

GOVERNOR'S EDUCATIONAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE

PRELIMINARY RECOMMENDATIONS

ORGANIZATION OF PUBLIC ELEMENTARY AND
SECONDARY EDUCATION IN IOWA

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GOVERNOR'S EDUCATIONAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE
PRELIMINARY RECOMMENDATIONS CONCERNING THE ORGANIZATION
OF PUBLIC ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION IN IOWA

The Governor's Educational Advisory Committee is making the following recommendations in regard to the organization and financing of elementary and secondary education in Iowa. These recommendations are based upon special research reports, personal study and judgment, and Committee debate and discussion.

The recommendations that follow are divided into sections somewhat sequential in nature as the Committee feels that the organizational changes needed must follow a step-by-step process.

THE PROPOSED LOCAL ADMINISTRATIVE DISTRICT

The Committee has concluded that major changes in the organizational structure of Iowa's local school districts is of paramount importance. Many areas in Iowa are experiencing dramatic population shifts. Districts with decreasing enrollments confront all or some of the following problems: salary disparity, high per pupil costs, limited vocational programs, lack of student exposure to work-study situations, multiple assignments for teachers, high teacher turnover, and limited course offering. The maps and graphs in Appendix A vividly illustrate some of these problems as they pertain to the State of Iowa. The Committee recommends:

1. The number of local administrative districts for elementary and secondary education in Iowa should

be drastically reduced. The Committee feels that the new organizational structure should consist of county-like units except in situations where population or geographic conditions preclude this possibility.

It must be emphasized here that the discussion relates to administrative districts only, not to attendance centers. The local school board should have the final decision as to what pattern of attendance centers will insure that the students in their school district will receive a quality education in an efficient manner.

The Committee makes no claims as to possible cost savings if this proposed structure is adopted. However, we are certain that this new organization could considerably improve educational opportunities for Iowa's young people. In addition, it would assist in insuring that the money presently spent for elementary and secondary education is being used in the most efficient manner.

THE ORGANIZATION COMMISSION FOR QUALITY EDUCATION

The Committee firmly believes that it is imperative that the citizens of the State of Iowa have both the time and opportunity to study and to gain understanding of existing organizational problems and the proposed changes and to provide valuable inputs for final consideration. Because of this belief, the Committee is making the following recommendation:

2. The 64th General Assembly should create an Organization Commission for Quality Education to thoroughly analyze and study the organizational structure of local school districts in

Iowa. This Commission should plan a new structure for Iowa's schools to be submitted to the 65th General Assembly.

A number of things must be considered in the development of this Commission. One basic requirement is that the Commission must be adequately staffed and financed. A tentative budget for the Commission would indicate the need for an allocation of approximately \$300,000 for a two-year period. The School Budget Review Committee has estimated that \$27,000,000 annually is currently being spent inefficiently by Iowa's schools. The Committee suggests that the development of a plan to organize Iowa's school districts in an efficient manner is a worthwhile expenditure of public funds.

MORATORIUM ON NEW SCHOOL CONSTRUCTION AND ORGANIZATION

3. The General Assembly should declare a moratorium on new school construction and school reorganization. Proposed new school construction or organizational changes should be required to gain Commission approval during the organizational period.

This step would insure that any money spent on new school facilities or plans for school reorganization will be compatible with any new organizational structure being developed. It is emphasized that any legislation of this type, should it receive favorable action by the General Assembly and the Governor, should be made effective immediately upon being signed by the Governor and published as provided by law.

ELIMINATION OF COUNTY SCHOOL SYSTEMS AND PROVISION FOR SPECIAL SERVICES

4. The Committee recommends that concurrent with the reduction of the local administrative districts that the county, joint county, and merged county school systems be abolished.

Many of the new administrative districts would have the resources needed to provide special services such as centralized purchasing, computer services, special education programs, health service, educational media, and inservice training. The newly formed local districts should be permitted to cooperate and jointly establish, finance, and control any organization between the local and state level that they feel is necessary to provide special services that the local district or the Department of Public Instruction cannot provide in an efficient manner. They should also be allowed to contract jointly or separately for special services with other educational or private organizations. All legislative authority presently vested in the county school systems as provided in the Code of Iowa should be transferred to the new local county-like administrative districts.

