

Running head: CONSOLIDATION AND REORGANIZATION OF SCHOOLS

CONSOLIDATION AND REORGANIZATION OF SCHOOLS AND SCHOOL DISTRICTS
IN THE UNITED STATES FROM 1993 TO 2012: AN EXAMINATION OF THE
INFLUENCE OF STATE POLICIES AND LAWS ON EDUCATIONAL RESTRUCTURING

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Abstract

The current study seeks to identify a possible connection between the consolidation and reorganization of public school districts and schools and state-level legislation throughout the United States from 1993 through 2012. A mixed methods approach was utilized. Quantitative analysis of statewide public school district data identified states exhibiting downward trends in total numbers of schools and districts while enrollment increased or remained consistent. Nine Downward Trending States (DTS) were identified: Alaska, Arkansas, California, Illinois, Kansas, Nebraska, Oklahoma, Oregon, and South Carolina. Specific terms were used to search state legislature websites of the DTS to identify legislative actions potentially connected to consolidation and reorganization. Search terms utilized were: public schools, districts, consolidation, reorganization, funding, taxes, facilities, enrollment, construction, cost, and transportation. Major findings include 138 legislative actions potentially connected to consolidation and reorganization in these states. Qualitative analysis of the identified materials classified all legislative actions into one of three categories based upon how these actions pertained to districts and schools from financial, procedural, and structural standpoints. Few bills were passed into law and this study found no authentic connection between state legislation and public education consolidation and reorganization. Recommendations for further study include analysis of state-level historical/political actions in DTS, examination of changes in local politics, changes in population, changes in industry, etc. in towns, municipalities, and counties in relation to school and district consolidation and reorganization, and analysis of student performance in DTS during the 1993-2012 time of consolidation and reorganization.

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Dedication

There are a number of people I would like to recognize and thank for their help throughout this dissertation process. To all members of the dissertation committee, I extend my heartfelt gratitude. Your guidance and insight assisted me in navigating this entire process. Most especially, I would like to thank Dr. Baker. Your suggestions and your probing questions challenged me to go beyond myself throughout this journey. I am a better professional educator and administrator because of you.

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CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

Public education in the United States has undergone many changes from its beginnings to the present day, and education continues to evolve. This statement seems self-evident when one considers the widespread variation across the country when it comes to history, geography, and demography, as well as the new and changing needs of current students and the mandate to respond to these needs in order to educate the nation's youth. Still, it is important to examine how educational organizations have changed to evaluate previous decisions and anticipate future issues and obstacles.

From an organizational standpoint, the school district is the most pervasive structural unit by which schools are regulated and categorized. One need only look at the data on district consolidation to know that the number of school districts in the United States has decreased sharply throughout the twentieth century. Since 1938, over 100,000 school districts have been consolidated (National Center for Educational Statistics [NCES], 2003, Table 87). Brasington (2003) reports that there were 119,001 school districts in 1937 but this number dropped to 14,804 by the year 1997. This consolidation has caused the size of districts to grow. From a state perspective, the average number of school districts has declined from 2,437 to 318, while the average number of pupils per district has increased from 216 to 2,646 (Meyer, Scott, & Strang, 1987). Clearly, there have been substantial changes to the structure of school districts, which suggests important shifts in how administrators and policy makers conceptualize school districts.

The variability of school and district structure within and among states adds another dimension to an analysis of district reorganization and school consolidation. In the decentralized configuration of U.S. education, organizational variance is substantial (Ready, Lee, & Welner, 2004). School configuration and district organization look very different from state to state as

well as within states. Schools across the country are configured with a variety of grade levels and grade spans. School size varies widely, as some schools have student enrollment below one hundred while other schools service thousands of students daily. School districts exhibit similar variation in size and configuration. Some states maintain separate elementary and high school districts and others service kindergarten through grade 12. Hawaii operates just one district (the entire state), while Texas operates more than 1,000 districts. Many states maintain hundreds of districts. For example, New Jersey, which is geographically small but highly populated, maintains more than 600 districts, yet within those districts there is a wide variety of configurations (Howley, Johnson, & Petrie, 2011). Across the country, these considerable organizational variations have produced notable differences with regard to school and district size and organization, yet despite these many variations, there is a constant: the idea of consolidation is pervasive across the United States. As a result, consolidation is a prevalent topic of examination from a research standpoint as educators seek to determine if there is an ideal school/district size at which both student achievement and economic efficiency are maximized.

From a historical standpoint, consolidation of schools and districts was often the result of a combination of educational and economic motivators. This applied to rural as well as urban schools. In 1900, educational reformers strongly and openly criticized many aspects of the traditional country school: community control, nongraded primary education, instruction of younger children by older children, flexible scheduling, and a lack of appropriate organizational barriers between teachers and parents (Tyack, 1974). Efficiency became an important aspect in organizing educational institutions. The steps for creating and operating schools in a more business-like manner became the standard from 1900 to 1925 (Callahan, 1962). This mainly consisted of officials making comparisons between schools and businesses and applying

concepts such as economics and efficiency to education. This efficiency movement also suggested that educators adopt business and industrial practices as they sought to provide students with an education (Callahan, 1962).

The needs for more rigorous study, more highly varied and differentiated instruction, and expanded use of technology to better educate students has caused continual re-examination of the then-current conditions of education, which in turn drove some rearrangement of facilities as part of the refinement of instruction in the search for the best possible school size. Conant (1959) determined that a high school should have at least 100 students in its graduating class in order to offer an optimal college preparatory curriculum and that at least 400 students should be enrolled in grades K-12 in order to offer a comprehensive curriculum. Conant further explained that the construct of the small high school was a serious problem in education and that the elimination of small high schools would result in increased cost-effectiveness and greater curricular offerings. As free public education became more pervasive, and the public's perceptions of the importance of education grew, the cycle of re-examination of both practice and facilities grew and evolved.

Economic decline in rural areas shaped consolidation. From 1933 to 1970, Smith (1972) observed the net migration of over 30 million people from farms to more urban areas. As a result, enrollment numbers in rural public schools began to decline and the cost of educating the remaining rural students began to rise (Bard, Gardener, & Wieland, 2006). Tax payers became concerned that the value of their land would be affected if there was a common public perception that small schools could not provide students with an appropriate education and prepare them for future schooling. Larger schools with more diversified staffs and greater access to resources, expanded libraries, more current periodicals, etc. were viewed as preferable to smaller schools. With the advent of improved transportation such as cars and various forms of mass transportation

and better road conditions - coupled with state government-initiated incentives such as aid for special programs, buildings, and transportation (Andrews, Duncombe, & Yinger, 2002), the consolidation of smaller schools into larger schools seemed to be a natural transition. As such, the rapid decline in schools district numbers from the late 1930s through the 1980s is easily understood.

From the 1990s through the present day, there have been no major changes or advancements in transportation that have influenced schools. The needs for a diversified staff and for access to other resources in schools still remain, as does the tax payer's concern about property values. Educational technology is a different story. Advancements in wireless technology and access to the internet have shaped how school libraries store information and service students. There is less of a need to have large buildings in which to store information. This information is now available quickly and easily from almost anywhere. Technological advances offer instruction across geographic boundaries and at any time, which extends educational opportunities (Timpson & Jones, 1989). Because resources are more easily accessed from almost any location, including home and school, consolidation continues. While the rate of consolidation has slowed in recent years, there are still numerous state-level incentives promoting consolidation (Zimmer, DeBoer, & Hirth, 2009).

Research Problem

Discussion of the concepts of consolidation and economies of scale are prevalent in educational research (Brasington, 1997; Cotton, 1996; Andrews, Duncombe, & Yinger, 2002; Duncombe & Yinger, 1993, 2000, 2005, 2011; Fischel, 2002; Fox, 1981; Kenny, 1982; March & March, 1977; Meyer et al., 1987; Strang, 1987; Streifel, Foldes, & Holman, 1991; Tholkes, 1991). While theories as to the reasons behind consolidation and reorganization are presented

through varied economic, political, and educational lenses, many researchers would agree that fiduciary considerations are deeply embedded in school district consolidation (Brasington, 1997, 1999; Duncombe & Yinger, 2003, 2005; Zimmer et al., 2009), but other motivations for consolidation and the resulting effects of such consolidation could exist. Changes in educational requirements and student outputs, adjustments in federal, state, and local funding formulae, and the overall state of the national economy precipitate alterations in the organizational structure of schools and districts, and these schools and districts must respond to the changes. An examination of recent consolidation trends and an accompanying state-level policy analysis would assist one in having a working understanding of the current consolidation climate in America's public schools. This could also potentially provide a distinction between consolidation/reorganization connected to state-level legislative actions versus consolidation/reorganization connected to local-level actions and decisions.

Legislation/Policy Trends Impacting Consolidation

There are numerous examples of legislation encouraging, promoting, and even mandating consolidation in various states across the country. Some of these laws and policies focus on gathering information (e.g. conducting transportation studies, analyzing isolated school districts and the potential effects of consolidation, and creating special commissions to monitor school accreditation and dissolution) as a means of contemplating future consolidation. Other policies create incentives for communities to agree to consolidation. For example, a state law in Arkansas provides for the creation of academic support centers for students who attend consolidated schools. In Wisconsin, Act 20 included \$250,000 in the 2007-2009 budget bill for one-time grants of up to \$10,000 each for school district consolidation studies during the 2008-2009 fiscal year. One law in Vermont encourages school districts to consolidate through an incentive that

reduces property taxes and provides grants to assist districts with the transition. Still other policies remove voter input by empowering state appointed commissions to reorganize state school districts after a set number of years to ensure that no district has fewer than 10,000 students (H.R. 2728, 2010), or by establishing minimum enrollment parameters that will dictate consolidation (Spradlin, Carson, Hess, & Plucker, 2010). State governments continue to employ the various legislative mechanisms at their disposal to shape the educational landscape through consolidation.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to identify a connection between proposed and enacted state educational legislation and the public school reorganizations and district consolidations that are occurring in various states throughout the country. Schools and districts should be designed to meet the needs of their respective student populations. This is true on all levels: township, city, county, and state. In keeping with a business analysis of supply and demand as it applies to modern education, one would expect to find a rise in the number of schools and districts in a given state as the student population in that state increases. Concurrently, one would expect to find decreasing numbers of schools and districts in states where the student population numbers are in decline, or where demographic fluctuations require change. In such places, consolidation and reorganization would make sense. As educational policy can affect the landscape and organization of education in a state, changes in the numbers of schools, districts, average student enrollment, etc. become evident.

The main question addressed in this study is whether legislative inducements are associated with consolidation over time. In addition to providing descriptive statistics relating to states with consolidation and reorganization trends, this study will also provide an analysis of

current educational legislation in these downward-trending states as they pertain to consolidation and reorganization and attempt to identify common themes within these policies.

Research Questions

1. Between 1993 and 2012, how has school consolidation and district reorganization played out across the United States?
2. Which states show evidence of significant consolidation and reorganization?
3. What overarching factors seem to be associated with school and/or district consolidation and reorganization?
4. What characteristics that seem linked to consolidation and reorganization exist in educational policies and statutes of states displaying significant consolidation?
5. What are the potential implications if these identified consolidation and reorganization trends continue?

CHAPTER II: LITERATURE REVIEW

It is prudent to review the general history of school and district consolidation in order to have a working knowledge of the most significant events and paradigm shifts that have strongly influenced public education in the United States. In addition to understanding how the public educational system has evolved into its present form through the restructuring of schools and districts, one should understand the potential advantages and disadvantages of continued consolidation and reorganization of public educational units. Finally, one should have a good sense of state legislation and policies that have impacted the consolidation and reorganization of schools and school districts across the country. With this background, one can then execute a study that will identify states displaying significant consolidation and reorganization of schools and districts, which will allow for an analysis of policies and legislation in these “consolidating states” in order to determine if there is a connection between certain consolidation trends and certain types of educational legislation.

