administration including assistant junior high principals and media director; elementary principals, assistant senior high principals, and vocational education director; junior high principals; business manager; and, senior high principals with salaries ranging from \$11,750.00 to \$17,750.00.⁵⁷ Additionally, there were six elementary principals, one director of media, one principal and one assistant principal each at the junior high and senior high levels.⁵⁸ At the same time, Don Stroh recommended that the second position of an assistant superintendent be added. This position would assume business management duties. For the first time documented in the Board's minutes, a job description was included. The business manager's duties were divided into three broad categories of budget preparation, budget control and accounting, and miscellaneous. The latter included working with

⁵⁶Millard Public Schools Board Minutes (Douglas County District 17), March 7, 1966, Don Stroh Administration Center, Omaha, Nebraska.

⁵⁷Ibid., June 1, 1970.

⁵⁸Ibid., February 2, 1970.

personnel records, negotiating contracts, vandalism, inventories of equipment, state and federal participation programs, quality control of purchases, food services, building and grounds, and transportation.⁵⁹ The first business manager, Dick Lewis, in commenting on the development of the administration stated, "We really didn't carry one title because of all the things you had to do."⁶⁰ The growing administrative staff needed support staff in addition. The superintendent's office by the 1968-1969 school year consisted of six people besides the superintendent. These support people included the superintendent's secretary and assistant secretary, the bookkeeper and assistant bookkeeper, the head custodian, and the food service manager.

Not only was the support staff growing but so was the way administration was being viewed. Marty Koolen was hired in 1969 as an administrative assistant. He was employed to design school attendance boundaries and assist with future planning of buildings.⁶¹ Prior to this time, Mr. Koolen had worked at Educational Service Unit #3 in the field of special education.⁶² In addition, the Board for the first time approved a part-time teaching and part-time administrative position for the new principal to prepare to open Montclair during the second half of the 1970-1971 school year.⁶³ The latter was different from previous half-time positions, as the administrative portion was for planning purposes only.

⁵⁹Ibid., March 10, 1970.

⁶⁰Richard Lewis, interview by author, Tape recording, Omaha, Nebraska, 15 October 1996.

⁶¹Dr. Ronald Witt, interview by author, Tape recording, Omaha, Nebraska, 24 October 1996.

⁶²Millard Public Schools Board Minutes (Douglas County District 17), May 5, 1969, Don Stroh Administration Center, Omaha, Nebraska.

⁶³Ibid., December 7, 1970.

Board Policies

The first comprehensive set of Board policies that are found in the Board's minutes are those printed for the 1963-64 school year. These policies were divided into ten sections and were a total of twenty-two typed pages. The sections included the Boards Functions, the Administration of the Schools, General Policies for Personnel, School Activities, Policies Affecting Pupils, Property and Buildings, Budget, Policies Affecting Patrons, Policies Affecting the Board of Education, and Miscellaneous policies. An example of one of the policies found in the Policies Affecting Pupils is as follows:

The moral conduct of pupils shall be of the highest type. It is expected that teachers are to exercise their influence to see that pupils learn moral and spiritual values in our general school atmosphere. Nothing shall be condoned in school which may tend to destroy or impair a desirable school atmosphere. Pupils may be suspended from school in order that this may be maintained. If and when necessary, such school officials as the school attorney and school physician may be employed to exercise the enforcement of the conduct of pupils.⁶⁴

Early Policy Development

Prior to the 1963-1964 Board of Education policies, there are several references to policies in Board minutes. Continued work on the policies was evident during this time as Superintendent Stroh was requested to work on the policies in late 1960.⁶⁵ Of major concern after the building of the new junior senior high school building was the considerable attention given to the use of the gym facilities by the general public. As this was a major public relations issue for the Board, they decided to charge \$20.00 for the use of the new gym

⁶⁴1963-1964 Board of Education Policies.

⁶⁵Ibid., December 5, 1960.

and \$10.00 for the use of the old gym at Central Elementary.⁶⁶ The use of school property remained a policy topic, as there was a Board Policy for Use of School Facilities by Local City Recreation Department that allowed for the use of Sandoz and Norris gyms providing the custodial service and any damage was paid and the city was willing to accept the liability.⁶⁷

Many of the policies recorded in the Board minutes from the mid-1960s are indicative of the concerns of the time. For example, there was a policy regarding the need for all school equipment to stay at school. With a growing district, the inventory and the location of equipment was becoming important.⁶⁸ The growing and changing staff can be found in the fact that the Board was discussing a Professional Growth Policy in 1965.⁶⁹ Another concern with the staff was aging. Staff would now be required to resign in June following the school year of their sixty-fifth birthday.⁷⁰ This was a change from a decade earlier when the Millard Public Schools was viewed as a training ground from which to move to larger districts.⁷¹ A growing teacher shortage became a problem that the Board had to contend in the late 1960s. "It was moved by Stanley Duysen, seconded by Robert Bartles, that we amend our board policy to recommend teacher placement according to supply and demand, on recommendation of Superintendent, with the board's approval. Motion

⁶⁶Millard Public Schools Board Minutes (Douglas County District 17), November 7, 1960, Don Stroh Administration Center, Omaha, Nebraska.

⁶⁷Ibid., November 6, 1967.

⁶⁸Ibid., June 7, 1965.

⁶⁹Ibid., September 9, 1965.

⁷⁰Ibid., May 2, 1966.

⁷¹Wilma Upchurch, interview by author, Tape recording, Omaha, Nebraska, 29 September 1995.

carried."⁷² Another personnel change was evident in the requirement for administrators to live within the district. "A motion by Bob Bartles, seconded by Houghston Tetrick, to deny request of Mr. Peters to live outside the school district, and to inform him that the policy requirement of administrators to live in the district will be retained. Motion carried."⁷³

With the growing youth population and a society that was requiring more and more education of its citizens, a policy was passed in 1966 regarding students who did not graduate but who would get a certificate of attendance.

Graduation Policy for Students who are unable to pursue a regular school program.

The Board of Education shall grant a Certificate of Attendance to those students, who are unable to pursue a course of study which will qualify them for a High School Diploma.

Purpose: A few of the students enrolled in school are unable to pursue a course of study which meets the qualification for a high school diploma. For these students it is essential they work toward some end. After a period of four years working within the framework of their ability, they should be granted a certificate which would recognize them for their attendance. The student who is able to pursue a regular school program would not qualify for this certificate. This certificate will be granted on the recommendation of the Superintendent and the approval for the Board of Education.⁷⁴

This policy was implemented when special education was a program that was starting as a program in public education.

⁷²Millard Public Schools Board Minutes (Douglas County District 17), April 7, 1969, Don Stroh Administration Center, Omaha, Nebraska.

⁷³Ibid., April 2, 1969.

⁷⁴Millard Public Schools Board Minutes (Douglas County District 17), May 2, 1966, Don Stroh Administration Center, Omaha, Nebraska.

Procedural Policies

Procedural policies also were needed with a growing district. Two major procedural practices were established during this time. First it was moved

by Hultman, seconded by Backhaus that it be resolved that all school matters to be presented at a regular meeting be placed on the superintendents's agenda by the preceding Thursday in order to be presented the following Monday. This is to be made a part of the regular board policies. Carried.⁷⁵

The growing size of the district also necessitated that the Board meet more than once a month. Thus in late 1968, the board decided to hold two meetings a month on the first and third Mondays. The first meeting was a business meeting and included all the bills and other legal transactions. The second meeting was to be directed towards curriculum and other items of concern.⁷⁶ This policy was altered again as the district continued to grow.

Motion by Robert Ackerman, seconded by Donna Black, that the second meeting of the month start at 6:30 and the first hour be used for discussion of common problems in the school district. Motion carried.⁷⁷

The growing amount of information being dealt with by the board of education became evident in a practice started in mid-1970 in which the secretary to the superintendent prepared skeleton minutes of motions that were expected to be made by the board to expedite the process of recording the actions of the board. This practice is still used today.⁷⁸ Some of the procedural changes during this time were dictated by state law. A good example of this was the change from

⁷⁵Ibid., December 5, 1966.

⁷⁶Ibid., November 7, 1968.

⁷⁷Ibid., June 1, 1970.

⁷⁸Ibid., July 13, 1970.

the caucus system of election to the direct filing system in 1970 based on Section 38 of Legislative Bill 542. The latter called for four year terms with elections every two years.⁷⁹

Codified Policy Development

The continued growth of the school district required a more complete system of codified school board policies. Dr. Hayes of the University of Nebraska and Croft Publishers Service, a board policy service, was consulted in 1968 regarding such services. Dr. Hayes presented options to the board and later that year the Board decided to adopt a do-it-yourself format provided by Croft Publishers Service.⁸⁰ At the same meeting, the Board decided to form a steering committee consisting of board members, administrators, and Millard Education Association and Parent Teacher Association representatives. Over the next several months, this group reviewed the Croft materials, met with their constituencies, and formed subcommittees to work on policies regarding Community, Administration, Business, Personnel, Students, Instruction, New Construction, Internal Board Operations, and Bylaws of the Board.⁸¹ This process continued over the next couple of years, resulting in a completed and codified set of board policies. For example,

Motion by Otto Cate, seconded by Norman Quist, that we accept the board policies, as presented this date, on community, administration, business, personnel and students. Motion carried.⁸²

A month later, internal board policies were reviewed, and in February of 1970

⁷⁹Ibid., February 12, 1970.

⁸⁰Ibid., May 5, 1968 and July 1, 1968.

⁸¹Ibid., July 1, 1968.

⁸²Ibid., December 1, 1969.

policies 6000 through 9000 were adopted.⁸³ These adopted policies dealt with instruction, construction, internal board policies, and the bylaws of the Board.

Policies Reflect Times

Throughout the 1960s, policies were developed that were a result of the times or because of contractual relationships with the Millard Education Association that represented the teachers. A prime example of both of the foregoing was the growing number of teachers requesting release from their contracts due to military involvement of a spouse or like the case of Phil Bartle, who requested all of his pay for the preceding year as he was leaving for Vietnam in June of 1968. At the same meeting, the draft status of two other teachers was reported on in the regular section of the Board agenda dealing with teachers.⁸⁴ Ultimately the number of war requests and state and federal laws resulted in the following policy.

MILITARY LEAVE

4152.4

All officers and employees, including elected officials, of the state, or of any of its political subdivisions, who, having been involuntarily required to undergo military training with the armed forces of the United States or having been involuntarily required to undertake military duty in the active service of the state, shall be entitled to a leave of absence from such civil employment for the period of such training or service, not to exceed four years, plus in each case any additional period in which he was unable to obtain orders relieving him from active duty, plus any period of time hospitalized incident to active duty, without loss of status or efficiency rating, and without loss of pay during the first fifteen work days of such leave of absence. Such pay for the first fifteen work days shall not be construed as being in addition to the pay provided for in section of 58 of this act. The proper appointment authority may make a temporary appointment to fill any vacancy

⁸³Ibid., February 16, 1970.