THE STATE BOARD OF PUBLIC INSTRUCTION

The State Board of Public Instruction is given a vital leadership role in education and is the official advisory body of the General Assembly under Chapter 257 of the Code of Iowa. This role needs to be strengthened by increased funding to enable the Board to meet the changed conditions and responsibilities envisaged in this report. It is recommended:

5. The State Board of Public Instruction should restructure its administrative body, the Department of Public Instruction, so that it is better able to provide efficient, quality education through meaningful leadership, research, evaluation, and services on a statewide basis.

With the reduced number of local administrative units now better able to offer a sound educational program, the regulatory function of the Department should be considerably diminished. This should allow for the needed strengthening of the new priority functions discussed in the previous recommendation.

6. The Committee recommends that the General Assembly take appropriate steps to insure that the Department of Public Instruction is able to offer competitive salaries and fringe benefits comparable with other educational organizations. The salary and qualifications of the State Superintendent of Public Instruction should be determined by the State Board, should not require Senate confirmation, and should be comparable to any educational position in the areas of the Superintendent's responsibilities or supervision.

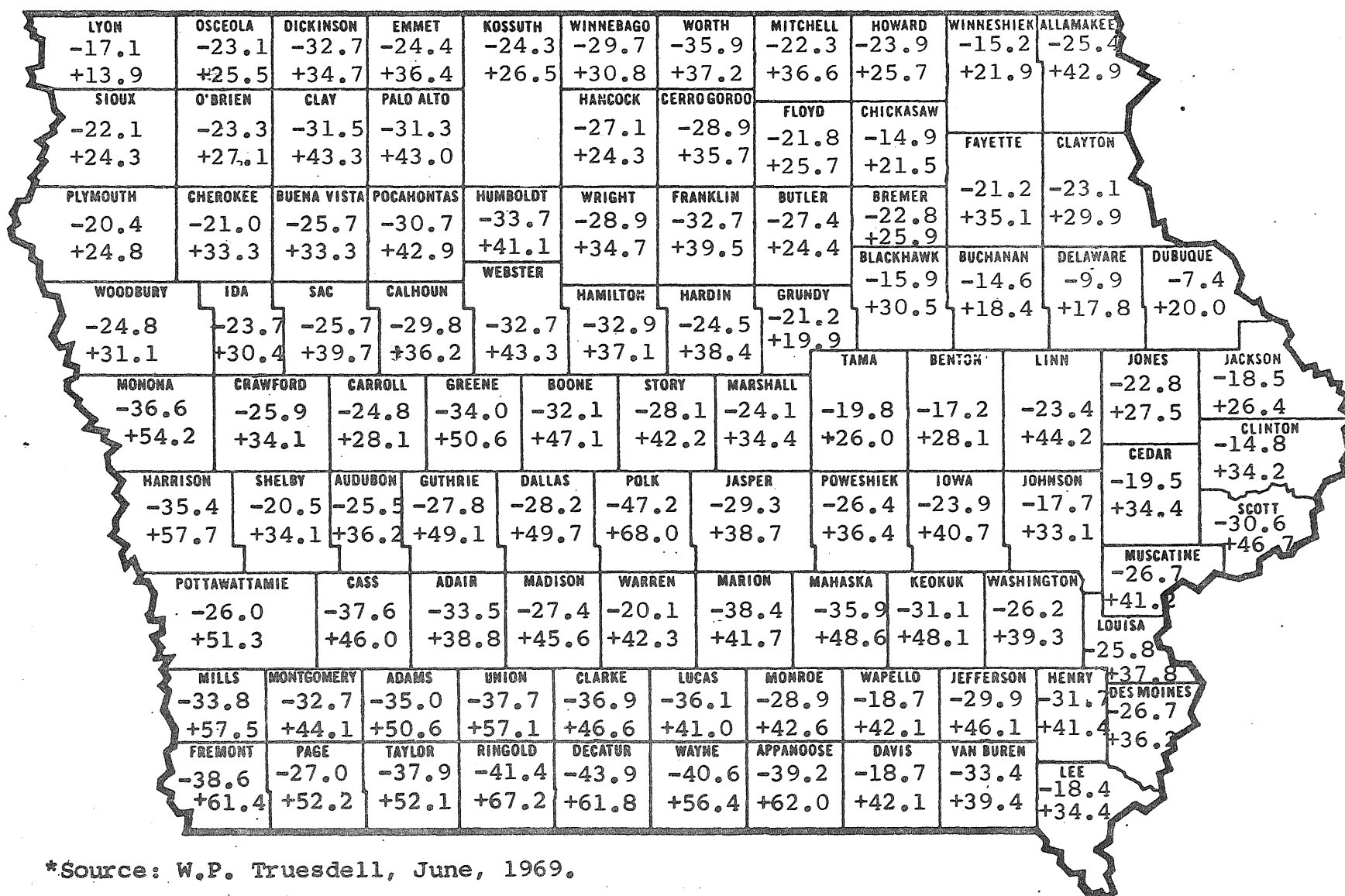
Education is a state function and the Department of Public Instruction must provide statewide educational leadership. To meet its tremendous responsibilities in administering the education of 700,900 students in Iowa involving \$626,700,000 it must be able to continue to employ and retain quality personnel. This is one of the keys to the improvement of educational opportunities for Iowa's students.