Consolidation and Reorganization

School district consolidation can be defined as the merging of two or more distinct jurisdictions into one (Strang, 1987). As cited in Peshkin (1982), Fitzwater (1953) defines consolidation as “the merging of two or more attendance areas to form a larger school” (p. 4). Reorganization involves “combining two or more previously independent school districts in one new and larger school system” (Peshkin, 1982, p. 4). In many places, reorganized school districts were called “unified school districts” as opposed to consolidated districts or reorganized districts. Although district consolidation is sometimes referred to as “district reorganization” and distinguished from school consolidation, recent literature on school consolidation can be viewed as research on school size, with the focus being on educational effectiveness rather than

economic efficiency. In contrast, recent research on district consolidation explores the reform as an efficiency measure. Attempts to gain efficiency through district consolidation are often through school consolidation. The efficiencies garnered by consolidation were generally intended to improve educational inputs in the hope of leading to improvements in educational outcomes (Howley et al., 2011).

At its foundation, this dissertation depends heavily on educational research in four main areas: the history of school consolidation, the perceived advantages of consolidation and reorganization, the perceived disadvantages of consolidation and reorganization, and the previously-noted legislation and policy trends related to consolidation. Once each of these areas has been examined, one should have sufficient background information to then take a critical look at current consolidation patterns and the legislative trends associated with these patterns. An examination of the states that display school consolidation and district reorganization and an analysis of the policies associated with this consolidation and reorganization will follow.

History of Consolidation

In the United States in the early 1903's, most schools existed in single-school districts, so the distinction between school and district consolidation was initially small. However, the landscape of public education in the United States has undergone significant change since the late 1930s. The educational research examining the trends in consolidation is conclusive: during the time between 1937 and 1993, states have consolidated schools and districts at a significant rate. Over 100,000 districts have been consolidated since 1938. This represents a reduction of almost 90% (Duncombe & Yinger, 2005). Brasington found that, "...in the 1937 school year the United States had 119,001 public school districts. By the 1997 school year there were 14,805" (Brasington, 2003, p. 673). From an organizational standpoint, a consequence of declining

numbers of school districts is an increase in the number of students serviced in the remaining or newly formed districts. With the previously-mentioned consolidation of approximately 100,000 school districts from 1940 to 1980, the average number of districts per state declined from 2,437 to 318. Conversely, the average pupil enrollment per district increased from 216 to 2,646 (Meyer et al., 1987).

Widespread consolidation and reorganization can be linked to adaptation to geography, population dispersion, and the outcomes of political, professional, and “popular situations” (DeYoung & Howley, 1990). Such “popular situations” can include local municipalities altering district sending areas to preserve or change school structure, districts changing the grade bands included in existing schools, etc. As early as the mid 1800s, consolidation of schools was thought to provide students with a more complete education by eliminating small schools in favor of large ones. The provision of free public transportation facilitated consolidation of rural schools in some states and the invention of the automobile and more organized road and street maintenance allowed students to travel longer distances in shorter amounts of time, replacing the need for many one-room schools with the ability to bring students together into more efficient educational collectives.

Efficiency movement. In the fall of 1910, efficiency expert Frederick Taylor began to have a powerful effect on American society. He had organized a system for eliciting greater productivity from human labor. In subsequent years, the terms “scientific management” and “efficiency” were ubiquitous to such a degree that it is appropriate to employ the label “Age of Efficiency” to this time period in American history (Callahan, 1962). The rise of industry in urban areas contributed to the school consolidation movement. The prevailing belief during the industrial revolution was that education could be structured using organizational techniques

adapted from industry, techniques based upon the concept of efficiency. This focus on productivity became pervasive throughout educational organizations, even down to the classroom level and how students were assessed. As the classroom was a part of the production line of the school factory, “examinations were the means of judging the value added to the raw material, namely the knowledge that the children had acquired during the course of the year” (Tyack, 1974, p. 49). In this statement, where students are identified as raw material, one gets a genuine sense of how schools were viewed by reformers at this time in American history.

The effort to make school curricula more practical is another example of the impact of organized business on education circa 1911. This not only exemplifies the strength of the influence of business on education but also the responsiveness of educators to make these changes (Callahan, 1962). Early school reformers and policy makers felt that an industrialized society required all schools to look the same, and these individuals began to advocate for more of an urban, centralized model of education (Kay, Hargood, & Russell, 1982). Larger schools were viewed as more economical and efficient. As a result of this thinking, urban and larger schools were adopted as the “one best model,” and from this context rural schools were judged deficient (Tyack, 1974).

Rural schools came under close scrutiny as numerous studies suggested that rural education lagged developmentally as the nineteenth century gave way to the twentieth century. According to Tyack (1974), in addition to providing a clear analysis of the economic and demographic forces which adversely affected rural life, these studies provided reformers with a viable solution: a “one best school system” that could be designed by professionals and led by professionals to be a standardized and modernized organization. When this set of beliefs became

entrenched in policy-making circles, school reform became a transfer of power from laymen to educational professionals.

Most rural educational systems have their roots in loosely organized village schools. Reformers who wished to standardize these schools and adjust them to account for the demographic and economic transformations occurring in cities searched for the one best system of education for urban populations (Tyack, 1974). These reformers were impressed with the structure and efficiency of industrial organizations. Factory constructs such as division of labor, coordination of staff, chain of command, etc. appealed to those professionals who sought to make schools more organized and systematic, as “efficiency, rationality, continuity, precision, impartiality became watchwords of the consolidators” (Tyack, 1974, pp. 28-29). Reformers sought to create educational organizations that maximized efficiency. In order to accomplish this, the one best system that encompassed all aspects of education had to be identified. The goals of defining, implementing, and refining the one best education system continued throughout the beginning of the twentieth century.

As previously mentioned, Conant (1959) explained that in order to offer the best possible college preparatory curriculum, a high school should have at least 100 students in its graduating class. Conant further stated that the most prevalent problem in education was the small high school, and that the elimination of small high schools would result in increased cost-effectiveness and greater curricular offerings. According to Fischel (2002), the decline in the number of school districts by 1970 was almost entirely accounted for by the consolidation of numerous one room rural schools into larger and more diversified districts. This was driven by local voter demand after high school education had become a widespread norm. Students who graduated from one-room schoolhouses found it difficult to gain admission to high school. Rural

districts that had difficulty keeping up educationally with their suburban and urban counterparts experienced a drop in their property values that in turn induced local voters to agree to consolidate.

Political climate. The political climate has also affected consolidation in the United States. This is apparent in the area of international competitiveness (DeYoung, 1989; Spring, 1987). Both the Cold War and Sputnik increased concerns that small high schools in the U.S. were not adequately preparing our nation's youth to lead our country to prominence on an international level (Ravitch, 1983). In the 1980s, the most prominent school reform was the *Nation at Risk* (1983) report. As society became more complex, educational reformers purported that schools should produce students possessing the skills and values necessary to contribute positively to a national, social economic order (DeYoung & Howley, 1990). Large schools continued to be represented as the best way to efficiently and effectively prepare students. As most small high schools were in rural areas, it is not surprising to note that much of this consolidation occurred in rural areas. Believing that professionals knew what was optimal when educating children, experts focused on centralizing control instead of leaving decision-making to local community members.

While it is obvious that the numbers of districts showed a sharp decline during the above-mentioned period and the effect of increased enrollment per district is apparent, what must be examined further are the effects this consolidation had on the districts. Increasing the size of schools and districts required structural changes to the overall organization. In the 1940s, most districts consisted of informal community arrangements with little to no organizational structure. By 1980, the majority of districts were bureaucratically organized, essentially insulated from the communities in which they were located, and oriented toward the larger professional definition

of educational administration (Strang, 1987). Such a reorganization effort necessitated the creation of new administrative positions, a re-examination of bureaucratic procedures, and a potential reconstitution of educational funding formulae and policies. In short, one should have a compelling reason for seeking to facilitate consolidation and reorganization given the amount of work such consolidation entails. Further, there must be a pervasive mechanism for facilitating this change. As stated in the literature:

The twentieth century has witnessed a great expansion of the role of the states in education. In recent decades, state funding has risen to match and surpass levels of local funding, and state authority has expanded in all the domains of education (e.g. curriculum, accreditation, setting minimum standards, personnel certification, and meeting the needs of special groups). There has been considerable conflict and much variability in this process, although state authority is constitutionally grounded (Meyer et al., 1987, p. 190).

The expansion of state authority over local school district functioning created an enhanced level of potential conflict between “the state” and “the local municipality” when it came to consolidation and reorganization.

Finances. A contributing factor to the decline in school district numbers was financially facilitated by an increase in state aid to local education (Fischel, 2002). Because larger organizations require more formalized funding to operate efficiently, these financial demands began to surpass the local community’s resources. State governments were able provide this funding regularly and relatively predictably. To ensure that the funds were being used properly, states and school districts developed administrative mechanisms and salaried positions. The rapid increase in the amount of federal and state funds being invested in schools, in conjunction with

the rising demands of all areas of the population, “brought a corresponding development of the instruments of public oversight and control – local community boards, state coordinating boards, court –appointed masters and monitors, and federal attorneys with the authority to enforce federal regulations” (Cremin, 1990, p. 2). In short, American schools simultaneously became more centralized and more decentralized.

Prior to 1930, local governments provided 80% of school funding while states provided less than 20%. The state share began to rise and eventually surpassed the 40% mark in 1973. In that same year, the local contribution amounted to 50 cents of every dollar of school funding. 1979 witnessed the first time that state funding exceeded the local contribution (Doyle & Finn, 1984). This limited the local community’s influence over education, for as Strang pointed out “...as state-level funds and regulations penetrate local educational systems, the ability of state agencies to impose consolidation increases, and the grounds for local resistance decrease” (Strang, 1987, p. 352). The expansion of state funding and decision-making could potentially take the form of direct organizational control and authority, especially when one considers previously-established measures of state influence in the realm of education. Several of these measures will be explored in the next subsection.

State mandates. While increased state and decreased local funding for schools can be viewed as a relatively “new” factor in educational consolidation, the influence of state-mandated requirements can be seen as far back as the nineteenth century. States have always defined the basic framework of education through such mechanisms as compulsory attendance laws and teacher certification requirements. From an organizational standpoint, these early control mechanisms were weak in that there was still a large amount of local control but, “the political, legal, and cultural principles of state sovereignty were well established. And as centralization

and consolidation have proceeded throughout the twentieth century, they have conformed to well-established organizational control principles” (Meyer et al., 1987, p. 190). These principles have become increasingly apparent with the advent of high-stakes testing, professional development requirements, and newer and stricter evaluation models for teachers and administrators.

Centralism vs. localism. Taking the educational system as a whole, district consolidation represents the centralization of authority through the concentration of authority within the local level. Changes in level and location of control of schools can be seen in rural and urban environments. The movement to relocate control of rural schools away from local community members and transfer it to professionals, “was part of a more general organizational revolution in American education in which laymen lost much of their direct control over schools” (Tyack, 1974, p. 25). New educational standards and practices required a more complex and multifaceted mindset, as opposed to the smaller local perspectives prominent in rural communities.

The practice of school district consolidation can be viewed from a central versus local perspective. From a central perspective, consolidated school districts create larger bureaucratic organizations that have the size and standardization for information and influence to flow easily back and forth from the center by way of direct organizational contacts and the common professional training of administrators and educators. From the local perspective, smaller and less formally organized districts facilitate personalized connections to the communities they service and also mirror the diversity of local conditions. Large bureaucratic organizations do not foster such a sense of closeness and attention to specific local needs (March & March, 1977). Basic sociological theory suggests that as an organization grows, human connections and interactions become more formal (Weber, 1947). As organizational growth creates new

bureaucratic structures, connections between individuals become less personal. For local communities to accept this, there must be apparent and desirable advantages.

Many state governments provide varied incentives to their districts for district or school consolidation. These incentives can come in the form of separate aid programs and building and transportation aid (Andrews et al., 2002). Conversely, some states provide additional financial aid to small charter schools and other organizations that emphasize smaller schools. As the trend toward consolidation has been evident since the late 1930s, there must be advantages, or at least perceived advantages, to creating larger school districts. These perceived advantages must also resonate with local communities. By altering the sizes of participating school districts, consolidation could raise or lower per-pupil costs. Proponents of consolidation must be able to provide sound reasoning to convince local voters that school/district consolidation is the better option.