⁸⁴Ibid., June 3, 1968.

created by such a leave of absences. When such person is separated from such training or incident to that day, such employee shall be entitled to return to his former position with such seniority, status, pay and vacation as he would have if he had not been absent for such purpose, if he is still qualified to perform the duties of his former position, and if he makes application within thirty days after he is released from such training or service. If such person is not qualified to perform the duties of such position upon his return by reason of disability sustained during the training or service but is qualified to perform the duties of any other position in the employ of the employer, he shall be restored to such other position, the duties of which he is qualified to perform, as will provide him with the same seniority, status, and pay, or the nearest proximation thereof consistent with the circumstances in his case. Such a person shall not be discharged from his former or new position without justifiable cause within one year after reinstatement. It shall be the duty of the Commissioner of Labor to enforce the provisions of this section.⁸⁵

Change again resulted in the addition of a policy providing payroll deductions for tax-sheltered annuities for teachers. This policy was put into place in part because of a desire on the teachers' part and also because of the large number of teachers being employed from other districts where such deductions had been allowed.⁸⁶

The Vietnam War was a major source of political controversy in the United States. On the same night that the policy regarding military leave was passed by the Board, the Board also passed a policy regarding political activities.

POLITICAL ACTIVITIES (2)

4130

1. School employees shall make it clear that their utterances and actions are theirs as individuals and that they, in no manner, represent the views of the school system.

⁸⁵Ibid., August 17, 1970. (Please note that the policy was written for males only.)

⁸⁶Ibid., September 2, 1969.

2. School employees shall not engage in political activity or perform political responsibilities on school premises at any time except during officially scheduled political meetings.
3. In the event the employee wishes to seek election to public office, and hold office if elected, the following regulations shall apply:
 - a. Written request to announce and campaign for public office shall be submitted to the Board of Education through the Superintendent in accordance with regulations established by the Board, stating full acknowledgement of said regulations and commitments for compliance with them.
 - b. The request shall be submitted at least ten days prior to the regular meeting date of the Board of Education at which the employee desires consideration of the request.
 - c. At the next regular meeting of the Board, following receipt of the request in accordance with Item b above, the Board will take action, giving either approval or disapproval of said request.
 - d. No announcement of candidacy shall be made prior to Board approval.
 - e. A specified period of leave-without-pay may be requested by the employee for active campaigning which will require activities on official working time.
 - f. In the event the employee is elected to office, he may serve on leave-without-pay to perform the functions of the office.⁸⁷

The 1960s was also a time of great unrest in the youth of America. Important policies were established by the Board dealing with student behavior that reflect the local feelings regarding the youth movement. One such policy was corporal punishment.

⁸⁷Ibid., August 17, 1970.

CORPORAL PUNISHMENT (2)

5144

This policy expects corporal punishment generally to be used as almost the last resort by the school in its attempt to maintain an instructional atmosphere. Therefore, many steps by the teacher and again by the principal after the case is referred to him are to

be expected preceding the administration of corporal punishment. It is hoped that the administration of such punishment should result in a recognition of the seriousness of the case and in the child's adjustment to more appropriate methods of behavior. However, if such improvement and recognition is not forthcoming, other steps by the school may be initiated.

Corporal punishment shall refer only to physical punishment administered in response to any act or acts of misbehavior committed by a student. It does not refer to any and all acts of touching a student when such action is taken for the safety and welfare of a student or students.

Application Regulations

1. The following conditions shall be observed by the principal, acting principal and assistant principal when administering corporal punishment:

- a. It shall be administered only after more positive actions have been taken.
- b. It shall be administered privately with only the presence of witness from the school staff necessary.
- c. It shall be administered in a manner which is not degrading or embarrassing to the student being disciplined.
- d. It shall be administered humanely, with reasonable restraint, and never in anger.
- e. It shall be administered so that no part of the head or face shall be struck.

f. It shall be administered only after parent permission.

g. It shall be administered only by an administrator.⁸⁸

Not all policies passed during this time reflected the changes on the American scene; some reflected the change in the community of Millard itself. With the construction of the new high school that opened in the fall of 1970, came the construction of a swimming pool. So as policies regarding student behavior regarding corporal punishment were being passed, there was also discussion on how to maintain the safety of students and the public at large as they used the new facilities open to the community.⁸⁹

Transportation

The rapid and uneven growth had an impact on the administration of the transportation program in the Millard Public Schools during the 1960s. At the start of the period under consideration, the school district was largely rural and many of the students needed to be transported several miles to attend school. While this remained true at the end of the period under consideration, uneven growth around the district and building utilization were having major impact on the Board's transportation policies.

Following the consolidation of the late-1950s, the administration with Board approval developed a system of transportation routes that transported all students to district stations. In turn, routes between the stations then delivered elementary students to the elementary buildings and secondary students to the new junior-senior high school.⁹⁰ Within one year, the Board established a policy

⁸⁸Ibid.

⁸⁹ Ibid.

⁹⁰Ibid., November 7, 1960.

that stated all elementary students who needed to be transported more than one mile to school would be given bus service, even though the state law only required bus service for students living four miles or more from school.⁹¹ Thus, the number of buses increased during this time. More buses resulted in the decision to build a bus barn during the summer of 1961.⁹²

In 1964, even before the opening of Cody Elementary School, a transportation problem presented the first of many safety issues that the Board would contend with over the years. The problem centered around students living in the housing subdivision that was located on the western side of 132nd Street called Kingswood who would have to cross a busy 132nd Street to get to the newly built Cody.⁹³ The Board's solution to the problem established a precedent that continues to be used by the district. L. and R. Bus Lines was contracted to run a pilot program. In this program, the cost of the bus services was partially paid for by the parents and the rest of the cost was incurred by the school district.⁹⁴

A similar precedent-setting decision was made by the Board in 1966 to transport only elementary and junior high students to school. At this time, this meant grades kindergarten through the ninth grade.⁹⁵ As part of the plan to transport these students, the Board decided to contract out the cost of transporting kindergarten and first grade students that were attending school at the junior-senior high building due to a lack of space. These students were

⁹¹Ibid., July 10, 1961.

⁹²Ibid., July 17, 1961.

⁹³Ibid., April 6, 1964.

⁹⁴Ibid., September 14, 1964.

⁹⁵Ibid., June 13, 1966.

transported by a private company, L. and R. Bus Lines, and the company was asked to submit a total program to the Board for the next year.⁹⁶ Although the Board did not accept the program for the following year, the Board was beginning to show a predisposition to withdrawing from transportation. The Board's desire to continue its own transportation program was foreshadowed in its decision two weeks later to buy a new bus for \$7,200.00.⁹⁷

Salary Negotiations

Millard Education Association Formed

Millard Public Schools was not the only organization experiencing growth during the 1960s. So was the teacher organization; until 1963 the teachers in the Millard school district who wished to belong at the local level of the National Education Association had been members of the Douglas County Education Association. Dick Corwine was the first President of the Millard Education Association (MEA); he was to have represented the teachers in the county organization until the teachers decided to form a local association in Millard. In November of 1963, the Millard Education Association was granted a charter by the National Education Association that was made retroactive to June in order to give the association voting rights at Delegate Assembly.⁹⁸ At the first official meeting, yearly dues were set at \$5.00 and MEA voted to send President Dick Corwine to the Delegate Assembly whether the local association was granted voting status or not for the first year.⁹⁹ Dick Corwine indicated that the

⁹⁶Ibid., July 5, 1966

⁹⁷Ibid., July 25, 1966.

⁹⁸Millard Education Association Minutes, November 14, 1957, 13823 P Street, Omaha, Nebraska.

⁹⁹Ibid., September 24, 1963.

major reason for forming a local association centered around the fact that Millard was growing. At the Douglas County level, evidence that Millard teachers “should investigate having its own association”¹⁰⁰ resulted in the formation of MEA. The 1960s was a time when teachers were encouraged to be professionals. Thus the Millard Education Association was a professional organization with concerns beyond salary and benefits. During this time there appeared to be a real partnership between the MEA and the Board as indicated in joint promotions of bond issues.¹⁰¹ Adeline Reis remembered the relationship with the Board as dealing with agricultural board members. She recalled the Board being the top of a hierarchical pyramid. The formation of the MEA was part of an evolution from a small, rural, German community to a suburban area. Until this time, one simply did not question the decisions of the Board.¹⁰²

Early Negotiations

Prior to the formation of the Millard Education Association, teacher negotiations had largely been carried out on an teacher-by-teacher basis with the teacher represented by the superintendent. Salary schedules were presented by teachers, but no actual negotiations took place such as in 1961 when a teacher proposal was accepted for study and then the board adopted its own schedule the following month.¹⁰³ Numerous examples of teachers being treated on an individual basis exist in the Board minutes of the early 1960s. For

¹⁰⁰Dr. Richard Corwine, interview by author, Tape recording, Omaha, Nebraska, 7 October 1996.

¹⁰¹Ibid.

¹⁰²Adeline Reis, interview by author, Tape recording, Omaha, Nebraska, 21 October 1996.

¹⁰³Millard Public Schools Board Minutes (Douglas County District 17), February 6, 1961 and March 6, 1961, Don Stroh Administration Center, Omaha, Nebraska.

example, a teacher was approved for a leave "for honeymooning."¹⁰⁴ Another example is the 1963-1964 teacher contract that included an extra \$100.00 in salary for men who were married.

The professional staff of a school district in the 1960s was much different from what it is today. For example, teachers could teach without actually having completed a four-year college degree, or without the necessary certification, as Dick Corwine related, "I was hired by Don Stroh on a provisional basis."¹⁰⁵ The district wanted to offer shorthand, and Dick Corwine, although certified in business education, could not teach the course. He agreed to take the course at Omaha University and began teaching shorthand during his second year in Millard. For those teachers without a four year college degree the 1962-1963 salary schedule included columns representing sixty (\$3,400.00) and ninety hours (\$3,800.00) of undergraduate work and these columns were followed by a Bachelor of Arts Column (\$4,200.00) and Bachelor of Arts Column with eighteen hours of graduate study (\$4,400.00). This was followed by two Master of Arts columns (\$4,600.00 and \$4,700.00). Having the latter degree in a teaching field was worth an extra \$100.00 per year.¹⁰⁶ The 1965-1966 negotiated contract between the Board and the MEA included a requirement for non-degreed teachers to earn nine hours of college credit each year in order to continue to receive a pay raise.¹⁰⁷ The number of non-degreed teachers was closely watched as was the number of teachers pursuing graduate hours. At

¹⁰⁴Ibid., February 6, 1961.

¹⁰⁵Dr. Richard Corwine, interview by author, Tape recording, Omaha, Nebraska, 7 October 1996.

¹⁰⁶Millard Public Schools Board Minutes (Douglas County District 17), February 5, 1962 , Don Stroh Administration Center, Omaha, Nebraska.

¹⁰⁷Ibid., February 1, 1965.

the start of 1965, the administration anticipated that there would be 13 non-degreed teachers in the district. Within two years, however, the number was expected to drop to only two.¹⁰⁸

Early Benefits

The benefits package was small and it reflected at times the morality of the period under study. The benefits for the 1962-1963 contract year included ten days of sick leave accumulative to 20 days. Immediate family illness was included; other family member illness had to be reviewed by the Board. Only three years of previous experience would be granted on the salary schedule. Finally, there was a maternity clause that read in "case of pregnancy, a teacher's contract may be canceled immediately. The teacher will be replaced at the Board of Education's earliest convenience."¹⁰⁹ Thus on a regular basis, the Board's packets and minutes contained letters like the following note that was hand written:

March 12, 1963

To whom it may concern:

This letter is to inform you of my resignation effective at the close of the 1962-63 school term.