APPENDIX A

Maps and Graphs Illustrating
Population Trends and Problems Faced
By School Districts with Small Enrollments

MAP 1

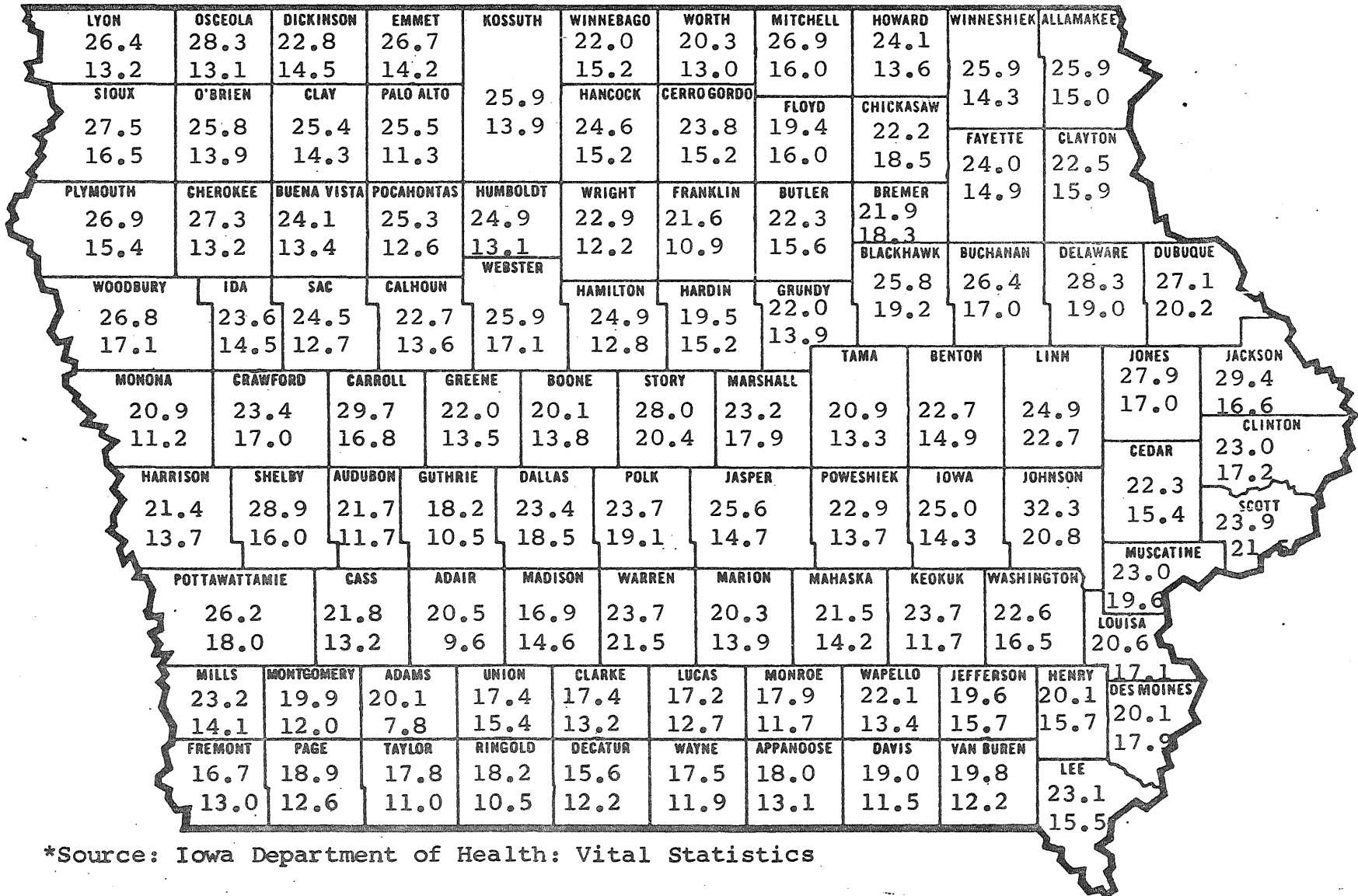