Potential Advantages to Consolidation

Numerous studies have examined the financial benefits of school and district consolidation, as well as the effects of specific aspects of such consolidation (Duncombe & Yinger, 2005; Haller & Monk, 1988; Tholkes, 1991; Wasylenko, 1977). According to education reformer Ellwood P. Cubberley, there were three distinct advantages to larger schools: (a) more specialized instruction, achieved by dividing students based on age, subject area, and ability; (b) a reduced ratio of administrators to teachers, creating a more centralized and more efficient system of administration, and (c) better facilities at lower costs (Berry, 2004). To benefit from these perceived advantages, schools and districts had to consolidate.

Researchers conducting studies endorsed by the Minnesota, Iowa, Missouri, Kentucky, Indiana, and Michigan Departments of Education have suggested that the advantages of

consolidation greatly outweigh the disadvantages (Self, 2001). To convince local voters that consolidation is beneficial, one must highlight all advantages to such consolidation and reorganization. One way to do this is through an explanation of the advantages that can be realized through the development and operation of economies of size. In business, an economy of scale is said to exist when the cost per unit declines as the number of units increases. Another way to say this is that economies of scale occur when reductions in total costs are associated with increased quantities of outputs. This concept is straightforward when viewed through the business model lens: it is advantageous for a business to produce goods in such a way that the cost for producing each unit decreases as the number of total units produced continues to rise.

When it comes to education, the idea of an economy of scale is more difficult to explain. This is due largely to the question of what “unit” one is measuring. Student achievement, per-pupil cost, and the overall scope of educational services, are just three potential “output units” when it comes to schooling. One must carefully and clearly delineate the “unit” being measured. Tholkes (1991) explains that several aspects of economies of scale must be considered when applying this concept to schools and education. First and foremost, school output should be defined in terms of the number of students being serviced within a given set of programs. Also, output quality must be assumed to remain constant. As is the case in most educational studies dealing with economies of scale, a main focus here will be on economies of size. This refers to the relationship between per-pupil expenditure and total enrollment, with all other variables held equal. The relationship between per-pupil cost and total enrollment “can be estimated from an education cost function, which controls for output (that is, student performance), input prices, and other variables. Economies (diseconomies) of size exist if the estimated elasticity of education costs per pupil with respect to enrollment is less than (greater than) zero” (Duncombe

& Yinger, 2005, p. 3). Tholkes (1991) refers to economies of size and diseconomies of size as “scale effects.”

Pratten (1972) identified various sources of economies of scale in manufacturing; Tholkes (1991) examined these sources and applied these to education. In doing so, Tholkes added a significant dimension to educational research, which gave rise to five potential sources of economies of size. The first of these is termed “indivisibilities” and refers to the idea that economies of size can exist because the services provided to each student by educators do not necessarily diminish in quality as the number of students being serviced increases, at least within certain limits. The best example of this pertains to the central administration of a school district. The superintendent of schools and the board of education are necessary components of a school district, no matter how big or small a given district may be. While additional administrators may need to be added once enrollment reached a certain level, the same existing central administration would be able to adequately service a significant range of enrollment.

The idea of increased dimension manifests itself as a second potential source of an economy of size. Economies of scale in the business perspective focus on efficiencies that are associated with larger units of capital. Larger production facilities, or plants, should be able to create product at a lower average cost due to the use of more efficient equipment. In applying this factory model to education, the “plant” is the school itself. The efficient equipment here includes the heating of the school, the communication and technological mechanisms utilized in the school, and the specialized facilities often found in schools that offer comprehensive programs (science labs, auditoriums, computer labs, etc.). Larger schools can utilize these resources much more efficiently than smaller schools. While it is true that small schools also contain many, if not all, of these resources, these smaller schools are less capable of utilizing

these resources as efficiently as their larger counterparts, due to the lack of bodies that can take full advantage of the spaces, and therefore may be facing diseconomies of size (Tholkes, 1991).

Tholkes (1991) discusses the concept of specialization when it comes to economies of size. As larger consolidated schools and districts are able to employ more specialized labor, these schools and districts are able to offer programs that smaller districts and schools cannot offer to their constituencies. On the surface, specialized positions such as science teachers, math teachers, English teachers, etc. who offer courses that may go beyond traditional curricular boundaries (in addition to teaching standard courses) may not seem terribly important and therefore not rate being mentioned when it comes to discussing efficiency. To fully comprehend the justification of these positions in the organization, one must take a closer look at these positions and also at the broader impact these positions have on the school facility. As noted earlier, one negative associated with small schools was their inability to offer the full spectrum of rigorous courses the youth of this country require in order to lead the United States into global prominence in the future (Conant, 1959). Specialized teaching positions address this weakness, in that schools with this type of personnel can offer more diverse courses that will challenge a wider range of students and provide educational experiences that will prepare students for the future. This concept of specialization works with the aforementioned idea of increased dimension as the specialized teachers can utilize specific resources and equipment more efficiently and effectively in larger districts.

Once again utilizing the business model lens, factories require supplies, equipment, and maintenance in order to produce goods efficiently. Companies and factories must purchase or lease these aspects, as these are some of the costs of simply “doing business.” The basic concept of supply and demand is illustrated in this dynamic: a factory must purchase the raw materials

and the means to create its product in order to generate outputs. Ideally, this must be done in a way which keeps costs low and revenues high for the factory. One must also consider the suppliers who provide these raw materials. These are also businesses that seek to be profitable. In an open market system, competition helps keep prices low and monopolies can be avoided (Tholkes, 1991).

With the consolidation of school districts, districts grow larger and larger and as a consequence, fewer districts exist. This leads to Tholkes' (1991) next potential source of economies of size: price benefits of scale. Large districts may be able to take advantage of the price benefits of scale by negotiating bulk purchasing of equipment and supplies. It can also be said that a decreased number of school districts can create a monopsony. A monopsony exists when demand comes only from one source. Basically, if there is only one customer for a given product, the lone customer has a monopsony on that product. With fewer and fewer customers for a given product, the companies creating the product must be more sensitive to pricing than they would if the market contained a large number of consumers.

If the district is viewed as the factory, one of its outputs to the local community is employment opportunity. In this scenario, the customer is the teacher seeking employment. The district can attempt to impose lower wages on employees through the power of its monopsony and present the customer with a difficult choice: accept what is being offered or seek employment elsewhere, knowing there really is little to no immediate "elsewhere" in this scenario.

The fifth potential source of economies of size, according to Tholkes (1991) is learning and innovation. It can be argued that the cost of implementing innovations in curriculum and management declines with experience. While it is recognized that resources must be spent in

order for districts to remain current on instructional practices, changing state-mandated policies and procedures, etc., larger school districts should be able to implement new innovations at lower costs. One reason is that larger districts have the advantage of a deeper pool of internal talent on which to draw. This raises the likelihood that the district will have individuals who are willing and able to understand the innovations and assist with their implementation.

Additionally, teachers in larger schools and districts are able to work with in-district colleagues and draw on each other's professional experiences and expertise. This has the potential to create district resources that cannot be purchased commercially and minimal additional costs are incurred by the district as these individuals are already employed and receiving their salaries from the district (Tholkes, 1991). One could say this "professional in-district collaboration" is an asset to the district that cost the district little or nothing extra in order to make the asset a reality.

Potential Disadvantages to Consolidation

The motivation to create economies of size in education has been challenged in the literature, mostly in research on the effects large schools have on student performance (Haller, 1992; Lee & Smith, 1997). This research focuses on schools rather than districts and also focuses on students rather than cost functions. Overall, these studies claim that the potential savings associated with consolidation are rarely garnered and that consolidation creates larger school learning environments that have negative effects on students. Five potential sources of diseconomies of size have been cited in the literature (Howley, 1996; Lee & Smith, 1997).

The first potential source of diseconomy lies in the realm of transportation. Specifically, consolidated schools and districts are comprised of expanded student sending areas and as a result, transportation costs increase. It is worth noting that these costs extend beyond the obvious financial impact associated with more buses that must be maintained and insured, more drivers

who must be paid, and increased fuel consumption. Another cost can be seen in the increased amount of time students will spend traveling to and from school. When considering a concept such as time when it comes to schools, one must analyze the effects this will have on all students. While it is not ideal for older students to spend extensive time riding on buses to and from school, one could argue that these high school and middle school students have the maturity to better handle such long trips twice per day. The same cannot be said for elementary school students. Subjecting young children to long buses rides twice per day greatly increases their overall “school day” and as such has an impact on their daily functioning. This additional time could be seen as time lost, as there is nominal supervision on school buses and students are not able to effectively utilize this travel time, as a bus ride is not conducive to the production of high quality schoolwork, studying, etc., or even leisure that allows students to rest and recharge their faculties. It is also worth noting that transporting a greater number of students over greater distances increases the risk of harm to these students as a result of accidents, weather events, etc. (Howley, 1996; Lee & Smith, 1997)

Labor relation effects are another potential source of diseconomies of size. According to Tholkes (1991), “the labor relations scale effect, caused by seniority hiring within certain certification areas and by change in comparison groups for collective negotiations, could be a major source of diseconomies of scale” (p. 510). A greater number of teachers working together increases the likelihood of an active teachers’ union because larger districts are easier to organize. Stronger unions may have the power to demand better wages and increased benefits, and also prevent staff layoffs. This eliminates one of the potential cost savings from consolidation. An organized powerful union could potentially counteract the monopsony power large districts may have (mentioned earlier among the sources of economies of size).

A third potential source of diseconomies of size pertains to staff motivation and effort. Teachers and administrators may have a more positive attitude toward their work in smaller schools and districts. This could be due to the tendency of smaller organizations to have greater flexibility and fewer formalized rules and procedures (Cotton, 1996). While state policies and regulations would be the same whether the districts were large or small, many internal processes, deadlines, etc. may vary from district to district. It is important to note that smaller organizations are flatter, meaning there are fewer layers of “middle management” between teachers and administrators. This could encourage more input from all school personnel. Also, as previously noted, smaller organizations foster more personal connections and create a greater sense of membership among staff.

In addition to lower staff motivation and effort, another potential source of diseconomies of size can be seen in lower student effort and motivation. Students in smaller schools have greater opportunity to participate in extracurricular activities and sports as compared to their counterparts in larger schools (Cotton, 1996). Fanning (1995) argues that as schools grow larger and are consolidated, they become more bureaucratic, standardized, and impersonal. Once again the idea of a more personal environment comes into play. A smaller environment means fewer students and teachers, which in turn means more personalized attention. Returning to the factory model analogy, a smaller production site translates into a more humanistic and intimate connection between the supervisors, the workers, and the outputs. A greater level of care is applied to the production process and workers are more knowledgeable about all aspects of the outputs produced. Applying this analogy to an educational setting, teachers in smaller schools are more likely to have greater knowledge of their students’ strengths and weaknesses, which would allow them to better meet student needs. Students in smaller schools have a greater sense

of belonging to their school community, a more positive overall attitude toward school, and a higher motivation to learn and succeed (Cotton, 1996).

When one analyzes school districts, close examination of students and educational staff is critical. Equally as crucial is an examination of parents. Parental contributions to the “production” associated with schools can be seen in parental participation in school activities and their overall involvement in the educational environment. This can be seen as a function of parent contact with teachers and school administrators. Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler (1995, 1997) view parental involvement as having its beginning in a set of perceptions parents have as to their role as a parent and also to the opportunities for involvement they receive from their children and from the schools. According to Duncombe and Yinger (2005), “The role of parents is linked to economies of size whenever parents find participation less rewarding or personal contacts more difficult in larger districts” (p. 6). Yet again the idea of larger schools and districts having a negative effect on the personal connection to a familiar environment felt by participants is seen. As the sense of belonging to and ownership of the school environment decreases for parents, the potential source of diseconomies of size increases.

Legislation and Policy Trends Impacting Consolidation

State educational policies and statutes have pervasive effects on the functioning of schools and school districts. In the current economic climate, it is important that all state agencies minimize costs and maximize efficiency wherever possible in order to maintain current levels of service and not incur tax increases. School and school district consolidation have been discussed as methods for controlling educational costs and possibly generating savings for local municipalities (Spradlin et al., 2010). When considering consolidation, one must analyze the benefits in relation to the impact consolidation will have on students.