A pregnancy, terminating in September, will prevent my teaching the first semester. However, if the board sees fit, and such a vacancy arises, I would consider teaching the second semester of the 1963-64 term.

Sincerely,
Kaye Boden¹¹⁰

¹⁰⁸Ibid., March 8, 1965.

¹⁰⁹Ibid., February 5, 1962.

¹¹⁰Ibid., April 1, 1963.

In discussing the latter situation, Adeline Reis, one of the early woman leaders in Millard Public School's administration, stated, "If I had been married, I would have not been offered the Johnson scholarship (A scholarship that Don Stroh helped her to obtain in order to earn her degree in special education.) or probably the opportunity to go back."¹¹¹ Unmarried women were viewed as professional women; married women were viewed as second income earners and thus were expendable.

The first mention of a school nurse appears in the Board minutes regarding that position's work schedule in 1965.¹¹² Substitute pay is first mentioned in the Board minutes in 1967. Substitute teachers would earn \$19.00 per day unless they worked ten consecutive days in the same classroom, then the salary would go to \$25.00 per day.

New Negotiation Process

In the fall of 1967, Dick Corwine, former MEA president, was the president of District II of the Nebraska State Education Association. He addressed the fall teachers conference that year and spoke of major changes for teachers that had been enacted the previous year by the state legislature. One of those items was the professional status of teachers in the new negotiation process.¹¹³ Other important issues included a new state aid to education package and teacher retirement benefits.¹¹⁴ Almost immediately the

¹¹¹Adeline Reis, interview by author, Tape recording, Omaha, Nebraska, 21 October 1996.

¹¹²Millard Public Schools Board Minutes (Douglas County District 17), May 5, 1965, Don Stroh Administration Center, Omaha, Nebraska.

¹¹³Millard Public Schools News Clippings File, (Douglas County District), 1967-1968 School Year, Don Stroh Administration Center, Omaha, Nebraska.

¹¹⁴Ibid.

new negotiations rules became a new set of issues for the Board in working with the professional staff. "Millard Board of Education members this month will be trying to decide what advantages, if any, teachers and board members have by entering into professional negotiations."¹¹⁵ The new negotiation process consisted of three steps. First, the Board must give recognition to MEA as the sole negotiator representing the teachers. Second, agreement had to be reached on what was to be negotiated for the next school year. This was followed by a third step in which the teachers' representatives and the Board, through a series of proposals and counter proposals, finally developed a new negotiated contract. Don Stroh stated, "The process could build a better teacher-board relationship and would possibly put more of a demand on the teachers."¹¹⁶ The Board was concerned that the teachers might ask for twice as much as they intended to receive. The first set of professional negotiations were successful and the budget stayed within the 108% mandated by the state legislature.

Within two years the Board and MEA tested the new law when they could not agree on a base salary nor a salary schedule for the ensuing 1970-1971 school year. The Board and teachers went to wage impasse, as the teachers wanted a \$6,700.00 base and salary schedule index changes. The Board wanted a base of \$6,600 with no salary index change. The base at the time was \$6,300.00.¹¹⁷ This disagreement resulted ultimately in the Board going into executive session, afterwards which the Board decided to hire a fact finder and

¹¹⁵Ibid.

¹¹⁶Ibid.

¹¹⁷Millard Public Schools News Clippings File, (Douglas County District 17) ,1969-1970 School Year, Don Stroh Administration Center, Omaha,Nebraska.

split costs for a third fact finder with MEA. The Board agreed it would "consider in good faith, the recommendations of the fact finding team."¹¹⁸ Within a little less than a month, a member of the fact-finding committee was present at a board meeting. The Board decided to accept the recommendation of this committee and the salary.¹¹⁹ Thus the decade closed with a base salary of \$6,700.00, but the salary schedule was that of the previous year.

Legal Issues

The legal issues of the 1960 to 1970 period centered around the rapid growth of the district resulting in home trailer courts, the building of schools, and some personnel issues. The rapid growth of the district resulted in several requests during the 1960s to grant approval for trailer court zoning. The Board was adamantly opposed to trailer courts due to the high number of students that they brought into the school district and the low amount of tax revenue the trailer courts generated. The first of the trailer court concerns arose in 1964. The Board expressed its dissatisfaction over the trailer court at 152nd Street between "L" Street and "Q" Street. This trailer court made it difficult to predict the number of students to be in school for the next year as it was easy to move in a few days, thus home starts were becoming less reliable figures to use in planning for building needs.¹²⁰ The Board again expressed its displeasure when a problem developed with the zoning of Fischer farm for trailers in 1968 and for the mobile homes on the Gramlich farm in 1970.¹²¹ Although the Board

¹¹⁸Millard Public Schools Board Minutes (Douglas County District 17), April 20, 1970, Don Stroh Administration Center, Omaha, Nebraska.

¹¹⁹Ibid., May 18, 1970.

¹²⁰Ibid., June 7, 1964.

¹²¹Ibid., April 4, 1968 and March 2, 1970.

was often unable to stop the growth of trailer courts, the Board did use legal leverage to let the Board's views on the matter known as "Mr. Tom Marshall was present to give some legal advice as to procedures to take against the mobile home park in Sarpy county. He will be present at the County Commissioners meeting set for September 8 at 10:00 A.M."¹²²

Building Litigation

Litigation regarding the building of so many schools was of two types; (a) litigation over property and (b) litigation concerning the actual construction of buildings. Litigation over school properties included some problems from the consolidation of the school district in the late 1950s, the acquisition of some school property from the Monroe family, dealings with other local government entities, and problems with Wiebe Construction Company over the construction of the track, playing field, and stadium area at Millard High School.

The litigation regarding the District 25 school house and land began in 1961. The school house was built on private land, thus when the school was closed and consolidated with the Millard Public Schools, a need to remove the building from the property arose.¹²³ The litigation continued for almost two years with a motion by the Board in late 1963 to condemn the property in attempt to keep the site as a location for a future school.¹²⁴ The Board lost in its attempt to keep the land and had to pay \$16,500.00 to Judge Trayer's court, thus allowing the owner's litigation bill on the Dodge Street property.¹²⁵

¹²²Ibid., September 2, 1969.

¹²³Ibid., December 4, 1961.

¹²⁴Ibid., December 2, 1963.

¹²⁵Ibid., February 22, 1966.

The Board also sought court relief over the acquisition of land from the Monroe family for the building of a new school. The litigation centered around the establishment of a fair price for the land. Ultimately, the Board had to resort to the use of the constitutional right of eminent domain, which allows a governmental body to condemn and take control of private property for the public good. Embedded in this problem was the issue that as the Millard community grew, so did the value of land that had once been used for farming. Part of the Monroe farm ultimately became the Cather Elementary School and Millard North Junior High School; the last offer for the land was \$21,000.00 per acre before the Board moved for eminent domain.¹²⁶ Within two months the Board had a condemnation report, and a court order that the 6.5 acres be sold for a total of \$94,860.00 or \$14,593.85 an acre.¹²⁷

At times, the Board worked with or against other local governments in its pursuit of land for building sites to keep up with a rapidly growing school population. In late 1962, a discovery was made regarding the land that had been sold to the Millard Public Schools in the Seldin subdivision for Cody Elementary School. The location of the land created boundary problems with the Omaha Public Schools in that a part of the property was in the Omaha district. The Seldin Development Company legally negotiated the problem for the Board and a letter was sent to the Douglas County Superintendent in early 1963 requesting a change in the boundary between the two school districts to correct the problem. Within two months the issue was resolved and the boundary line change was approved by all parties involved.¹²⁸

¹²⁶Ibid., April 8, 1966.

¹²⁷Ibid., November 7, 1966.

¹²⁸Ibid., March 4, 1963 and May 6, 1963.

Juxtaposed to the foregoing congenial agreement, was the issue of whether to allow the annexation of new school properties by the City of Millard. At this time, the consolidation efforts of the late-1950s had resulted in a school district larger than the town of Millard. "Motion by Houghston Tetrick, seconded by Norman Quist, that we oppose annexation of Bryan Elementary and new Senior High School. Motion carried."¹²⁹ Ironically during this period, the Board was working with the City of Omaha to connect a new elementary school under construction to a community center in the Montclair subdivision, allowing for a sharing of services. "Tom Marshall was present to discuss the agreement between the Millard Public Schools and the City of Omaha for use of Montclair Elementary School."¹³⁰ The agreement was worked out and a connecting corridor was built between Montclair Elementary School and the Montclair Community Center.¹³¹

The period under consideration closed with a major disagreement between the Board and Wiebe Construction Company. The issue centered on the drainage problems in the new stadium under construction and was first reported in the spring of 1970, when to correct the problem Wiebe Construction was authorized to put in a French drainage system.¹³² A month later, "Dick Engler of HD&R (The Board's architectural firm for the senior high school) reported to the board of a small drainage problem on the football field at the senior high school."¹³³ In July, the water problems continued and the

¹²⁹Ibid., November 3, 1969.

¹³⁰Ibid.

¹³¹Ibid., April 6, 1970.

¹³²Ibid., May 18, 1970.

¹³³Ibid., June 15, 1970.

construction of the track was delayed. Further compounding the issue was a conflict of interest on the part of the law firm representing the Board and Wiebe Construction Company as they were one and the same. By the start of August, the Board was contemplating legal action against Wiebe Construction Company. Finally, the Board changed attorneys for the school district and legal action was sought.

Mr. Malcom Young, attorney, and Mr. Dick Engler of HD&R were present to review and discuss the Senior High Stadium and Wiebe Construction Company. After lengthy review and discussion, Mr. Engler recommend termination of the contract with Wiebe Construction Company at which time Mr. Young requested Mr. Engler send a letter to that effect.¹³⁴

Student Litigation

Beyond the negotiation problem in 1970 with the Millard Education Association, only one other major legal problem arose. Mr. Hugh Troshynski, a teacher at the high school, made a student eat a half a bar of soap as part of punishment. The student's family contacted the school district regarding the incident which happened on November 2, 1966. In the initial letter contacting the Board, the family was asking for \$500.00 for full payment of medical bills.¹³⁵ A letter, dated four days later, indicated the family was ready to withdraw its proposed suit. No further mention of the case is found in the Board's minutes, however, three years later, two teachers were reelected with no raise and placed on probation for one year. One of the teachers was Mr. Troshynski.¹³⁶ Commenting on this particular case, Dick Lewis the Millard Junior-Senior High School Principal at the time said, "that to wash out a student's mouth with soap

¹³⁴Ibid., November 16, 1970.

¹³⁵Ibid., December 5, 1966.