PERCENT OF CHANGE IN FARM POPULATION AND SIZE OF FARMS, 1947 - 1967*



*Source: W.P. Truesdell, June, 1969.

MAP 3

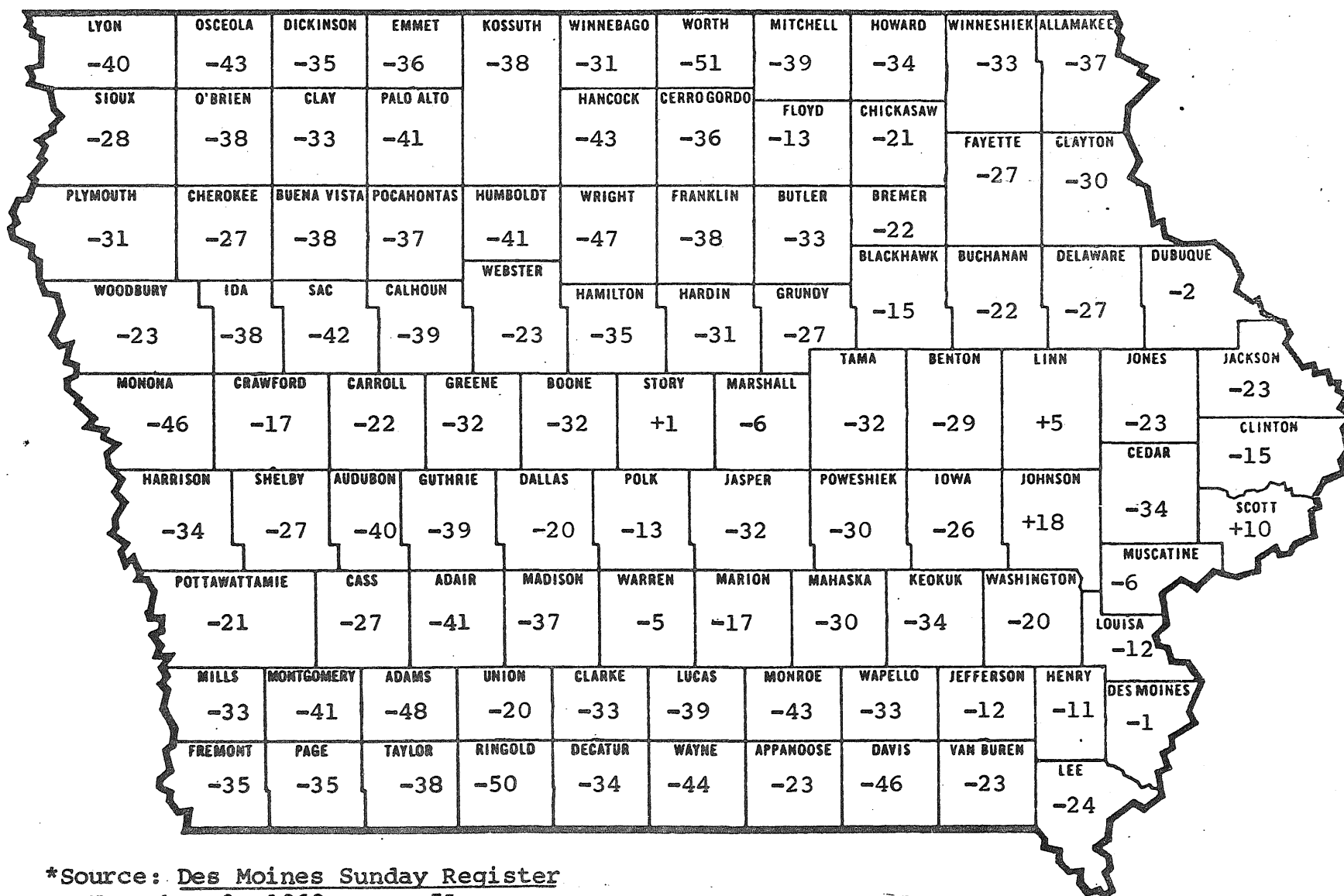
BIRTH RATES PER 1000 POPULATION, 1955 - 1968*