Across the nation, states have proposed and enacted legislation to facilitate school and district consolidation. While the purpose of this section of the literature review is not to present an exhaustive analysis of state legislation as it pertains to reorganization and consolidation, it is important to note that enacted and proposed legislation seek to foster consolidation through various mechanisms. Some of these pertain directly to financial incentives, and some set minimum enrollment standards, which imply a belief in a minimal level of efficiency. Some policies empower local voters to make the decision to consolidate while others create committees to analyze pertinent data and make such decisions, and still others establish mandates for how state funds can and cannot be used (Spradlin et al., 2010). Published accounts of consolidation efforts in several states describe different ways in which school districts and states have approached consolidation and various combinations of policy tools that states have used to encourage or require school districts to reduce administrative and other non-instructional costs (Plucker, Spradlin, Magaro, Chien, & Zapf, 2007).

In 2007, Maine enacted state legislation that required school districts to enroll at least 2,500 students. In passing this mandate, “Maine undertook one of the most aggressive comprehensive reorganization reforms to date” (Spradlin et al., 2010, p. 3). The original goal of this law was to consolidate the state’s 290 districts into approximately 80 districts. In 2008, the law was amended and included exemptions for the smallest rural school districts where it would have been impossible to meet the 2,500 student requirement. Communities qualifying for this exemption were permitted to form districts with fewer than 1,200 students but were prohibited to go below the 1,000 student mark. According to the legislation, districts that had not adopted reorganization plans to ensure compliance with the stipulation set forth would face penalties

including loss of state subsidies, reduced funding, loss of transition adjustments, and less favorable consideration for construction projects.

In March of 2007, South Dakota enacted similar legislation (H.R. 1082, 2007) that established minimum enrollments. Specifically, school districts with enrollments below 130 students were required to consolidate with neighboring districts. These consolidated districts received additional funding. It should be noted that school districts spanning at least 400 miles were exempted from this consolidation mandate.

Indiana's Senate Bill 521, proposed in 2009, required "school corporations with an average daily enrollment (ADE) of less than 500 students to merge with another school corporation or corporations" (S. 521, 2009). The bill also required that county committees prepare reorganization plans, hold public hearing on these plans, and gain approval from the Indiana State Board of Education for these plans. School organizations serving the needs of 500-1,000 students were required to demonstrate that they achieved the established standards or be required to consolidate with another school corporation (charter schools were excluded from these stipulations).

Vermont has attempted to move in the direction of consolidation through state policies. In 2010, legislation was introduced which sought to reduce the number of school governing units from 260 to between 14 and 16 (H.R. 755, 2010; S. 252, 2010). Legislation was also enacted in Vermont (H.R. 66, 2010) which encouraged consolidation through incentives. Reductions in property taxes and provisions of grants to districts to assist in the consolidation process were also provided.

In April of 2007, Arkansas enacted legislation that created academic support centers for students attending consolidated schools. To encourage the consideration of consolidation, the

Wisconsin State Legislature enacted Act 20, which included \$250,000 in the 2006-2007 budget bill for one-time grants of up to \$10,000 each for school districts who simply conducted consolidation studies during the 2008-2009 fiscal year.

The state of Pennsylvania also proposed legislation geared toward consolidation. This legislation (S. 833, 2009), proposed in April of 2009, would create a committee to study and develop a plan for consolidating Pennsylvania's 501 school districts, based upon the governor's call to reduce the number of districts to 100 in his February budget report.

In 2009, Delaware Senate Bill 95 called for consolidation of existing school districts into three countywide districts and one vocational district. Delaware Senator Karen Peterson estimated that this consolidation could save the state \$40-50 million annually (Spradlin et al., 2010).

As previously mentioned, in March of 2010, Kansas introduced legislation (H.R. 2728, 2010) which authorized a state-appointed commission to reorganize all K-12 school districts every ten years to ensure that no district had fewer than 10,000 students. This bill also required the Kansas Board of Education to enforce a uniform system of accounting for districts to report expenditures and revenues to the state.

It is important to note that not all recent legislation involving consolidation encourages the growth of schools and districts. In fact, there have been state policies proposed and enacted which seek to limit the size of districts and protect local communities from future consolidation. Illinois's Senate Bill 1719 (2009) proposed a stipulation in which school district consolidation would only be considered if 50 resident voters in the affected area sign a petition in favor of potential consolidation. Idaho's Senate Bill 1078 (2009) provided that the majority of voters in both school districts must vote in favor of consolidation for it to occur. Arkansas's House Bill

2263 (2009) actually sought to improve schools' chances to avoid consolidation. Under current policy, a school must consider consolidation if enrollment falls below 350 students for two consecutive years. Since House Bill 2263 would require enrollment to be under 350 students for two consecutive years, residents of the district have the opportunity to encourage increased enrollment in the district if they wish to avoid consolidation. It is interesting to note that this bill passed in the Arkansas House of Representatives but failed in the Arkansas Senate. In New Mexico, Senate Bill 255 (2009) prohibited state funds from being used to construct high schools with more than 225 students per grade. Additionally, consolidating districts were required to prepare a report on the consolidation's effects on students, and this must meet with the approval of the New Mexico Secretary of Education.

CHAPTER III: METHODOLOGY

While it is possible that the policies within consolidating districts would be very similar, as they are all undergoing the same process, one might expect that consolidation influenced by different factors would be coupled with policies that reflect different goals and motivations. It seems plausible that states that are consolidating schools and districts in the face of increasing, or at the very least stable, student populations would have educational policies that include incentive-laden language to encourage local constituencies to vote for consolidation - incentives such as additional funding for building projects, additional funding for new academic support measures/interventions, and monetary grants to townships and municipalities that agree to consolidation.

This study utilized a mixed methods approach in examining information from a variety of sources to determine what trends, if any, exist in modern district and school consolidation. Using a combination of quantitative and qualitative measures was most appropriate as the researcher collected and analyzed data pertaining to consolidation, as well as the proposed and enacted state legislation in areas experiencing consolidation. The quantitative aspect entailed the analysis of raw statistical data pertaining to numbers of schools, numbers of districts, total enrollment figures, grade level enrollments, numbers of school-aged children, etc. The qualitative component included a historical analysis of state legislative actions, policies, and mandates associated with consolidation.

In keeping with the aforementioned research stating that the numbers of schools and districts have decreased over the previous 75 years while school enrollment numbers have increased, this study looked for further decreases in numbers of schools and school districts. The study analyzed total numbers of districts, schools, and students nationally. It also examined

numbers of districts and schools in rural locales, the average numbers of students per district, and the average number of students per school (by grade level) for the years 1993 to 2012. Once states exhibiting significant consolidation and reorganization trends were identified through this analysis, recent educational bills and laws in these states were examined to determine if these legislative actions coincide with the chronology of the previously-identified consolidation trends. The demographics of downward-trending states (DTS) were analyzed using census data to corroborate the educational data identifying potential enrollment declines.

Sample and Setting

From an organizational standpoint, this study analyzed national data of school districts, schools and students. To gain a fuller understanding of the changes in educational units between 1993 and 2012, one must have a working knowledge of the total number of school districts in the country, the total number of schools in the U.S., and the total number of students enrolled in school districts encompassing kindergarten through grade 12. Once this had been accomplished, one could then begin to identify states that display evidence of significant consolidation and reorganization. Educational policies within these consolidating/reorganizing states could then be examined to determine if any connection exists between these policies and the consolidation and reorganization occurring in these states. It was also prudent to analyze demographic trends over time when attempting to identify connections between consolidation/reorganization and educational policies. This was done to reveal any demographic shifts during the time period under examination that could have connections with consolidation, reorganization, and educational policies.

The first step in conducting an analysis of consolidation and reorganization in public education across the United States from 1993 to 2012 was to analyze the total number of school

districts, schools, and students nationwide. These years were chosen due to the digital availability of data across this time period, allowing for examination of legislation from across the nation. Data from NCES Common Core of Data (NCES CCD, 2015) and the Integrated Public Use Microdata Series (IPUMS, 2016) websites were used to examine trends in school district consolidation and school reorganization throughout the United States from 1993 to 2012.

The following data were compiled:

1. Total districts nationwide
2. Total schools nationwide
3. Total number of students in K-12 districts
4. Average number of students per district
5. Average number of students per school (by grade level)
6. Total number of school-aged children (6-16)
7. Total number of school-aged children enrolled in public/private school
8. Total number of school-aged children enrolled in public school (by grade level)

Through such nationwide data, one could identify states that showed evidence of consolidation and reorganization through a comparison of population trends against changes in the number of schools and districts. Based on this analysis, it was clear that states fell into one of four categories. In Category 1 were states in which the student population had increased or remained stable and in which there had been an increase in the number of schools and school districts from 1993 to 2012. In Category 2 were states in which the student population had decreased but in which there had been an increase in the number of schools and school districts from 1993 to 2012. In Category 3 were states in which the student population had increased or remained stable, but in which there had been a decrease in the number of schools and school districts from 1993 to 2012. In Category 4 were states in which the student population had

decreased and in which there had been a decrease in the number of schools and school districts from 1993 to 2012. (See *Table 1*).

Table 1

Categories According to Changes in Population and Number of Schools and Districts

	Population	
Number of schools and districts	Increasing or stable	Decreasing
Increasing	Category 1	Category 2
Decreasing	Category 3	Category 4

Data Analysis

Once this analysis was accomplished, a closer examination of states that fell into Category 3 (decreasing number of schools and districts with an increasing or stable student population) and Category 4 (decreasing number of schools and districts with a decreasing student population) was conducted. This study sought to identify states displaying the following characteristics:

- Total number of school districts had declined and the number of students per district has increased or remained the same.
- Total numbers of school districts and schools had declined and the number of students per district and per school has increased or remained the same.
- Total number of school districts has declined and the number of students per district had declined or remained the same.
- Total numbers of districts and schools had declined and the number of students per district had remained the same or declined.

Once these parameters had been identified, this study addressed the following questions:

1. Between 1993 and 2012, how has school consolidation and district reorganization played out across the United States?

2. Which states show evidence of significant consolidation and reorganization?
3. What overarching factors seem to be associated with school and/or district consolidation and reorganization?
4. What characteristics that seem linked to consolidation and reorganization exist in educational policies and statutes of states displaying significant consolidation?
5. What are the potential implications if these identified consolidation and reorganization trends continue?

After determining the states with downward consolidation and reorganization trends, a historical policy analysis was conducted on each state identified. This analysis incorporated the methodological techniques of Leopold von Ranke in that it used primary historical sources in identifying legislative actions that could be connected to consolidation and reorganization. In keeping with the fundamental principle of the Rankean tradition, this study sought to locate and report on potentially pertinent legislative actions objectively, with little exercise of intuition, and without generalization (Novick, 1988). To accomplish this, state legislature websites were accessed and searched for pertinent bills and laws designed to potentially influence the organization of public schools, districts, enrollments, etc. The first step was to isolate all education-related legislation from 1993-2012 for each state. The next level of analysis was to use search terms to investigate which of these education bills and acts pertain to the focus of this study. The search terms used are as follows: “schools,” “districts,” “funding,” “taxes,” “facilities,” “enrollment,” “consolidation,” “organization,” “reorganization,” “cost,” “construction,” and “transportation.” The identified legislative actions from this search were reviewed and the content explained. The goal of this was to bring to light any facets of current educational legislation that may have dealt directly or indirectly with the functioning of schools and districts, as well as the organization of schools and districts. Such facets included, but are not limited to: enrollment parameters, funding incentives, cost analyses, changes in organizational

structure, and mandates for suggested consolidation and approval of consolidation. Furthermore any guidelines, stipulations, timelines, etc. for consolidation and reorganization were compared to data trends in the identified “downward trending states.” Connections were then considered between types of educational policies being proposed or enacted and student data trends in a given state.