¹³⁶Ibid., April 10, 1970.

was not uncommon prior to that time, but that the incident reflects a changing view of students' rights."¹³⁷

Public Relations

One of the most successful endeavors of the Board during the 1960s was the development of a good public relations program. The need for the passage of four bond issues in the 1960s for a total of \$14,600,000.00 made public relations a Board and administrative priority.¹³⁸ All of the bond issues passed with an 82% voter approval rate. One of the means by which these bond issues passed was the policy of permitting the community to use the facilities that the school district had built. Don Stroh, Superintendent at the time, indicated that it was an advantage with bond issues to have newly formed churches using school facilities for their services. The church congregations were a good source of public forums to disperse the information necessary to obtain bonds to construct new buildings.¹³⁹ Thus the Board allowed Trinity Baptist Church the use of the schools in 1962, Hope Presbyterian Church the use of a cottage in 1963, St. Paul's Lutheran Church the use of the school auditorium in 1964, and Faith Christian the use of Cody Elementary in 1966.¹⁴⁰ This policy of public use of school facilities continued throughout the period under study. "Motion by Donna Black, seconded by Norman Quist, the board allow the city to use the

¹³⁷Richard Lewis, interview by author, Tape recording, Omaha, Nebraska, 15 October 1996.

¹³⁸Millard Public Schools General History File, (Douglas County District 17), Don Stroh Administration Center, Omaha, Nebraska.

¹³⁹Dr. Don Stroh, interview by author, Tape recording, Omaha, Nebraska, 28 October 1995.

¹⁴⁰Millard Public Schools Board Minutes (Douglas County District 17), November 5, 1962; January 7, 1963; and, September 6, 1966, Don Stroh Administration Center, Omaha, Nebraska.

gyms on Saturday for winter recreational program to be coordinated with the existing Lion's Club program. Motion carried."¹⁴¹

Yearly Report and Newspapers

Use of the school facilities was not the only way in which the Board communicated about the school district to its public. In 1964, the Board began a long standing practice of mailing to the public a report on the district from the preceding year. This practice remains today in a yearly calendar sent to the school district's public. The first mailing of a yearly report to the public included information on the number of teachers in the district, the in-service program plans for the staff, the new elementary schools Bryan and Norris, the second year of SRA scores and the district's standing on these standardized tests, the new elementary library, the district's art show, the elementary school program, the summer school and adult education programs, drivers education, journalism, and the sports program, and the 1964-1965 school calendar.¹⁴² Facts and figures regarding the 1965-1966 school year budget were included in this mailing for the following year; allowing the public to better understand where the money came from and on what programs it was spent.¹⁴³

The use of direct mailings was only one way in which the Board communicated to the public during the 1960s. Use of the local newspaper was also used. The Millard Edition of the Ralston Recorder was used to report many special events. For example, during National Education Week of the 1967-1968 school year parents were encouraged to visit classes as special classroom or demonstrations were set up to be in operation in the lower level of

¹⁴¹Ibid., September 21, 1970.

¹⁴²Ibid., July 13, 1964.

¹⁴³Ibid., July 12, 1965.

Millard shopping center.¹⁴⁴ This was a good time to be spotlighting students as a bond issue was soon to be voted on by the public.

The need for good public relations was evident when the Board discussed the idea of modular scheduling at the new senior high school. "The Board instructed the administration that they must go out and sell modular scheduling program to the community."¹⁴⁵

Citizen Committees

Finally, the Board made use of citizen committees whenever possible to obtain input regarding major decisions that needed to be made. A high school program had been accepted and instituted earlier as part of a Mid-Continent Regional Education Lab project. This program had created a high school advisory council that operated under a charter as presented to the board.¹⁴⁶ Eventually, this program's basic tenets were adopted to obtain community input, whenever possible, as evident in the issue of curriculum development and the Board's decision in late 1970 to develop a school advisory group.

CITIZENS STUDY & DISCUSSION COMMITTEE

The Board of Education has authorized the formation of a Citizens Committee called the Millard Citizens Study and Discussion Committee. Purpose of this committee shall be to:

1. Work for the improvement of the educational program for all students in the Millard Public Schools.
2. Provide a communicating link between the public and the schools.

¹⁴⁴Millard Public Schools News Clippings File, (Douglas County District 17) ,1967-68 School Year, Don Stroh Administration Center, Omaha, Nebraska.

¹⁴⁵Millard Public Schools Board Minutes (Douglas County District 17), November 3, 1969, Don Stroh Administration Center, Omaha, Nebraska.

¹⁴⁶Ibid., July 7 and August 22, 1969.

3. Study and interpret to the public the policies, procedures, curricular program and educational needs of the Millard Public Schools.

4. Discuss with and suggest to the Superintendent of Millard School District items which will promote a better and more efficient educational program.

The purposes of this organization are to be carried out without any real or implied connection with, or relation to, any other organization, individual, or political body, group, party, or subdivision.

This committee shall be composed of lay membership with two couples selected from each elementary school, three couples from the junior high school, one couple from special education, and four couples from the high school.

The committee is purely advisory in nature, and may, after careful consideration of some topic, submit recommendations to the superintendent. Such recommendations shall be given careful consideration, but the Board/Administration is free to accept or reject committee recommendations.¹⁴⁷

Business Practices

Until the close of the period under consideration, the business program of the school district was conducted by the superintendent in conjunction with the board. Not until March 10, 1970, was an associate superintendency for business management created. The business management of the school district's program was conducted by the superintendent and the growing number of secretarial personnel. Dick Lewis, the first person to fill the associate superintendency for business management indicated that his early work was primarily in two areas: to develop an accounting system that was less reliant on hand accounting and to keep up with

¹⁴⁷Ibid., October 5, 1970. (A social value of the times is evident in only couples were allowed to be committee members.)

the growing need for more buildings. Due to the fact that Dick Lewis had worked in construction, his expertise in the field had been called upon since he had come to the district.¹⁴⁸

Business Management Growth

One of the reasons for the need for growth in business management was the number of programs at both the state and federal level that required more fiscal management and documentation. For example the hot lunch program, which was first started in the 1960-1961 school year, ended its first year with a balance of \$88.00.¹⁴⁹ In little over three months, however, the yearly audit called for the establishment of a separate lunch fund account.¹⁵⁰ The national concerns regarding poverty were part of Millard Public Schools with the introduction of a free and reduced lunch program was eventually added in order to continue to receive federal funding for the hot lunch program. The sentiments of the Board were found in the minutes as it was recorded that "Stroh to present the poverty plan to the State Department of Education for approval of free lunches and report next meeting."¹⁵¹ The addition of first Title I and Title II funds in budget further added to bookkeeping needs during this time.¹⁵²

State and federal programs were not the only issues complicating the business matters of the district. A growing number of staff members meant new and different programs. Payroll deductions for United Community Chest were

¹⁴⁸Richard Lewis, interview by author, Tape recording, Omaha, Nebraska, 15 October 1996.

¹⁴⁹Millard Public Schools Board Minutes (Douglas County District 17), June 5, 1961, Don Stroh Administration Center, Omaha, Nebraska.

¹⁵⁰Ibid., September 14, 1961.

¹⁵¹Ibid., January 6, 1969.

¹⁵² Ibid., July 14, 1967.

allowed in 1968.¹⁵³ The growth of the Millard Public School's staff was reported in the local newspaper that for the first time the Millard Schools were challenging Millard Lumber, the largest local business concern, for the highest number of contributions to the Omaha Community Chest.¹⁵⁴ The growing influence of the teachers was apparent the next month when payroll deduction of professional dues was allowed.¹⁵⁵

Electronic Payroll

The bookkeeping was not only a growing administrative problem, it was also a problem for the Board. All the checks had to be signed by selected individual board members. In 1965, the Board began pursuing an electronic payroll system. One of the criteria it placed upon the use of such a system was the printing of board members' signatures when so authorized by Board action.¹⁵⁶ Thus began what was to become almost a yearly pursuit of more effective ways to conduct business reporting and check writing. "At a recent special meeting, Millard School Board members accepted a proposal offered by U.S. National Bank of Omaha to run payroll for the district's 200 employees by a computer process."¹⁵⁷ This program was for a one-year trial basis and cost \$44.00 a month. By the late 1960s intermediary school units called Educational Service Units were appearing in Nebraska under new state legislation.

¹⁵³Ibid., August 27, 1968.

¹⁵⁴Millard Public Schools News Clippings File, (Douglas County District 17) ,1968-1969 School Year, Don Stroh Administration Center, Omaha, Nebraska.

¹⁵⁵Millard Public Schools Board Minutes (Douglas County District 17), September 4, 1968, Don Stroh Administration Center, Omaha, Nebraska.

¹⁵⁶Ibid., November 15, 1965.

¹⁵⁷ Millard Public Schools News Clippings File, (Douglas County District 17) ,1967-1968 School Year, Don Stroh Administration Center, Omaha, Nebraska.

Eventually, the Millard Public Schools contracted Educational Service Unit Number Three (ESU #3) for computer services. These services would eventually grow to include bookkeeping services, student record services, and student scheduling services at the secondary level.¹⁵⁸

In addition to handling programs mandated at the state and federal levels, the Board began to actively pursue more state aid to education for its district. Don Stroh, while providing leadership for the state's school administrators called for "a resolution declaring that state aid to education should be for general support of schools and supplemental to the local community effort by not restricting local support."¹⁵⁹ The rapid growth of the district was placing a burden on the taxpayers and some property tax relief was needed. Thus began a yearly drive on the part of the Board and the school administration to increase state aid to public education in the state of Nebraska.

Curriculum and Instruction

An area of great change in the 1960-1970 period was that of curriculum and instruction. Causes for the change were multiple, but included the size of the district itself, the changing times, and the advent of technology. The points of change to be discussed in this section include the strides made in curriculum development, accreditation, summer school and adult education, special education, and instruction.

Curriculum Development

One of the most important developments in curriculum was the

¹⁵⁸Millard Public Schools Board Minutes (Douglas County District 17), November 18, 1968, Don Stroh Administration Center, Omaha, Nebraska.

¹⁵⁹Millard Public Schools News Clippings File, (Douglas County District 17) ,1967-1968 School Year, Don Stroh Administration Center, Omaha, Nebraska.

appointment of Ron Witt as assistant superintendent for the 1966-1967 school year. Mr. Witt's major focus was on curriculum and instruction and his title is often written in the Board's minutes as director of curriculum even though the administrative flow chart of the period listed the position as an assistant superintendent. Up until this time, the curriculum used in the district had been very dependent on the textbook series that had been purchased by the district. With the advent of an administrator in charge of curriculum, this changed. Probably the first major indication of this was a board presentation regarding the curriculum guides developed during the past year in June of 1968.¹⁶⁰ The focus of these guides had been the math program. These curriculum guides were developed following a nine-point program of curriculum development instituted by Mr. Witt using teachers and teacher leaders on curriculum committees.

Committee Responsibilities

1. Select a chairman.
2. Select a recorder.
3. Meet at least five times during the 1967-68 school year.
4. Develop K-12 guidelines or 7-12 guidelines.
5. Submit to the director of curriculum immediate recommendations for 1968-69, long range recommendations, pilot programs for 1968-69, and new textbook adoptions for 1968-69.
6. Work should be completed by May 3, 1968.
7. Review the self evaluation report.
8. A course outline must be submitted before a pilot program can be considered.
9. Write a K-12 or 7-12 philosophy for the subject area.

Chairman responsibilities.

1. Call meetings (at least five) notify all committee members.

¹⁶⁰Millard Public Schools Board Minutes (Douglas County District 17), June 3, 1968, Don Stroh Administration Center, Omaha, Nebraska.