*Source: Iowa Department of Health: Vital Statistics

MAP 4

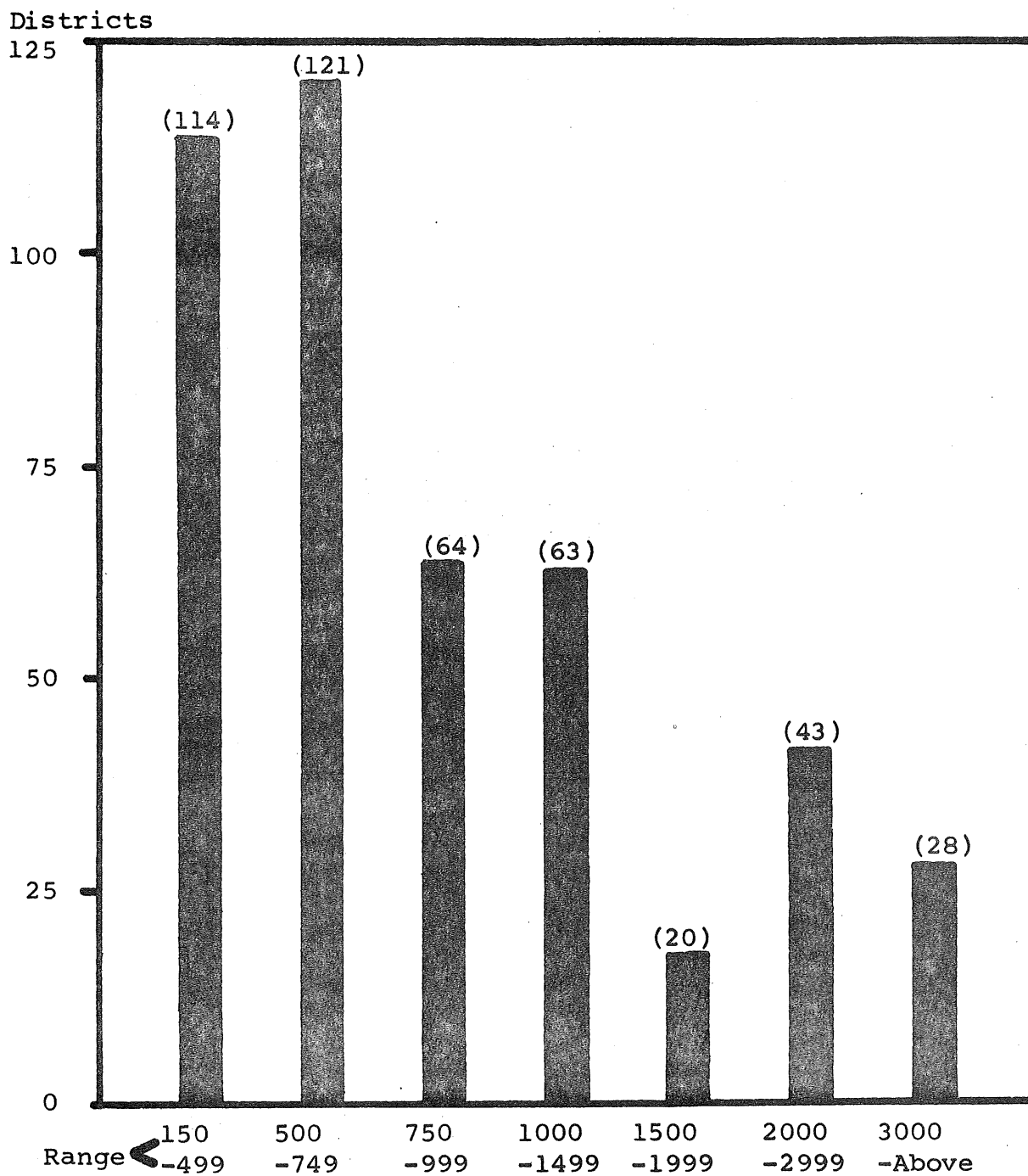
PERCENT OF CHANGE IN NUMBER OF CHILDREN UNDER FIVE YEARS OF AGE, 1958-1968*



*Source: Des Moines Sunday Register