Significance of Study

Educational policies should be enacted to address changes in the educational needs of a given geographical area, but policies can also be enacted to precipitate changes that policymakers desire (Campbell, 1969). It follows that one might have some general predictive thoughts as to the types of policies one might encounter when analyzing states exhibiting consolidation and reorganization trends. States with decreasing student populations and decreasing numbers of schools and districts would most likely enact policies that mandate consolidation in response to student population numbers. One might expect to encounter policies that set enrollment parameters and force consolidation should these enrollment parameters not be met. Other consolidation policies in states with decreasing numbers of students and decreasing numbers of schools and districts might include geographic guidelines for consolidation and reorganization. Items such as cost analyses of facility use, transportation costs, etc. could come into play here, as these can provide compelling arguments in favor of consolidation.

The focus of this research study was to identify relationships between policy conditions, changes in educational units, and the contexts in which these changes occur. The main goal was to provide a lens through which educational researchers could examine enrollment data, student population figures, and school and district figures in a given state, which would help predict the types of consolidation and reorganization policies present in the state under examination. The

design of this dissertation used empirical screening first in order to limit the sample of states for further exploration. Another way to approach such a study might have been to initially examine educational policies and then search for the corresponding changes connected to these policies. Such an approach would allow a researcher to go “a mile wide and a half inch deep” in characterizing policy conditions with the analysis. On the other hand, this dissertation utilized a historical analysis framework. In part, it sought to determine whether one can make assumptions about policy conditions in a given area by first looking at the data from the area under observation. This dissertation also sought to explore policy conditions in greater depth than would be feasible if one were to conduct a state policy analysis and examine changes in policies across all 50 states for a 20 year period of time. An additional byproduct of this dissertation originated from the policy search itself. In conducting the consolidation and reorganization policy analysis of this study, the researcher was able to provide a description of state legislature websites of the DTS where legislative actions can be accessed. This could provide future researchers with guidance in locating state educational policies.

CHAPTER IV: RESULTS

Quantitative Analysis

To determine which U.S. states have experienced educational consolidation and reorganization, the first level of analysis in this study examined the raw statistical data in all 50 states pertaining to numbers of schools, numbers of districts, total enrollment figures, grade level enrollments, numbers of school-aged children, etc. The NCES CCD (2015) and IPUMS (2016) data were analyzed using Stata software. Data panels were then exported into Excel spreadsheets. In order to examine each state on all data points pertinent to this study, individual spreadsheets for each of the following descriptors were created:

- Total districts per state
- Total schools per state
- Total students per state
- Mean students per district
- Mean students per school
- Total school-age children per state

Figure 1 represents an outline of the overall process for determining which states exhibited downward trends when it came to schools and school districts. Subsequent graphs and explanations in this study provide deeper and detailed analyses.

Figure 2 shows states that exhibited decreasing numbers of districts from 1993 to 2012. This encompasses seventeen states: Alaska, Arkansas, California, Illinois, Iowa, Kansas, Maine, Mississippi, Montana, Nebraska, North Dakota, Oklahoma, Oregon, South Carolina, South Dakota, Vermont, and Wyoming.

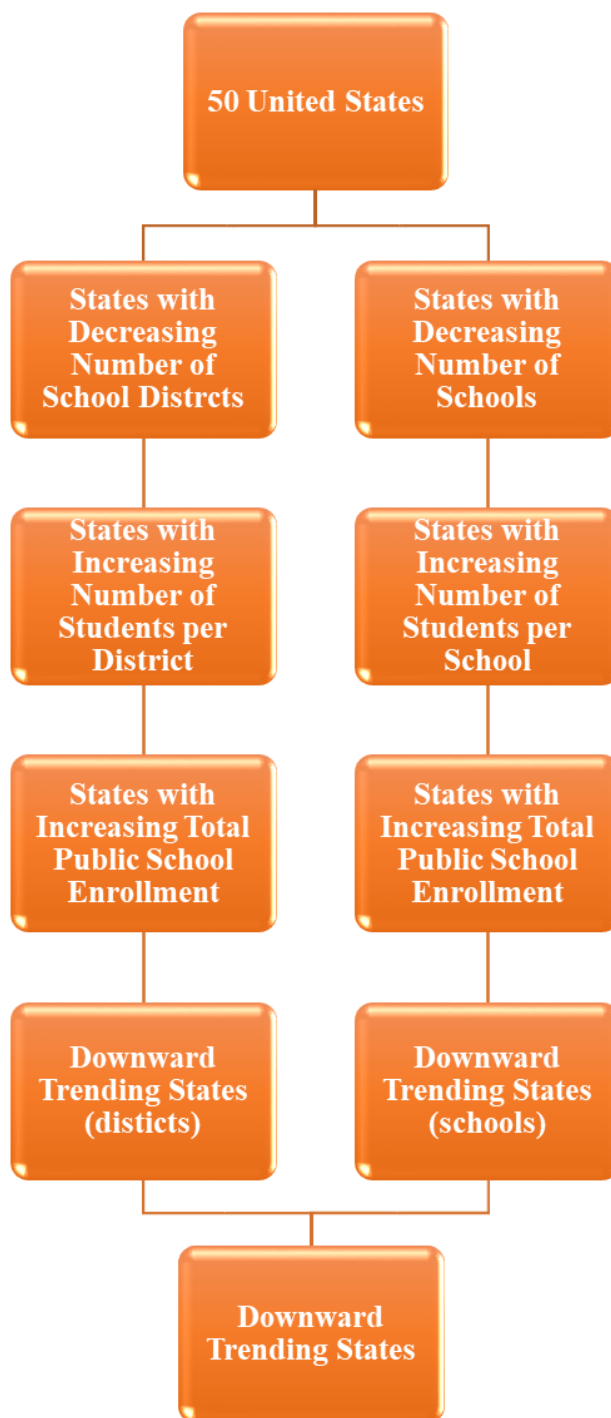


Figure 1. *Decision tree showing process for determining downward trending states.*

It is important to note that all states showing any decrease in number of school districts throughout the given time period are represented in Figure 1. The size of the state, the levels of enrollment, the actual numbers of districts, etc. do not influence the analysis in this table. In

order to identify a true list of states experiencing consolidation or reorganization for further analysis, this study began from the basic premise of identifying all states exhibiting any school district consolidation. As the school district is the primary unit of study in this dissertation, subsequent quantitative analyses pertaining to school districts developed from this list of seventeen states.

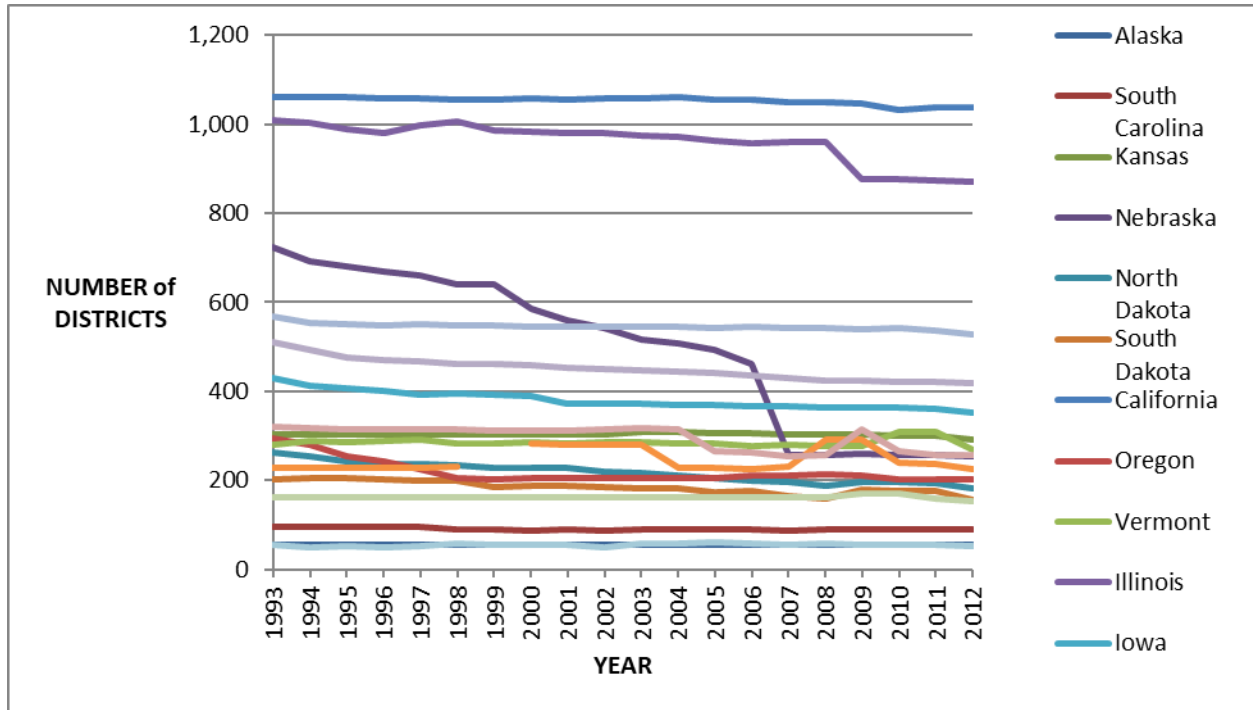


Figure 2. *States with decreasing numbers of districts.*

Declining numbers of school districts could indicate consolidation in a state. It was necessary to look deeper at district data to get a sense of the student population sizes in districts. As the relationship between the total number of districts in a state and the number of students per district must be explored here, the next step in this study involved analyzing the states displayed in Figure 2 (decreasing numbers of districts) to identify which of these states showed increasing numbers of students per district from 1993 through 2012. The results of this average enrollment analysis are displayed in Figure 3 and Figure 4, delineating the fourteen states which have shown

decreasing numbers of school districts and increasing mean students per district in the respective states: Alaska, Arkansas, California, Illinois, Iowa, Kansas, Maine, Montana, Nebraska, North Dakota, Oklahoma, Oregon, South Carolina, and South Dakota. In order to represent the data in an identifiable manner, and more specifically to allow for a reasonable scale to make evident the trend lines, it was necessary to create two separate graphs to account for the size difference between California and South Carolina as compared to the other states within this level of analysis. Figure 3 shows the trend lines for Alaska, Arkansas, Illinois, Iowa, Kansas, Maine, Montana, Nebraska, North Dakota, Oklahoma, Oregon, and South Dakota. Figure 4 shows the trend lines for California and South Carolina. Although these are two distinct graphs with two distinct scales, the data contained within the graphs evidence similar data trends, namely a decrease in the number of districts per state coupled with an increase in students per district within the state.

Fewer school districts would naturally have an effect on the number of students per district, namely an increase in average students per district. However, an increase in students per district could also be caused by declining enrollment statewide, in that fewer total students would precipitate the consolidation of districts. The mathematical effect of this dynamic could result in an overall increase in students per district in a state while this state concurrently experienced decreasing enrollment. In order to accurately identify states displaying consolidation for reasons other than decreased enrollment, this study examined overall statewide enrollment numbers. An increase in the total number of students attending public schools in a state would naturally have an effect on the number of school districts required to meet the educational needs of these students.

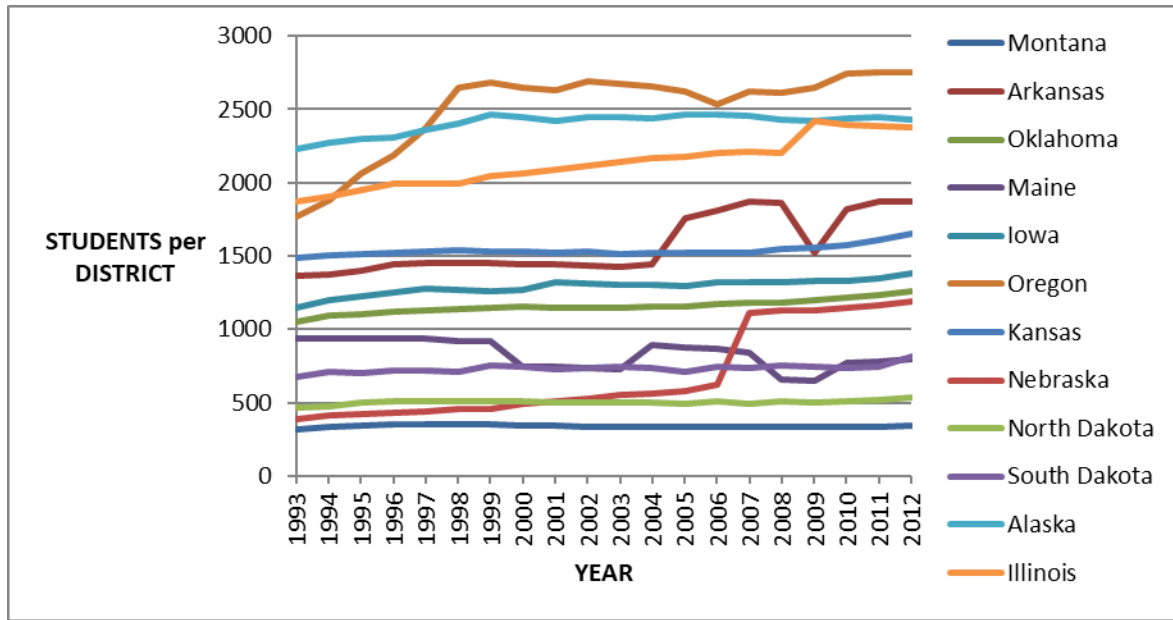


Figure 3. States with decreasing numbers of districts and increasing numbers of students per district (lower range).