2. Submit work of committee to director of curriculum by May 3, 1968.
3. Converse after each meeting with director of curriculum to see how work is progressing.
4. Visit programs in the immediate area to see what new programs are in existence.
5. Submit textbook inventory to directory of curriculum by October 15, 1967.
6. Direct committee so that progress can be made in the particular area.
7. Establish sub-committees and make assignments to complete the work.
8. Inform the director of curriculum of the dates and place of meetings.
9. Keep attendance records.¹⁶¹

Elementary Curriculum

Little mention is made of the elementary curriculum at the time. In discussing elementary curriculum, Dr. Witt stated "This is not a very complicated answer. We set up a rotation on how we were going to bring in books. A salesman or consultant came in and our textbook committee for that subject met with them. Then that committee voted."¹⁶² Most of the focus was on the secondary level. Four curriculum components, however, were started at the elementary level. These were the development of a comprehensive outdoor education program, a parent tutor program in reading, a new report card for primary grades, and the introduction of strings into the instrumental program at the elementary level.

The outdoor education program developed at the district level was designed for sixth graders. The first experience was held at the Circle R Camp

¹⁶¹Ibid., September 7, 1967.

¹⁶²Dr. Ronald Witt, interview by author, Tape recording, Omaha, Nebraska, 24 October 1996.

and included hiking, archery and soil conservation lectures.¹⁶³ Stan Anderson, a secondary teacher was in charge of the first program which included some outdoor meals. Over the years, many additions were made to the program. The program eventually included one or two nights of camping at nearby 4-H, scout, or church camps. Although this was an expensive program for parents, the Board did assist through partial funding of the program. "Motion by Houghston Tetrick that the school district would assume one half the cost of the sixth grade outdoor education at Camp Calvin Crest in Fremont for the 1969-1970 school year. Motion carried."¹⁶⁴

A special request was approved for second semester of the 1969-1970 school year for a special program to help those experiencing difficulty in reading.

Mr. Ron Witt gave a report on Volunteer Aides In Reading (VAIR). The program is composed of volunteers from the district who assist the classroom teacher in supplying the necessary reinforcement of specific reading skills for children who demonstrate the need. Mr. Witt requested the district be allowed to begin the program second semester.¹⁶⁵

Although reading had long been a component of the summer school program, this was the first attempt in the district to provide extra programmatic help during the regular school day to those students experiencing reading difficulty. The development of the program came about in large part to the Board and the administrators having new statistical information on the students in the form of scores provided by achievement testing. This form of testing began in the

¹⁶³Millard Public Schools News Clippings File, (Douglas County District 17) ,1967-1968 School Year, Don Stroh Administration Center, Omaha, Nebraska.

¹⁶⁴Millard Public Schools Board Minutes (Douglas County District 17), May 4, 1968, Don Stroh Administration Center, Omaha, Nebraska.

¹⁶⁵Ibid., December 7, 1970.

district with the administering of the SRA (Scientific Research Associates) test in 1963.¹⁶⁶ From this time forward, the Board reviewed the standardized achievement test scores on a yearly basis.

The instrumental program for band had started in the Millard Public Schools with the advent of the new Junior Senior High School building in 1960. In 1968, a strings program was started in the elementary schools in the sixth grade. By the start of the 1970-1971 school year, this program was moved down into the fourth grade to allow for more preparation of students prior to the secondary program at the junior and senior high level. As much of the curriculum work done in the post-Sputnik era, an aptitude test for music, the Iowa Musical Aptitude Profile, was used for placement into this program.¹⁶⁷ Fear of the Soviet advancements during the late 1950s and early 1960s had caused many aptitude tests to be developed to maximize the money and time expended on instruction in the United States.

The late 1960s also saw the development of a trend to use new ways of educating America's youth. An example of this movement at the elementary school level is found in the expansion of a pilot program to use anecdotal report cards in the primary grades. This was first tried in a pilot program for grade two during the 1969-1970 school year. The program was expanded to grades one through three for the 1970-1971 school year.¹⁶⁸ Some of the reasoning in the educational community of the time is evident in notes presented to the Board as to why there should not be report cards.

¹⁶⁶Ibid., February 4, 1963.

¹⁶⁷Millard Public Schools News Clippings File, (Douglas County District), 1970-1971 School Year, Don Stroh Administration Center, Omaha, Nebraska.

¹⁶⁸Ibid.

1. Report cards show failure.
2. Reports cards encourage working for a "grade." This discourages individual motivation, and may even involve trickery for a good grade. Thus you don't learn for intrinsic, but rather extrinsic values.
3. How can the teacher justify the following: She gives a "1" to a child in a "low reading" group, and she gives a "3" to one in a faster-moving group.
4. No report cards or grades would help develop a non-graded primary. It would be quite difficult to pass report cards from teacher to teacher for the purpose of recording grades, especially if crossing grade lines.
5. Teachers "grade" differently. Parents don't understand why one teacher "grades" one way and another teacher "grades" another way. One teacher may 'grade' higher or lower than another.
6. Personalities (a teacher's or a child's) or a teacher's opinions go into grades.
7. If 'graded,' a child with many experiences will be on top--shouldn't be 'graded' or 'judged' on experiences a child has had.¹⁶⁹

Secondary Curriculum

The experimentation with new ideas regarding education was not only done at the elementary level. New trends were having their impact at the secondary level as well. The space race with the Soviets brought a new set of ideas regarding curriculum to the secondary level including aviation and the need for computers. The youth generation was also making changes in education. Drug education, sex education, and boys taking home economics were reflections of a changing American society.

One of the most interesting courses developed at the secondary level was an aviation course. In its attempt to keep its political identity as a community, Millard had built a municipal airport. The Board decided to capitalize on this by offering an aviation class. Bill Averman, a high school

¹⁶⁹Ibid.

teacher, attended a three-day seminar sponsored by Cessna, in preparation for an aviation course to be taught in the Millard Public Schools. "Mr. Averman said the purpose of the course was not to qualify for licenses, but rather to spur interest in aviation as a profession."¹⁷⁰ As part of an earlier summer course, Mr. Averman had received his pilots license. The Nebraska Department of Education shortly thereafter proposed the idea of developing an aviation course in a Nebraska school as a result in part of the space race that was going on at the time between the United States and the Soviet Union. To induce the idea the State Department of Education offered scholarships for two other instructors to take flying lessons. Thus Dick Lewis and Dick Corwine took the lessons, and helped Mr. Averman with the course when possible. The course lasted several years, but the difficulties with the course were the cost of actual flying time and school district liability. Eventually, the latter two factors caused the course to end.¹⁷¹

The space race had also made available new technologies not previously used in education before. One such technology was the computer. Although the 1990s was the period for major implementation of the use of computers in the classroom, during the 1960s computers were expensive. The Board was already considering the use of technology in instruction during the late 1960s as the following report and request indicates.

¹⁷⁰Millard Public Schools News Clippings File, (Douglas County District 17) ,1967-1968 School Year, Don Stroh Administration Center, Omaha, Nebraska.

¹⁷¹Dr. Richard Corwine, interview by author, Tape recording, Omaha, Nebraska, 7 October 1996.

REPORT AND REQUEST FOR COMPUTER

Submitted by Don West

Attention Board of Education and Administration

In reference to our conversation and communication in January, I submit the following report.

We of the math, science, and business departments wish to request the close access of some form of a computer in the Millard school system, beginning the earliest date possible.

The need for some form of data processing is prevalent in as much as almost all colleges will soon be requesting a basic manipulation knowledge of the computer, especially in the fields of science and related subjects. As you already know, the business field is completely dominated with computers and it is estimated that three of every four graduates will be working almost directly in conjunction with an electronic mind within five years. If there were ever a more directly job oriented teaching device in a school it would only be the book.

How a machine of any type would fit or be used, we see as follows.... The business department could teach the principles of card punching and sequential reasoning in their upper business courses. Science would directly apply it to the study of electronics and especially in problem solving in chemistry and physics courses. The math department could use a device of this nature to check solutions and assist in solving long manipulative, time-consuming problems. I also see a use in the elementary schools for a field trip when they are studying computers, plus the use of the machine with their special science and math clubs.

My estimation seems minimal to state that we would anticipate contacting 700 students each year, costing about \$7 per student and of course assuming the life expectancy of a machine to be a minimum of seven years. We would be talking in terms of \$1 per student over a seven year period. About 1/600 of the cost of educating a child which will affect 3/4ths of the graduates' further income is involved.

What are others doing.... Westside and Omaha are leasing time through a teletype hook-up at U.N. of Omaha at a cost of about

\$175 a month. Bishop has purchased a number of Olivetti Underwood Programma 101's at a cost of approximately \$4,000 each. Ralston has budgeted for and Wesleyan University has a functioning in Wang set-up which range in cost according to the elements purchased, starting in our case at about \$4,000 total cost and added to as we would see fit. What we have in mind would cost \$5,000.

I would like to exclude all other machines which we researched in as much as their cost ranged from, \$10,000 upward and their degree of satisfaction is, we feel, head and hand above our need at this time.

Our recommendation at this time would be the Wang machine. Our feeling is that this machine, if properly equipped, can serve as a calculator for the business department and for checking elementary arithmetic problems in the math classes. This machine can be programmed for use in physics and higher mathematics and may be adapted to teach the principles of card punching in the upper business courses. Last, but not least, this is a basically movable type of machine and has only one learning station.

We would not recommend a direct line hook-up because you would continue payments and never own the machine. The degree of satisfaction offered by this would be unnecessary and very difficult to explain to a student unless we offered a course as such. Also, this would not be very movable and has only one learning station.

The Olivetti Underwood machine, which some of you have seen, would be our second choice. Although it is the cheapest, since it only has one learning station, we feel it should only rate a second choice. It is very definitely the best machine for programming purposes but has no means for card punch applications.

Thank you for your time and consideration.¹⁷²

The request for the above computer was not the only discussion regarding technology during this time. The changing world of technology

¹⁷²Millard Public Schools Board Minutes (Douglas County District 17), May 19, 1969, Don Stroh Administration Center, Omaha, Nebraska.

required the Board to look for new curriculum at the secondary level. For example, there was the need, from an industrial viewpoint, for a class on plastics and possibly leather and basic silver smithing.¹⁷³ A new business office practice course during the 1967-68 school year made use of dictaphones, a print and rotary calculator, and fifteen IBM electric machines for key punch simulation.¹⁷⁴ The building of the new senior high school included the latest use of technology in its student response system, which had been fully researched by Dick Corwine the director of educational media. Eventually the system was acquired for \$21,570.00.¹⁷⁵ As Dick Corwine indicated, the latter was possible because “the star of media was rising in educational circles rapidly in the late 1960s. It was given some impetus by some federal funding.”¹⁷⁶ Thus much of the innovative media put into the Millard Public Schools in the late 1960s was funded by federal grants. Dick Corwine noted that the real advancement during this time was television, overhead projectors, and thermofax machines to make overhead transparencies.¹⁷⁷

Educational Consortiums

Impacting much of the curriculum of the age was the television. The Board made Millard Public Schools a leader in this field also. In 1963, the Nebraska Education Television Act was passed making Nebraska a leader in educational broadcasting. Educational television was discussed as early as

¹⁷³Millard Public Schools News Clippings File, (Douglas County District 17) ,1967-1968 School Year, Don Stroh Administration Center, Omaha, Nebraska.