November 2, 1969, page 5L

GRAPH 1

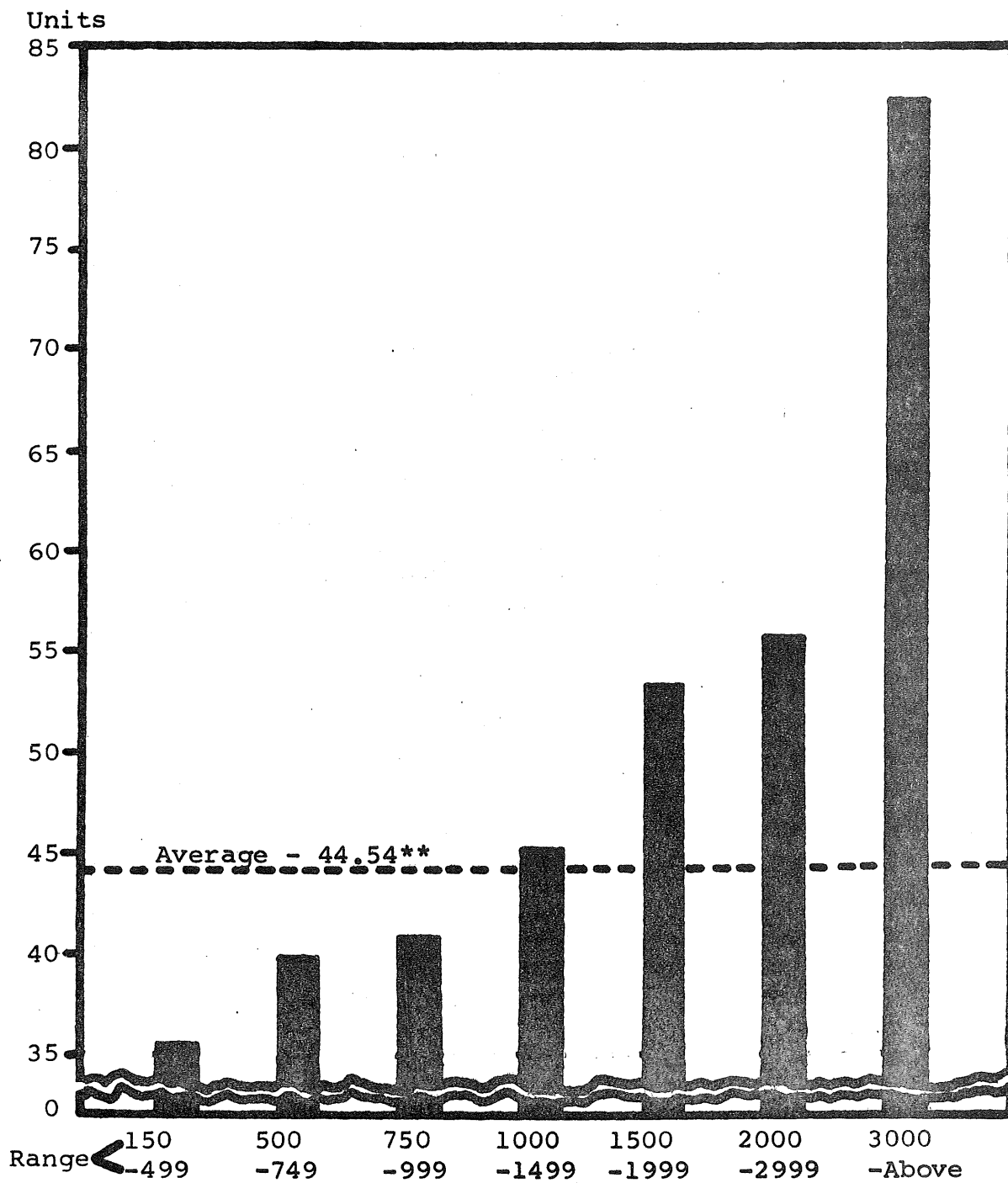
NUMBER OF SCHOOL DISTRICTS BY K-12 ENROLLMENT RANGE*



*Source: Data on Iowa Schools, 1969-1970, Part 1, p. 44.