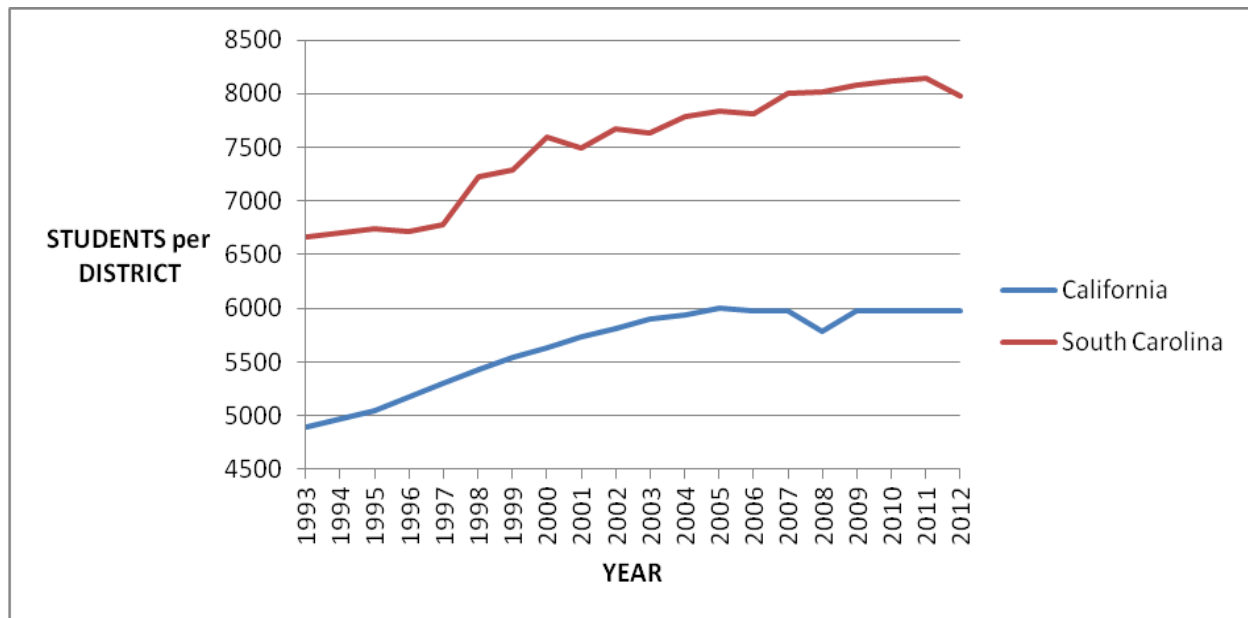


Figure 4. States with decreasing numbers of districts and increasing numbers of students per district (upper range).

A decrease in the total number of students attending public school districts in a given state would also have an effect on the number of districts needed for these students, namely the need for

fewer districts. Figure 5 and Figure 6 display states exhibiting decreasing numbers of districts (from Figure 2) while also exhibiting stable or increasing numbers of total students enrolled in public schools from 1993 through 2012. The states identified in Figure 5 are Alaska, South Carolina, Kansas, Nebraska, Oregon, Arkansas, and Oklahoma. The states identified in Figure 6 are Illinois and California. Once again it was necessary to generate two separate graphs with two separate scales to clearly display the trend lines representing increasing numbers of total students enrolled in public schools.

Identification of states exhibiting decreases in the number of school districts, coupled with analyses of increasing mean students per district and increasing total numbers of students enrolled in public schools, yields a list of states that appear to have experienced consolidation at the school district level between the years of 1993 and 2012 for reasons not related directly to decreases in population. These consolidating states are: Montana, Arkansas, Oklahoma, Maine, Iowa, Oregon, Kansas, Nebraska, North Dakota, South Dakota, Alaska, Illinois, California, and South Carolina. It is worth noting that all states identified as having decreasing numbers of districts with increasing numbers of total students enrolled in public schools also display the characteristic of increasing mean students per district. However, several states display the increasing number of total students enrolled in public schools trait while not showing an increase in mean students per school. These particular states are: Montana, Maine, Iowa, North Dakota, and South Dakota. This distinction could reveal educational policies within these states that have a focus that is somewhat different from the other states identified as consolidating based upon school district data.

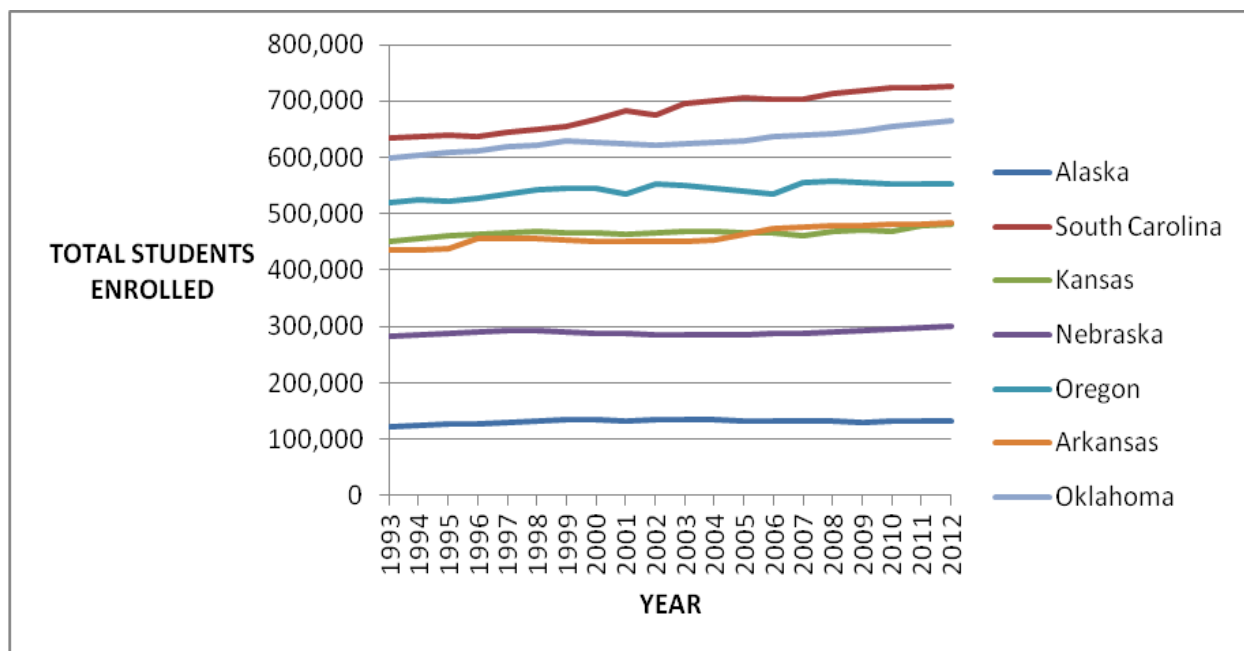


Figure 5. States with decreasing numbers of districts and increasing numbers of total students enrolled in public schools (lower range).

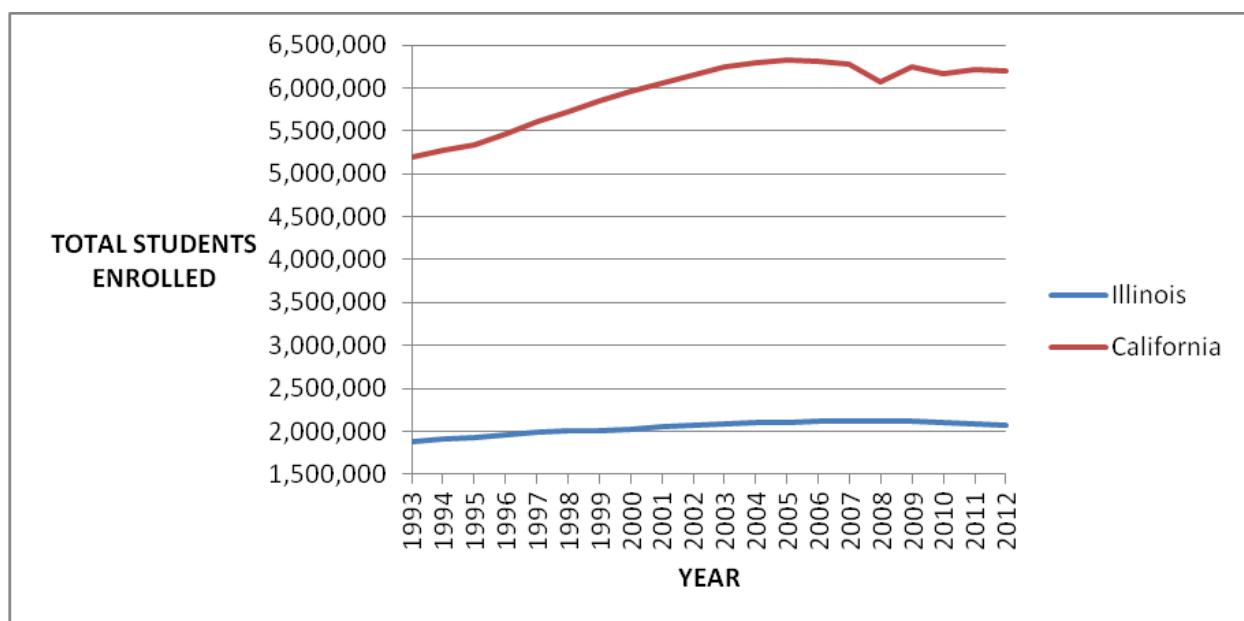


Figure 6. States with decreasing numbers of districts and increasing numbers of total students enrolled in public schools (upper range).

Schools vary widely between states and within states on many characteristics, including size, number of students, grade span, and sending area. School districts located in adjacent townships/cities/counties within a state can be organized in vastly different configurations in order to accommodate the needs of students. Within each school district are individual schools attended by students in those districts. These schools can also vary greatly. Across the nation and within states, there are numerous differences in how schools are organized. For example, some elementary schools encompass grades kindergarten through four while other elementary schools include grades five and six. Some middle schools span grades six through eight, while others service grades seven and eight. Districts sometimes distinguish between lower elementary schools (e.g. grade K-2) and upper elementary schools (e.g. grades 3-4). Understanding that there are obvious universal differences between an elementary school, which may serve the needs of students in grade kindergarten through grade four, and the comprehensive high school, which may service students in grades nine through twelve, the overall construct and distinction of a “school” plays an important part in this study.

This study examined school data in order to identify potential consolidation and reorganization in given states. The study utilized the same pattern of district data analysis on school data. Specifically, this study analyzed school data and identified states with decreasing numbers of schools in a given state between 1993 and 2012. The states exhibiting this data trend are represented in Figure 7 and Figure 8: Montana, Wyoming, West Virginia, Maine, Vermont, North Dakota, South Dakota, Iowa, Kansas, Nebraska, and Oklahoma. Once again, it was necessary to divide the data into two separate graphs to better display trend lines.