¹⁷⁴Ibid.

¹⁷⁵Millard Public Schools Board Minutes (Douglas County District 17), February 17, 1969, Don Stroh Administration Center, Omaha, Nebraska.

¹⁷⁶Dr. Richard Corwine, interview by author, Tape recording, Omaha, Nebraska, 7 October 1996.

¹⁷⁷Ibid.

1961 by the Board.¹⁷⁸ The Board joined "School TV Education Aid Series" on Channel 16 in 1965.¹⁷⁹ The cost to the school district at this time was \$.50 per student.¹⁸⁰ In addition to the cost for each student, all of the buildings had to be wired for television and television stands had to be purchased. Board actions from the time include the purchase of thirteen televisions and stands and expenditures to wire the junior senior-high school at a cost of \$420.00.¹⁸¹ Millard remained an active member of the program renewing its use of Channel 26 for the 1966-1967 school year. In 1966-67, however, the Board, as a founding member of MOEBA (Metropolitan Omaha Educational Broadcast Association), suggested that the newly formed Educational Service Unit Number 3 (ESU #3) should take over educational television for the following year.¹⁸²

The Board's involvement with ESU #3 represented a growing trend in the late 1960s for the metropolitan school districts to work together to provide services in both curriculum and instruction. As a member of the Omaha Suburban Area Council of Schools (OSACS), Millard Public Schools was cooperatively working on a Title III grant to establish a science center. For a short period, the Millard Central Elementary School was considered as a science center site. The program was located in Gretna, with a lab for

¹⁷⁸Millard Public Schools Board Minutes (Douglas County District 17), March 6, 1961, Don Stroh Administration Center, Omaha, Nebraska.

¹⁷⁹ibid., January 4, 1965.

¹⁸⁰Millard Public Schools News Clippings File, (Douglas County District 17) ,1963-1965 School Years, Don Stroh Administration Center, Omaha, Nebraska.

¹⁸¹Millard Public Schools Board Minutes (Douglas County District 17), September 9, 1965 and November 1, 1965, Don Stroh Administration Center, Omaha, Nebraska.

¹⁸²Millard Public Schools News Clippings File, (Douglas County District 17) ,1967-1968 School Years, Don Stroh Administration Center, Omaha, Nebraska

metropolitan area students to do original research.¹⁸³ In addition, the OSACS group developed a large film library which the group eventually sold to ESU #3. The Millard district was already using the local service unit for some of the district's bookkeeping purposes. Eventually, the district would add scheduling and student record-keeping to the list of services provided by the service unit.

Drug and Sex Education

Two youth-oriented topics at the national level during this period were the growing use of illegal drugs on the part of youth and sex education. Both of these topics are found in the Board's work during this time.

The more controversial program for the Millard community was that of sex education.

Several parents, who are concerned about sex education being taught in the Millard schools, were at the meeting. The parents are concerned as to whether the SIECUS (Sex Information and Education Council of the United States) materials is being used. Mr. Stroh stated the SIECUS materials, to his knowledge, has never been used in Millard schools. The SIECUS group was seen as very liberal group at the time and there was a great deal of concern in the community.¹⁸⁴

A meeting was set for Monday, August 25, in the vocal music room, at 7:00 p.m. "Parents will have a chance to review the films, filmstrips, and other materials used in the Millard schools."¹⁸⁵ The specific course of concern was an Adult Living class that was open to juniors and seniors. After a group of concerned parents approached the Board, the materials were reviewed by parents. Just

¹⁸³Millard Public Schools News Clippings File, (Douglas County District 17) ,1967-1968 School Year, Don Stroh Administration Center, Omaha, Nebraska.

¹⁸⁴Dr. Richard Corwine, interview by author, Tape recording, Omaha, Nebraska, 7 October 1996.

¹⁸⁵Millard Public Schools Board Minutes (Douglas County District 17), August 18, 1969, Don Stroh Administration Center, Omaha, Nebraska.

prior to the start of the 1968-1969 school year, the course was eliminated from the curriculum for the school year. This resulted in a petition signed by eighty-two parents and sixty-five students. The latter had been enrolled to take the course before it had been eliminated. The parents and the students wanted Adult Living reinstated. As a result of this request, the board established a study group to review the district's curricular materials.¹⁸⁶ The formation of this study group was presented to the Board and eventually approved. The study committee consisted of two medical doctors, two ministers, two board members, three staff members (In addition to Ron Witt who would facilitate the meetings and be a non-voting member of the committee.) six lay people for and six lay people against.¹⁸⁷ Two books were rejected by the committee, Sex and the Teenager and Reproduction, Sex, Preparation for Marriage. This was included in the information presented by Ron Witt in a report of the evaluation of materials studied by the committee for the Senior Adult Living Course. As a result of this study there was a "Motion by Norman Quist seconded by Donna Black, that we reinstate the Senior Adult Living course, using the materials which received majority approval by the study committee. That the class be offered in the evening and the parents are invited and strongly encouraged to attend with their children."¹⁸⁸ The resulting program reflected not only a sex education program in the public schools, but also a methodology for instituting curricular programs of a controversial nature.

The formation of committees including lay people, educators, and the clergy continues to be a modus operandi for the Millard Public Schools in

¹⁸⁶Ibid., September 15, 1969.

¹⁸⁷Ibid., October 6 and 20, 1969.

¹⁸⁸Ibid., January 5, 1970.

resolving curriculum issues. Millard Junior-Senior High School Principal Dick Lewis had stressed the need for balance between home, church, and school a year before the objection to the course had arisen in an informational PTA meeting on the sex education program.¹⁸⁹

Other Curricular Issues

The Adult Living class was part of a growing number of additions that were being made to the secondary curriculum in the late 1960s that would lead to a greatly expanded curriculum with the opening of the new high school in 1970. For example, the new courses offered during the 1968-1969 school year were to include physiology, power mechanics, marketing and merchandising plus semester courses in home economics including housing and home furnishings, human and child development, clothing and textiles, food and nutrition, and adult living.¹⁹⁰ Often the curriculum changes being made were reflections of a changing society. For example, as gender roles changed in American society, boys took home economics. A class of high interest was Gentlemen Only. This course focused on basic grooming, clothing care, social graces, basic techniques of food preparation, and the use of the washer and dryer.¹⁹¹

The changing counter culture of youth during the late 1960's took on many forms of expression. One of these forms was student dress. Although not directly curriculum-related, indirectly this was an issue that took up much time on the part of administrators in the late 1960s. Mr. John A. Lammel, in

¹⁸⁹Millard Public Schools News Clippings File, (Douglas County District 17) ,1967-1968 School Year, Don Stroh Administration Center, Omaha, Nebraska.

¹⁹⁰Ibid., 1968-1969.

¹⁹¹Ibid., 1970-1971.

newspaper interview upon joining the staff indicated his

'...well balanced curriculum duties include telling boys to get haircuts when hair grows over eyes, ears, and collar.' Meanwhile bloomers and mini-skirts give him opportunity to allow some girls to go home before 3:30. 'They're cute but not for school wear.' And 'when sitting there shouldn't be more than a hand's width between knee and the hemline on any dress or skirt.'¹⁹²

That this was a recurring issue is evident in the fact that John A. Lammel presented dress codes twice to the Board during the 1969-1970 school year.¹⁹³

The last presentation to the Board resulted in a new dress code which was dependent on the individual and the parent but "if disruptive to educational process, a threat to safety and health, or a violation of statute not permitted" final authority rested with the administration.¹⁹⁴ As Dick Lewis pointed out, "This was a time when all discipline was being questioned. There was the Vietnam War and authority was questioned on such issues as long hair and mustaches."¹⁹⁵

The other youth problem of the late 1960s was not easily handled by policies, as it was the problem of the growing drug culture in America. Due to concern regarding this issue, James Rames, a secondary science teacher, attended a drug education conference and presented information to the Board. The Board decided there was a need for a community committee to develop drug education curriculum and that a drug survey at the secondary level should

¹⁹²Ibid., 1967-1968.

¹⁹⁴Millard Public Schools News Clippings File, (Douglas County District), 1969-1970 School Year, Don Stroh Administration Center, Omaha, Nebraska.

¹⁹⁵Richard Lewis, interview by author, Tape recording, Omaha, Nebraska, 15 October 1996.

be conducted.¹⁹⁶ The latter was presented to the Board in May of 1970. The Board then developed a policy that included eight points: (1) providing information for wise choices, (2) total community involvement, (3) medical and legal input, (4) part of total health program, (5) emphasis on school and district problems, (6) in-service program that includes all employees, (7) start at elementary level, and (8) that new facts and research be shared with the community.¹⁹⁷ As the district searched for curriculum, its involvement with ESU#3 came into play once again. ESU#3 had a drug education curriculum that included selected problem solving situations and a parent component called "Drug Decisions" by Lockheed Educational Systems.¹⁹⁸ This curriculum was adopted as part of the health education curriculum at the secondary level.

Accreditation

Directly tied to curriculum development was school accreditation. Prior to the consolidation of the late 1950s, the Board had struggled with presenting an educational program that was accredited by the Nebraska State Department of Education. Much of the curriculum development was a planned effort to raise the accreditation of the school system. As Dr. Witt stated,

One of my very first jobs in 1966 was to conduct a North Central self-study we had in those particular years. That was kind of a guiding light that led our school district. That was the first effort to get some really organized curriculum. Until then we were a small

¹⁹⁶ Millard Public Schools Board Minutes (Douglas County District 17), March 16, 1970, Don Stroh Administration Center, Omaha, Nebraska.

¹⁹⁷ Millard Public Schools News Clippings File, (Douglas County District 17), 1969-1970 School Year, Don Stroh Administration Center, Omaha, Nebraska.

¹⁹⁸ Ibid.

school and curriculum had been left to teachers and principals to make choices.¹⁹⁹

As a result of this effort made in the 1960s, major differences can be found in the curriculum guide provided for the secondary students for the 1962-1963 school year and the same guide for the 1970-1971 school year. The 1962-1963 curricular content consisted of English, social studies, shop, home economics, journalism, business, science, vocal and instrumental music, and physical education. For example for grades 9-12, the math curriculum consisted of Algebra I, Algebra II, Geometry, General Math, and General Business. The latter were taught by the business department along with Typing, Shorthand, and Bookkeeping.²⁰⁰

By 1970-1971, the curriculum content consisted of physical education, homemaking, aviation, drivers education, art, science, industrial arts, business education, mathematics, foreign language, social studies, and English. Math courses included Algebra I, Algebra II, Geometry, Consumer Mathematics, Advanced Math (College Preparatory), and Vocational Math while the business courses included Marketing and Merchandising, Personal Use Typing, Typing I, Shorthand I, Notehand (College Preparatory), Stenographic Office Practice, Clerical Office Practice, Bookkeeping, Advanced Bookkeeping, and Distributive Education Work Experience. These two sets of curriculum offering reflect a definite three-pronged approach to curriculum. These prongs being general

¹⁹⁹Dr. Ronald Witt, interview by author, Tape recording, Omaha, Nebraska, 24 October 1996.