GRAPH 2

UNITS OFFERED (9-12) BY DISTRICT SIZE*

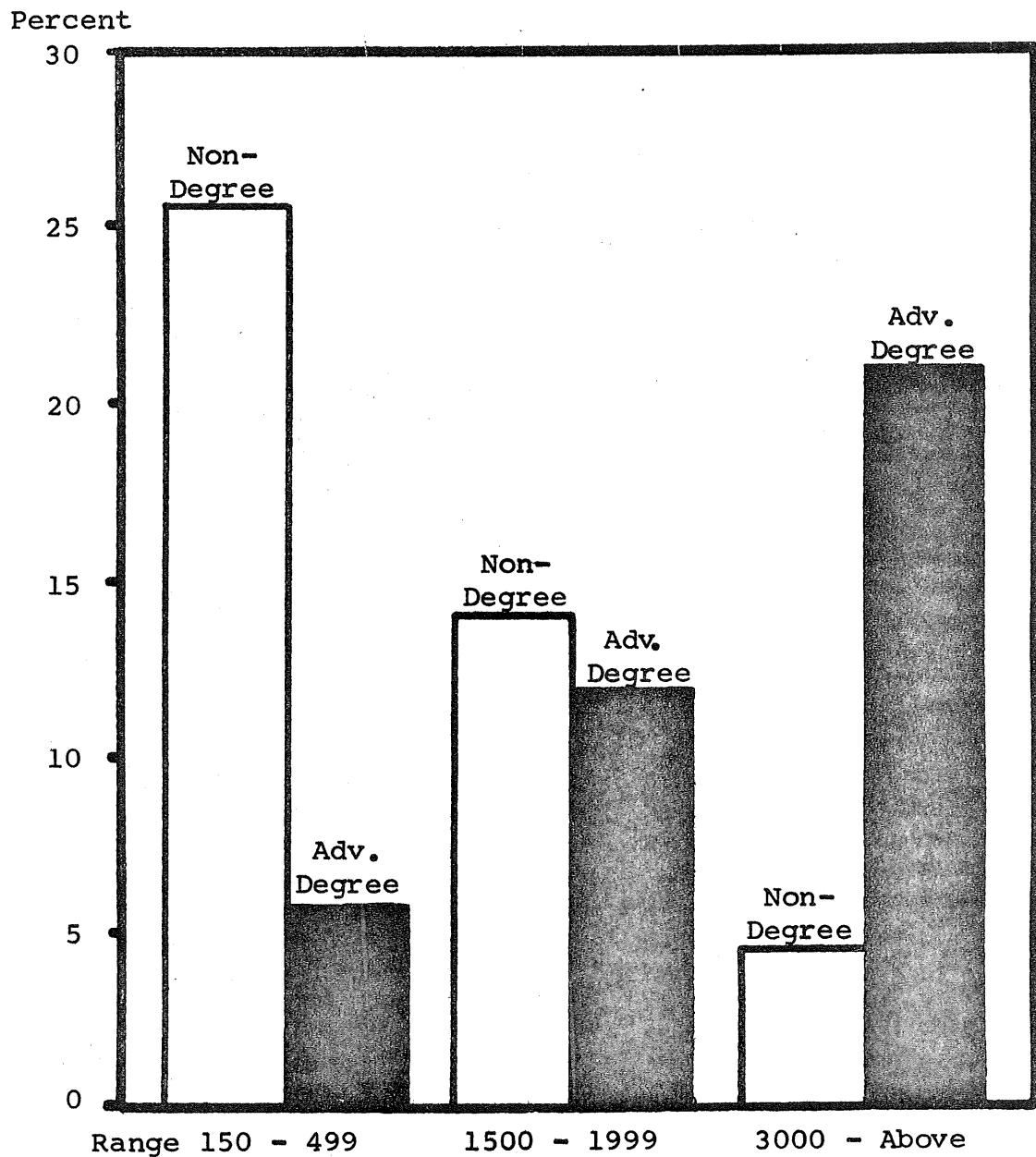


*Source: Data on Iowa Schools, 1969-1970, Part 3, p.2

**Average non-public school offerings = 37.65.

GRAPH 3

PERCENT OF NON-DEGREE AND ADVANCED DEGREE TEACHERS
IN THREE SELECTED ENROLLMENT
SIZE RANGES*



*Source: Data on Iowa Schools, 1970, p. 135. Graph by Administrative Consultant Services.

Note: Percent of Bachelor's degree teachers in all size categories range from 68.9% to 74.2%.

APPENDIX B

Suggested Timetable for
the Organization Commission for Quality Education

DATE	ACTIVITY
June, 1971	Creation of the Quality Education Commission by the 64th Iowa General Assembly.
August 1, 1971	Commssion becomes operative.
September 1, 1971	Commission establishes criteria for organizational change.
September 1 - November 1, 1971	Mass dissemination and testing of established criteria. Commission should utilize the news media and solicit position papers from interested organizations.
November 1, 1971 - February 1, 1972	Commission divides into teams and conducts meetings in all 99 counties.
February 1 - March 1, 1972	Commission reviews results of meetings and makes revisions in criteria where needed.
March 1 - May 1, 1972	Second series of meetings in all 99 counties.
May 1 - July 1, 1972	Hearings conducted by the Commission
July 1 - September 1, 1972	Commission takes final action on local school district structure.
September 1 - November 1, 1972	Commission plans for any needed organizational changes in the intermediate and area community college/vocational technical units.
November 1, 1972 - January 1, 1973	The Commission prepares the detailed plan complete with organizational maps and any legislative program that may be needed.
January, 1973	The legislature has the final opportunity to reject the Commission plan. This should be a total yes or no decision.
July 1, 1973	The Commission plan takes effect.