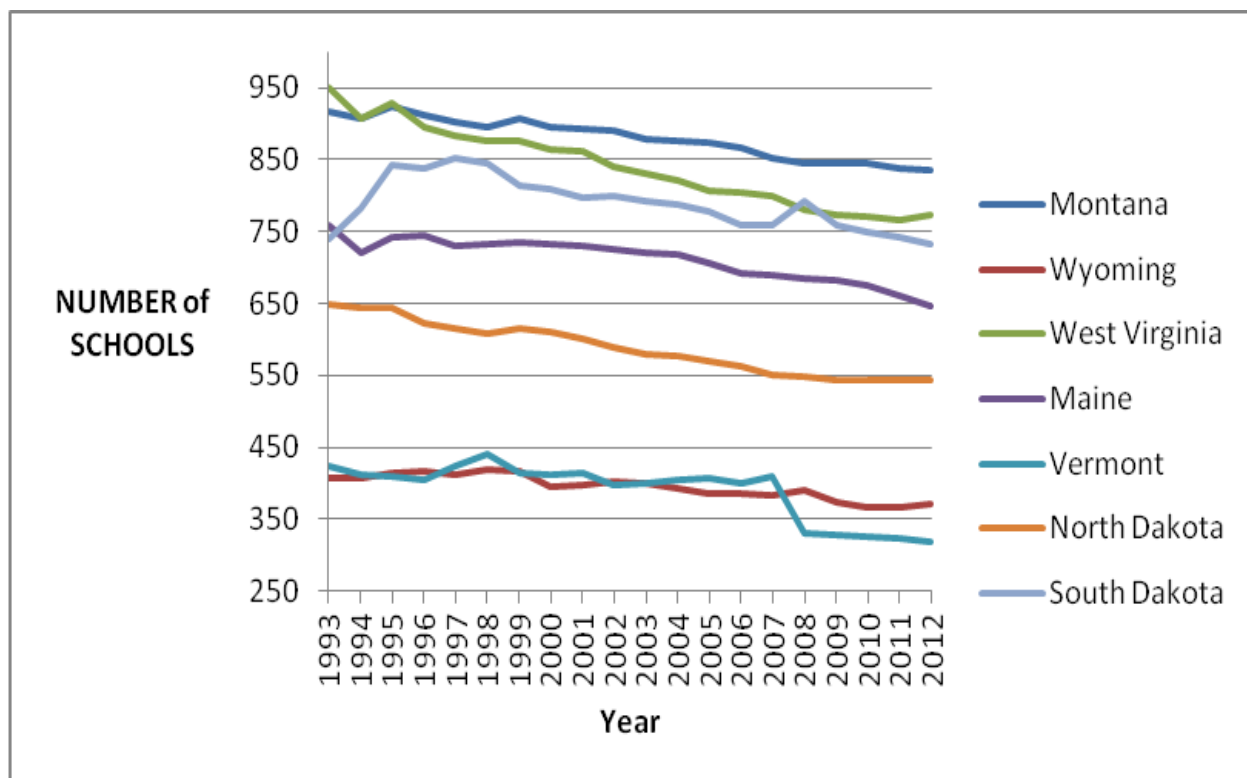


Figure 7. States with decreasing numbers of schools (lower range).

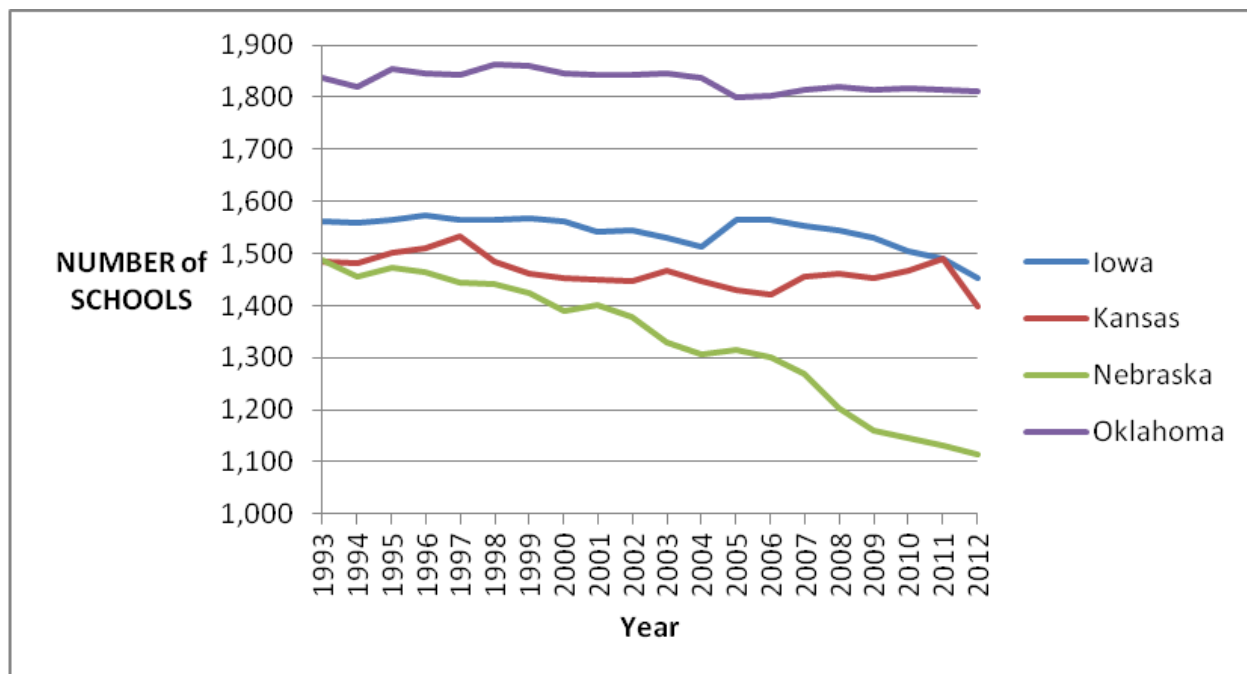


Figure 8. States with decreasing numbers of schools (upper range).

The next step in the current study identified states exhibiting a decrease in the total number of public schools (Figure 7 and Figure 8) with an increase in the number of students per school. This information is represented in Figure 9 and delineates the following states:

Oklahoma, West Virginia, Vermont, Iowa, Kansas, and Nebraska.

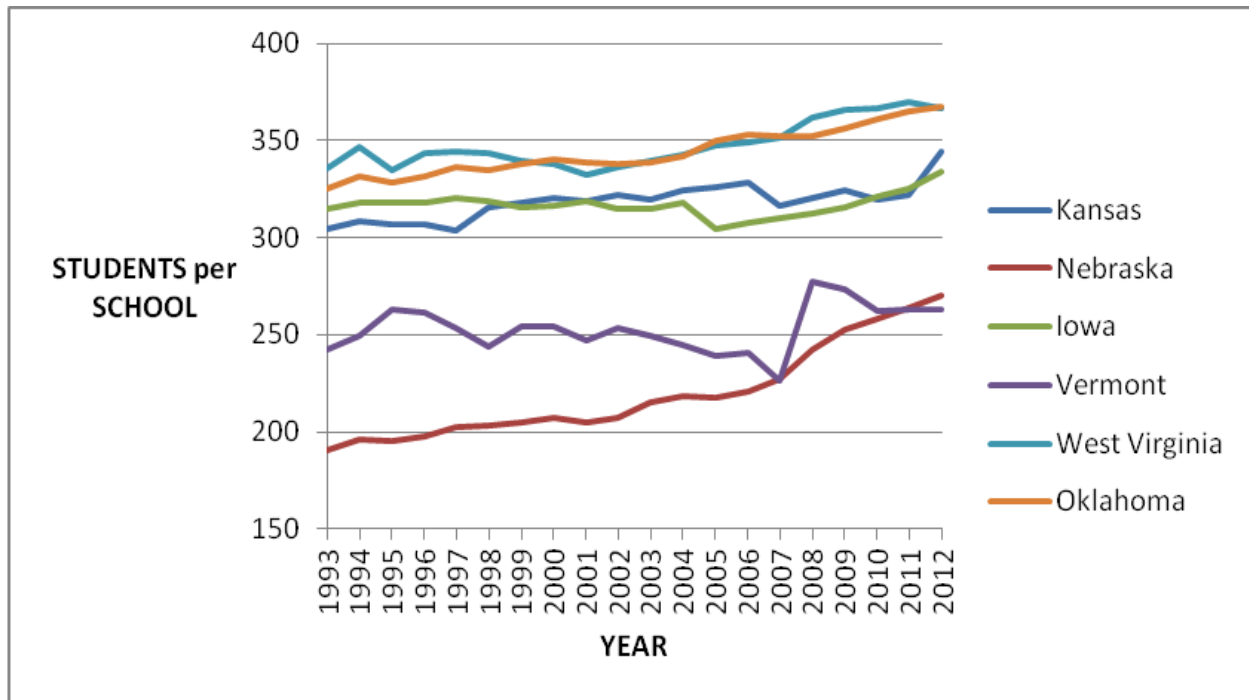


Figure 9. *States with decreasing numbers of schools and increasing numbers of total students per school.*

As was the case when searching for evidence of consolidation at the district level, declining enrollment could cause an increase in students per school, in that fewer total students would precipitate the consolidation or reorganization of schools. The mathematical effect of this dynamic could result in an overall increase in students per school in a state while this state concurrently experienced decreasing enrollment. Therefore, the next layer of analysis in this study involved identifying states displaying decreasing numbers of schools (Figure 7 and Figure 8) and increasing numbers of total students enrolled in public schools. Figure 10 represents the three states that fit this description: Oklahoma, Kansas, and Nebraska.

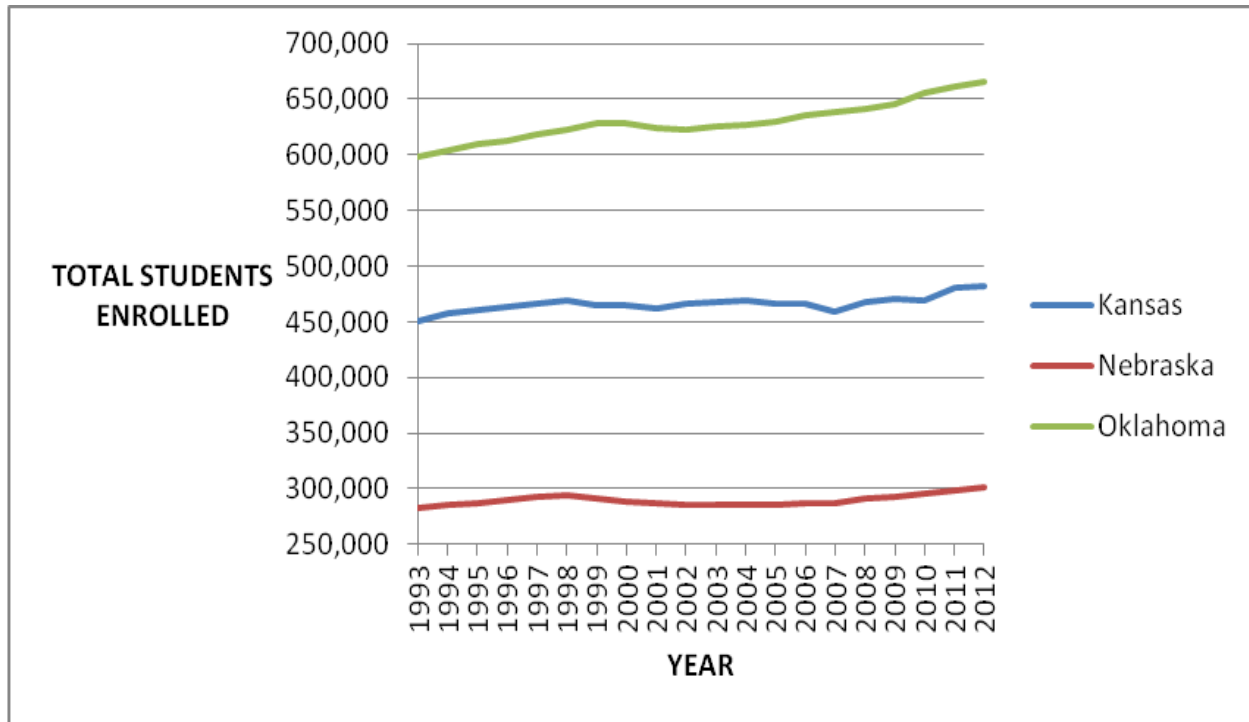


Figure 10. *States with decreasing numbers of schools and increasing numbers of total students enrolled in public schools.*

Another metric utilized in this study was the total number of school age children in a given state. This type of information was pertinent in that it provided data regarding the total population of potential students each state would be required to educate, should all families decide to enroll their children in public schools. Data on total school age children contained within the NCES begins in the year 2000. Therefore, the analysis of school age children in the current study spans the years 2000 to 2012.