²⁰⁰The high school in 1962-1963 consisted of grades 10-12, while in 1970-1971 it consisted of grades 9-12 due to overcrowding at the junior high level. Thus art which was offered to grade 9 in 1962-1963 is not listed among the courses because art was not available at the high school level at that time.

education, vocational education, and college preparatory. Including special education, there was really a four-pronged approach.

This change in curriculum resulted in changing state accreditation requirements. Reports from the early part of the 1960s reflect deficiencies in meeting certain criteria such as needing an elementary principal (Ron Witt was hired to fill this position.) or needing more library books.²⁰¹ In 1962, the school district was fully accredited by the state department but was warned the following year that some teachers were deficient in the correct course work in three subjects and there was no guidance counselor.²⁰²

As the Board and the school administrators worked to develop the curricular offerings required by the Nebraska State Department, secondary principal Dick Lewis was sent to Chicago to a meeting of the North Central Accreditation Association.²⁰³ A North Central Accreditation Team visited Millard Junior-Senior High School during February of 1965.²⁰⁴ The visiting team also met with the Board. Millard Junior-Senior High School was accepted as being North Central Accredited in April of 1965.²⁰⁵

The importance of this accreditation on the part of the Board and the school administration can be found in Millard Junior High School pursuing its own North Central Accreditation after the building of the new senior high school.²⁰⁶ Reasons given for this move were national recognition and

²⁰¹Millard Public Schools Board Minutes (Douglas County District 17), June 5, 1961, Don Stroh Administration Center, Omaha, Nebraska.

²⁰²Ibid., June 6, 1962 and May 11, 1963.

²⁰³Ibid., February 3, 1964.

²⁰⁴Ibid., December 7, 1964.

²⁰⁵Ibid., April 4, 1965.

²⁰⁶September 8, 1970.

improvement of instruction. Millard was a leader in the use of middle school concepts in that a block concept was being used by combining social studies and English. The same concept was tried in math and science with less success.²⁰⁷

By the late 1960s, the Nebraska State Department of Education was awarding Millard Public Schools a double A rating. "Double A school systems meet and exceed the criteria found in the over-all Class A pattern and have programs which are definitely above the general level of fully accredited schools. These school systems are characterized by stability, continuity and growth and receive excellent community support."²⁰⁸ This level of accreditation remains today in the Millard Public Schools.

Summer School and Adult Education

The 1961-1962 school budget added two categories of community service: adult education and summer school.²⁰⁹ The summer school programs were started earlier that year with no allowance for them in the budget. The summer school program for the school district consisted of summer band and a remedial reading program. Both programs were based on a minimal number of students participating. A survey of the community found seventy-eight students who wanted summer band. The Board required that twenty students participate

²⁰⁷Richard Lewis, interview by author, Tape recording, Omaha, Nebraska, 15 October 1996.

²⁰⁸Millard Public Schools News Clippings File, (Douglas County District 17) ,1967-1968 School Year, Don Stroh Administration Center, Omaha, Nebraska.

²⁰⁹Millard Public Schools Board Minutes (Douglas County District 17), July 10, 1961, Don Stroh Administration Center, Omaha, Nebraska.

in remedial reading for it to be offered.²¹⁰ The following year a recreation program was proposed to enhance the summer reading and band programs.²¹¹

While the band program was for all grades, the reading program was for the elementary grades. New programs were added over the years. For example, parents requested drivers education program in the summer of 1964 for secondary students.²¹² During the same summer, a library program was added for the elementary students.²¹³ By the summer of 1967, the elementary program was greatly enlarged to include remedial work in language arts and math. This expansion was possible due to federal monies from Title I funds. This summer program allowed for extra help for around five hundred elementary students during that summer.²¹⁴ The adult education program was slower in its growth. Early adult education was performed by civic groups using school facilities. The ties to the community were important and the Board provided evening teachers for a General Education Degree (GED) program at Western Electric where there were twenty-nine students pursuing high school equivalency diplomas.²¹⁵ In addition in the mid-1960s the district began offering adult improvement courses such as Personal Typing, Beginning Bridge, Tailoring, Cake Decorating, and Beginning Sewing.²¹⁶ Although these were

²¹¹Ibid., February 5, 1962 and June 4, 1962.

²¹²Ibid., March 2, 1964.

²¹³Millard Public Schools News Clippings File, (Douglas County District 17) ,1963-1965 School Years, Don Stroh Administration Center, Omaha, Nebraska.

²¹⁴Millard Public Schools Board Minutes (Douglas County District 17), June 5, 1967, Don Stroh Administration Center, Omaha, Nebraska.

²¹⁵Millard Public Schools News Clippings File, (Douglas County District 17) ,1967-1968 School Year, Don Stroh Administration Center, Omaha, Nebraska.

²¹⁶Millard Public Schools Board Minutes (Douglas County District 17), September 7, 1967, Don Stroh Administration Center, Omaha, Nebraska.

modest beginnings, the Millard school district was part of a suburban setting served by a city college, a state technical college, and numerous private educational institutions.

Vocational Education

An early curricular concern of the district was vocational education. The need for technically-trained labor at Western Electric, other growing local businesses, and agriculture placed pressure on the Board and the administrators to develop vocational offerings. These curricular offerings were a major focus for the school district in the mid to late 1960s. A survey of clubs and organizations at the junior-senior high school during the 1967-1968 school year revealed that the majority of the clubs were vocational in nature.²¹⁷ The growth of the business and home economics programs were a part of the growth of the vocational program.

With the planning for a new high school, Dick Lewis was sent to visit a nationally renowned vocational school in Alexandria, Minnesota.²¹⁸ In addition, a shared vocational program with Ralston and Papillion Public schools was being explored at the same time.²¹⁹

Although both approaches would be used over the coming years in Millard Public Schools, the early approach was to develop a local program. In a

²¹⁷Millard Public Schools Board Minutes (Douglas County District 17), March 4, 1967, Don Stroh Administration Center, Omaha, Nebraska.

²¹⁸Ibid., November 11, 1965.

²¹⁹Ibid., October 4, 1965.

report to the Board regarding the need for a vocational business program, the following was recorded.

There exists in our present curriculum a definite need for Vocational Training. Approximately 50% of our graduates go to college or technical school which leaves another 50% who graduate from high school and begin their employment.²²⁰

When the new Millard Senior High School opened in the fall of 1970, it offered a variety of new vocational programs including metal technology, vocational machine metals, electricity and electronics, mechanical and architectural drafting, and woods.²²¹ This industrial arts program was complemented by the business and home economics program. The overall importance of the program is found in Board action " that Harlan McCoy be hired as Vocational and Adult Education Director for 1970-1971 school year."²²² Thus began a new phase of both vocational education and adult education in the community. The development of the vocational program also allowed the district to continue to let adults make use of the facilities in the evening as part of a good public relations and adult education program.

Special Education

In addition to the general and vocational education programs and the growth of the school district, the Board also and administrators worked to develop a new and growing educational program called special education. As early as 1962, the Board was discussing the education of students with special needs when it contracted with Westside to provide a program on a half-day

²²⁰Ibid., March 16, 1969.

²²¹Millard Public Schools News Clippings File, (Douglas County District 17) ,1981-1982 School Year, Don Stroh Administration Center, Omaha, Nebraska.

²²²Millard Public Schools Board Minutes (Douglas County District 17), April 6, 1970, Don Stroh Administration Center, Omaha, Nebraska.

basis for a Millard student.²²³ Early references to the need for the development of the program reflect a need for information regarding the special education students and also the language of the day. Thus the Board requested a Plan for Mentally Disturbed.²²⁴ The growing need for this program was also evident in the Board's asking for testing to be done to better determine the district's needs in special education.²²⁵ To achieve the latter, the Board hired Dr. Mary Kreider from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln to test students and to outline a program of special education for the district. Dr. Kreider found through testing a need for twenty students to have some sort of program of special education.²²⁶ During this time, the Board continued to contract outside services for special education. The issue of what type of program to provide and to whom was further compounded by the changing role of educational entities. Services such as speech therapy that were once provided through the Douglas County Superintendent's office were terminated at the close of the 1965-1966 school year. This termination of services would have an impact on seven possible students in the district.²²⁷ Thus, a need for a speech therapist was created within the district. A year later, however, the position was "done away with" and ESU#3 accepted the responsibility.²²⁸ The growing role of outside agencies is

²²³Ibid., September 4, 1962.

²²⁴Ibid., May 6, 1963.

²²⁵Ibid., June 3, 1963.

²²⁶Ibid., June 1, 1964.

²²⁷Ibid., March 8, 1965.

²²⁸Ibid., March 4, 1968.

also apparent in ESU#3 agreeing to help in finding and identifying special education students.²²⁹

In addition to the use of services of Westside Community Schools and ESU#3, two other sources of help were contracted during the 1960s. Adeline Reis, a Millard teacher, was granted a leave of absence to pursue a special education endorsement.²³⁰ Another form of help was working through cooperative programs with other suburban schools through the Board's membership in OSACS.

In 1967 a formal proposal for a special education program went to the Board. The proposal included a program of study, placement procedures, and a definition of what was at that time a special education student.

DEFINITION

Educable mentally retarded shall mean children of school age who because of retarded intellectual development as determined by individual psychological examination are incapable of being educated profitably and efficiently through the use of ordinary classroom facilities and procedures, but who may be expected to benefit from special educational facilities and methods designed to make them socially adjusted and economically useful (Nebraska School Law 43-604).²³¹

The growth of the program was such that within two years Adeline Reis was made the secondary department head for special education and given a ten-month contract.²³² Adeline Reis remembered these early years of special education as a time of developing school-to-work programs. Much of her time

²²⁹Millard Public Schools News Clippings File, (Douglas County District 17) ,1967-1968 School Year, Don Stroh Administration Center, Omaha, Nebraska.

²³⁰Millard Public Schools Board Minutes (Douglas County District 17), June 13, 1966, Don Stroh Administration Center, Omaha, Nebraska.

²³¹Ibid., April 3, 1967.

²³²Ibid., August 4, 1969.

was spent driving students to jobs that would train many students the skills they needed to survive. Also, many of the extreme cases were served outside the district due to the numbers. "The district couldn't afford not to contract."²³³ Most of the special education students of the early years were not labeled, what today we would call, learning disabled. Often Adeline Reis found herself mediating between physicians, school psychologists, and the Educational Service Unit #3 to provide what was best for students.

A major component of special education during this time was staff development. "Special education was the new field. All of our people were young people. It was very rare that our people had more than one or two years of experience when they came in to apply."²³⁴ Often the early years were spent just sharing what other teachers used. The real goal was to be child advocates.

Instruction

The instructional program in the Millard Public Schools during the 1960s focused on two main issues. First, the growth of the district and its corresponding instructional program within the context of a changing world. Second, the development of the instructional setting designed for construction of the new school buildings. The latter reflect the instructional and curricular programs at the time of their construction.

Early In-service Programs

The first in-service program for instruction in the district was implemented during the 1962-1963 school year. A half-day was set aside for elementary

²³³Adeline Reis, interview by author, Tape recording, Omaha, Nebraska, 21 October 1996.

²³⁴Ibid.

teachers to take part in a workshop on the instruction of music.²³⁵ Early in-service programs included teachers visiting other schools to gain knowledge about instructional programs in surrounding districts. When the idea was first presented to the Board, the Board was reluctant. The Board, however, agreed to the idea because the teachers had three more days in their 178 day contract than did surrounding districts.²³⁶ The in-service program was not totally dependent on what the school district provided to the teaching staff. The teachers, through their membership in the Nebraska State Education Association, were taking advantage of services provided to them such as the Helpmobile Session which allowed teachers to observe outstanding teachers demonstrate new techniques. This in-service program was done on teachers' own time, but many elementary teachers took advantage of the program.²³⁷ Much of the concern in instructional methodology of the early 1960s dealt with the need to compete with the communist Soviet Union. An in-service speaker, Dr. O.W. Kopp, Director of Elementary Education at UNL, in the spring of 1964 spoke to the teachers of the four challenges facing educators: survival, excellence, individualization of instruction, and flexibility. He saw an improvement of instruction with television and audio visual aids but he reminded teachers that "Our bright Johnnies must be brighter than the bright Ivans."²³⁸ Within one year the Board was putting television into all the schools and implementing an educational television program.

²³⁵Ibid., August 6, 1962.

²³⁶Millard Public Schools News Clippings File, (Douglas County District 17) ,1963-1965 School Years, Don Stroh Administration Center, Omaha, Nebraska.

²³⁷Ibid.

²³⁸Ibid.

The advent of the development of curriculum with leadership provided by Ron Witt also saw a change in the development of an in-service program for teachers. In 1967 Ron Witt proposed a once a month 8:00 to 10:00 a.m. period for teachers to have an in-service program.²³⁹ The district's involvement in instruction can also be viewed through the first student teacher report found in a board packet in late 1967.²⁴⁰ A growing need for highly trained teachers was quite different from the early 1960s when the salary schedule made allowances for non-degreed teachers. By the late 1960s, administrators were sent on recruiting trips to Midwest colleges and universities to interview prospective teachers.²⁴¹

The late 1960s was a time when the same two pronged approach of district level in-service and teachers working independently to improve instructional skills. It also included the systematic approach to an in-service program before the start of the school year. For example, the opening workshops for teachers for the 1968-1969 school year included six guest speakers.²⁴² A review of the agenda for this in-service program indicates a variety of topics including the growth of Millard Public Schools,²⁴³ the use of instructional media, the use of the television, the use of the new math curriculum, and the latest trends in reading instruction.²⁴⁴

²³⁹Millard Public Schools Board Minutes (Douglas County District 17), October 3, 1967, Don Stroh Administration Center, Omaha, Nebraska.

²⁴⁰Ibid., December 4, 1967.

²⁴¹Millard Public Schools News Clippings File, (Douglas County District 17) ,1968-1969 School Year, Don Stroh Administration Center, Omaha, Nebraska.

²⁴²Ibid.

²⁴³This program consisted of a district tour for new teachers.

²⁴⁴Millard Public Schools Board Minutes (Douglas County District 17), August 20, 1968, Don Stroh Administration Center, Omaha, Nebraska.

New Instructional Methods

Individual instructional methods developed during this time were often promoted in the news. A good example is the work done by two social studies teachers to use the inquiry method. Multiple materials were used to give students a varied perspective on events in order to help students develop their own opinions on events in history.²⁴⁵

The instructional methodologies that started in the late 1960s, such as the inquiry method, were a foreshadowing of the major controversial issues in the 1970s for education. Another future issue can be found in the 1970-1971 opening workshop topic of in-service speaker Paul Kennedy, of the University of Nebraska-Omaha. He spoke to the teachers about the measurement of their performance by looking at the performance of their students. This performance was to include academic achievement, attitude development, social behavior and love of learning.²⁴⁶ Teacher performance and evaluation would be a topic in the 1970s.

Instructional Impact on New Building Design

The instructional setting of the school buildings themselves indicate a changing evolution in instruction. During the period under consideration two secondary buildings were built and six elementary schools. While the first secondary building, Millard Junior-Senior High, which had opened in 1960, had focused on providing a basic secondary education. The opening of Millard High School in 1970, presently Millard South High School, represented a movement on the part of the Board to provide a general, vocational, and college

²⁴⁵Millard Public Schools News Clippings File, (Douglas County District 17) ,1968-1969 School Year, Don Stroh Administration Center, Omaha, Nebraska.

²⁴⁶Ibid., 1970-1971.

preparatory program. The Board also sought to include the latest instructional methodology in the new high school.

It has been said that innovations in educational processes require fifty years of trial before general acceptance. Long range projections are most often for five years and seldom exceed ten

years in an educational program. With this realization it is difficult to accept any superlative as "up to date", "the latest", every effort was expended to relate the successes and failures of self and others and proceed on a course implement such factors.²⁴⁷

Thus the building provided both a format for a school within a school concept to keep like grade levels together while at the same time providing for departmentalization through departmental planning areas.

Additionally, modular scheduling, an instructional methodology that allowed for both large and small group instruction, had been studied quite strenuously. A committee had been formed in 1968 to study modular scheduling.²⁴⁸ Almost a year later, "Ron Witt, John A. Lammel, and Dick Lewis were present to discuss modular scheduling. It was decided that more visitations will have to be made before a decision can be reached on this matter."²⁴⁹ The modular scheduling called for large and small group instruction in addition to individualized instruction. This was reflected in the new high school having a large lecture hall space where visually enhanced lectures could be presented as students sat in tiered semicircles. Also, each student could respond to teacher questions by registering answers to questions on an

²⁴⁷Dedication Brochures File for Millard Public Schools (Millard High School), (Douglas County District 17), Don Stroh Administration Center, Omaha, Nebraska.

²⁴⁸Millard Public Schools Board Minutes (Douglas County District 17), September 4, 1968, Don Stroh Administration Center, Omaha, Nebraska.

²⁴⁹Ibid., October 20, 1969.

electronic response system that was in the large lecture hall. A large media center was created with more than two hundred individualized study carrels. Small group instruction was carried on throughout the building.

The Board decided to “not to go with the trend but rather stayed pretty traditional with the schedule.”²⁵⁰ Yet, the facilities were available to support a wide variety of instruction. The building reflected special features such as acoustically treated classrooms for the music program, overhead projection screens in every classroom, a specially designed guidance department, and enhanced classrooms including a swimming pool for the physical education program.

The first five elementary schools, Bryan, Norris, Cody, Sandoz, and Cather, were built in the 1960's followed the same floor plan.

From its inception the Bryan school was planned by the Board, the administrative staff and the Architects to allow for flexible teaching methods. Provisions were made for “Activity” corridors wherein circulation space is increased to allow for greater use of the area other than for getting from room to room. Operable partitions rather than fixed walls are placed between classrooms to allow for expansion of the room as well as of the teaching program. These as well as other facilities incorporate the newest of educational principles retaining the flexibility of converting to tried and true methods if it is found that the new “workable” ideas really do not work.²⁵¹

Each of these buildings was designed for expansion if necessary due to growing enrollments. When the second elementary school, Norris, opened the line “These as well as other facilities incorporate the newest of educational principles retaining the flexibility of converting to tried and true methods if it is

²⁵⁰Richard Lewis, interview by author, Tape recording, Omaha, Nebraska, 15 October 1996 .

²⁵¹Dedication Brochures File for Millard Public Schools (Bryan Elementary School), (Douglas County District 17), Don Stroh Administration Center, Omaha, Nebraska.

found that the new “workable” ideas really do not work,²⁵² was removed from the official dedication brochure. By November of 1964, the third building opened with the folding walls allowing teachers to specialize or departmentalize in curricular fields at each grade levels.²⁵³ In addition, rooms for speciality teachers such as speech therapy or counseling were included. Budget constraints prevented the hiring of an elementary guidance counselor until 1969 when Bob Lykke was employed.²⁵⁴

When Sandoz and Cather opened, in 1967 and 1968 respectively, the flexible grouping instructional model was firmly in place. In addition, special attention was given to the physical education facilities.²⁵⁵

The sixth and final elementary school built during the period under consideration was opened with a different instructional model in mind. This necessitated special action by the Board. “Motion by H Tetrick, seconded by Donna Black that we approve as a pilot program for differentiated staffing at East Elementary. Motion Carried.”²⁵⁶ This was due to a new way of presenting the curriculum.

In the development of the Elementary School Program in this school, the open classroom concept is used. Classes are divided according to curriculum and ability, not by grade levels. All classrooms are contained in one enormous room, separated by

²⁵²Dedication Brochures File for Millard Public Schools (Norris Elementary School), (Douglas County District 17), Don Stroh Administration Center, Omaha, Nebraska.

²⁵³Dedication Brochures File for Millard Public Schools (Cody Elementary School), (Douglas County District 17), Don Stroh Administration Center, Omaha, Nebraska.

²⁵⁴ Millard Public Schools Board Minutes (Douglas County District 17), May 5, 1969, Don Stroh Administration Center, Omaha, Nebraska.

²⁵⁵Dedication Brochures File for Millard Public Schools (Sandoz and Cather Elementary Schools), (Douglas County District 17), Don Stroh Administration Center, Omaha, Nebraska.

²⁵⁶Millard Public Schools Board Minutes (Douglas County District 17), April 6, 1970, Don Stroh Administration Center, Omaha, Nebraska.

furniture on wheels, allowing for great flexibility. Library and audio-visual materials are an integral part of the open classroom area. Children enjoy greater use of audio-visual materials and

reading programs are library oriented, with students progressing at a rate of speed comfortable for them.

Cooperative teaching has increased communication and flexibility among the staff. The art and/or science classroom is set up on a self-contained basis. The building also provides a gymnasium, two separate kindergarten rooms, a music room and complete cafeteria facilities.

The open concept presents fewer discipline problems than the traditional classroom. The emphasis is on self-discipline. School ceases to be monotonous because students can spend a portion of their time moving to a different area to work on subjects in which they are most interested.²⁵⁷

Thus the 1960s closed with the advent of highly individualized programs at both the elementary and secondary levels.

Summary

The 1960s for the Millard Public Schools can be viewed as a time of rapid growth. Opening new elementary schools took center stage. The age of the youth had a major impact in the Millard Public Schools. Instruction and curriculum was being driven by federal monies due to a new focus on youth and their problems.

Leadership provided by Don Stroh encouraged people like Dick Corwine and Adeline Reis to pursue advanced degrees. Degrees in educational media and special education reflected issues of the time. Millard, like much of America, was reaping the technological benefits of the space race in the forms of new instructional media. In addition, new focus at the university level on how young people learned, as a result of the race to be better than the communists

²⁵⁷Dedication Brochures File for Millard Public Schools (Hitchcock Elementary School), (Douglas County District 17), Don Stroh Administration Center, Omaha, Nebraska.

of the world, was placing added emphasis on instruction. The latter resulted in the beginning of the special education program.

District leadership provided by the administrators and the Board was focused on keeping up with the rapidly growing numbers of students. At the same time the administration and the Board were setting precedents that are still evident in the policies and actions of the Board today. Although few of the early policies remain, the format for those policies is the same. The inclusion of parents on committees to review curriculum that was potentially sensitive or the distributed monthly calendar of Board meetings are examples of such policies. The development of board policy was to play a major role in the next several years as political institutions of America were to be questioned.