Total numbers of school age children were examined in the states exhibiting declining numbers of districts and increasing numbers of total students enrolled in public schools (Figure 5 and Figure 6), and states exhibiting declining numbers of schools and increasing numbers of total students enrolled in public schools (Figure 10). The states showing the trend of decreasing numbers of districts and schools while also exhibiting increasing numbers of school age children

from 2000 to 2012 were: Arkansas, Oklahoma, Oregon, and South Carolina. This information is displayed in Figure 11 and it indicates the need for particular focus on these four states.

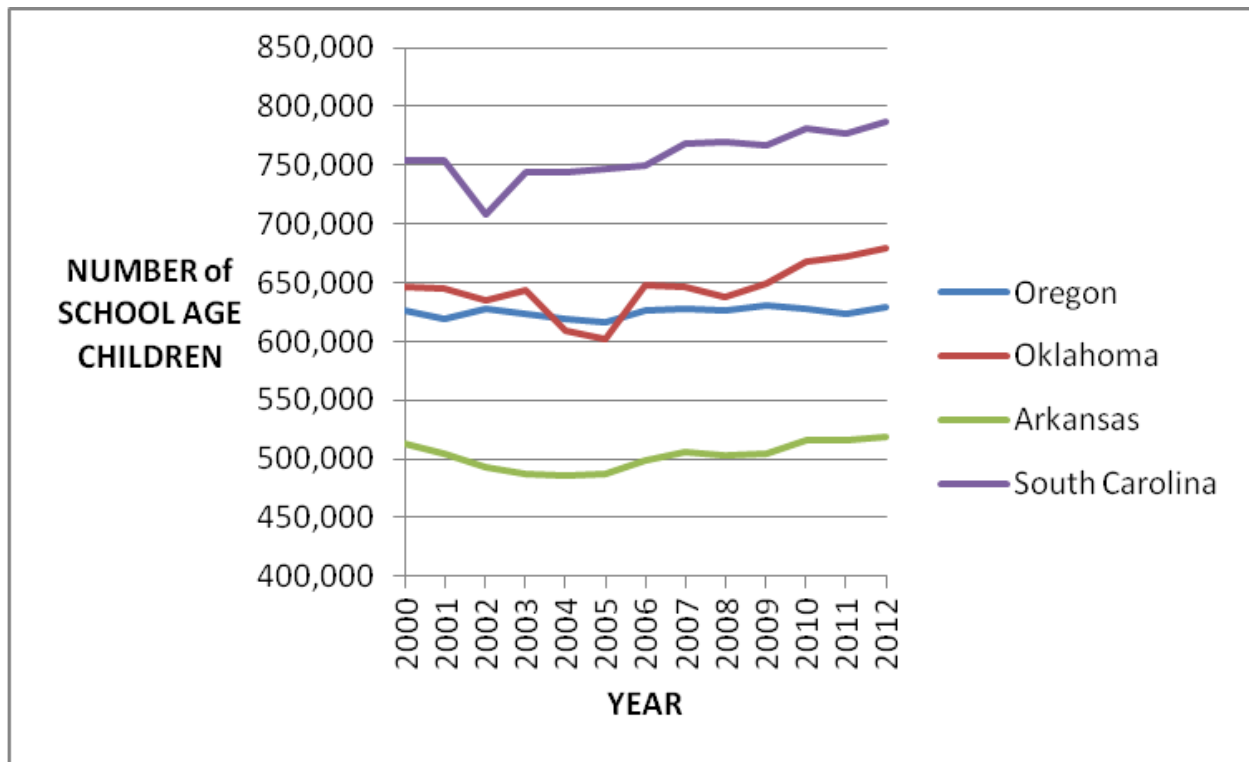


Figure 11. *States with decreasing numbers of districts and schools and increasing numbers of total school age children (2000–2012).*

To gain an understanding of the relationship between state student population and student placement in public schools, this study once again utilized totals of school age children and total students enrolled in public schools. As previously stated, data on school age children is only available from 2000 through 2012. This study created a ratio between the total number of school age children and the total number of students enrolled in public schools for all states exhibiting declining numbers of districts and increasing numbers of total students enrolled in public schools (Figure 5 and Figure 6), and states exhibiting declining numbers of schools and increasing numbers of total students enrolled in public schools (Figure 10). The closer this ratio is to 1, the

higher the percentage of total school age children in the state who attend public school in that state.

Table 2

Ratios of Average Number of Students Enrolled in Public Schools to Average
Number of School Age Children (2000–2012)

State	Average number of children		Ratio (<i>a</i> / <i>b</i>)
	Enrolled in public schools (<i>a</i>)	School age (<i>b</i>)	
Alaska	112,829	135,965	0.830
Arkansas	401,542	502,778	0.798
California	5,345,962	6,814,657	0.784
Illinois	1,788,982	2,310,816	0.774
Kansas	468,833	502,824	0.932
Nebraska	290,120	323,428	0.897
Oklahoma	638,769	644,574	0.991
Oregon	468,396	624,856	0.750
South Carolina	606,408	757,684	0.800

Table 2 shows that the majority of school age children attend the public school systems in the states identified in this study as “downward trending states” or “DTS” – states that exhibit stable or increased student populations while simultaneously exhibiting decreasing total numbers of districts or schools.

The search of the bills and other legislative actions connected to consolidation and reorganization in each of the DTS followed a two-step procedure. All legislative actions for each year were examined using the following search terms: public schools, districts, consolidation, reorganization, funding, taxes, facilities, enrollment, construction, cost, and transportation. The results of this search were read and reviewed to determine the potential connection to public school consolidation and reorganization for each DTS. This search revealed that across the nine

DTS there were 138 legislative actions pertaining to financial, structural, or procedural changes in the organization of districts, boundaries of schools or districts, grade bands contained within schools or districts, authority of committees to affect school or district structure, etc. Legislative actions in each of the downward trending states (DTS) were sorted, labeled, and described briefly in Appendices A-D as follows:

- Appendix A: Legislative Actions by State
- Appendix B: Legislative Actions by Classification
- Appendix C: Legislative Actions by Enacted (Y/N)
- Appendix D: Legislative Actions by Year

Alaska

A search of all education and education-related bills and laws from 1993 through 2012 was conducted utilizing the Alaska State Legislature website (<http://w3.akleg.gov/index.php>). Approximately 8,200 pieces of legislation were available for review, and 166 of these were noted using the previously identified search terms as pertaining to education in connection with this study. From these 166 pieces, 12 bills and acts were identified that could have been connected to district consolidation and reorganization in the state.

Several bills were direct in their proposed effect on educational organization. House Bill 174 (1993) separated the types of school districts in Alaska into three categories: an organized borough, a home rule/first class city in an unorganized borough with 1,000 or more students in average daily membership, and a regional attendance area with 1,000 or more students in average daily attendance. Districts existing prior to the implementation of this legislation were unaffected. However, going forward, in consultation with the Department of Education and local communities, House Bill 174 also permitted the Department of Community and Regional Affairs

to establish and determine the boundaries of regional attendance areas containing 1,000 or more students in average daily membership.

House Bill 450 (1998) amended the definition of middle/junior high schools and secondary schools. Specifically, grades 6 through 10 constituted a junior high school or middle school, while grades 6 through 12 constituted a secondary school. These same school definitions were also part of Senate Bill 95 (1999) and would have the same effects on the grade structures of these schools.

House Bill 145 (1999) created parameters to determine the number of schools in a district. Namely, a community with an average daily membership (ADM) of at least 10 but not more than 100 would be counted as a school. A community with an ADM of at least 101 but not more than 450 would be counted as one elementary school (grades K-6) and one secondary school (grades 7-12) or one elementary school (grades K-6), one middle school (grades 7-9), and one high school (grades 10-12) if the community had an elementary school, middle school, and high school on January 1, 1999. In a community with an ADM greater than 450, each facility that is administered as a separate school would be counted as one school, except that each alternative school with an ADM of less than 200 would be counted as part of the school district with the highest ADM

House Bill 452 (2002) stated that the Department of Education should require consolidation of any district where district enrollment has less than 100 students in average daily membership for two consecutive years.

House Bill 480 (2004) gave the Department of Community and Economic Development, in consultation with the Department of Education and Early Development and local communities, the authority to establish and determine the boundaries of regional educational

attendance areas having 1,000 or more students in average daily membership. Further, each regional educational attendance area would contain an integrated socioeconomically, linguistically, and culturally homogeneous area. The manner in which communication and transportation facilitated the administration of education to these areas would also be considered, as well as geographical and physical boundaries. House Bill 480 amended some of the content of House Bill 174 (1993), specifically establishing a home rule or first class city outside a borough as a city school district. A city school district was required to establish, operate, and maintain a system of public schools as provided for boroughs. Finally, House Bill 480 established that a second class city outside of a borough was not a school district and could not establish a system of public schools. This would directly impact the overall number of districts in Alaska.

The Alaska State Legislature focused on school district finances more recently. Senate Bill 131 (2003) amended existing legislation in the area of funding public school construction by specifying that the total amount of school construction projects approved for department reimbursement could not exceed \$191,144,901. Senate Bill 131 established allocation amounts from June 30, 1998 through July 1, 2006 based on student enrollment numbers. \$77,897,000 was allocated to projects in a municipality with a public school enrollment of 25,000 or more students in the fiscal year 2000. \$14,571,000 was allocated to projects in a municipality with a public school enrollment of at least 15,000 students but not greater than 25,000 students in the fiscal year 2000. \$14,143,000 was allocated to projects in a municipality with a public school enrollment of at least 10,000 students but not greater than 15,000 students in the fiscal year 2000. \$7,429,000 was allocated to projects in a municipality with a public school enrollment of at least 7,500 students but not greater than 10,000 students in the fiscal year 2000. \$20,712,912 was allocated to projects in a municipality with a public school enrollment of at least 5,000 students

but not greater than 7,500 students in the fiscal year 2000. \$2,660,000 was allocated to projects in a municipality with a public school enrollment of at least 2,750 students but not greater than 3,000 students in the fiscal year 2000. \$454,000 was allocated to projects in a municipality with a public school enrollment of at least 2,400 students but not greater than 2,750 students in the fiscal year 2000. \$46,869,989 was allocated to projects in a municipality with a public school enrollment of at least 2,050 students but not greater than 2,400 students in the fiscal year 2000. \$329,000 was allocated to projects in a municipality with a public school enrollment of at least 1,700 students but not greater than 1,750 students in the fiscal year 2000. \$286,000 was allocated to projects in a municipality with a public school enrollment of at least 650 students but not greater than 725 students in the fiscal year 2000. \$519,000 was allocated to projects in a municipality with a public school enrollment of at least 500 students but not greater than 525 students in the fiscal year 2000. \$500,000 was allocated to projects in a municipality with a public school enrollment of at least 482 students but not greater than 490 students in the fiscal year 2000. \$2,224,000 was allocated to projects in a municipality with a public school enrollment of at least 425 students but not greater than 482 students in the fiscal year 2000. \$2,550,000 was allocated to projects in a municipality with a public school enrollment of at least 290 students but not greater than 305 students in the fiscal year 2000. This bill would incentivize more sizable consolidations as the larger enrollment areas would receive more money.

Senate Bill 202 (2003), which was sponsored by the Senate Finance Committee and set to take effect July 1, 2003, related to school transportation. This legislative action stipulated that a school district providing student transportation was eligible to receive funding for operating the student transportation system. The amount of funding was determined by multiplying the amount of the school district's ADM less the district's correspondence programs during the current fiscal

year on a per student allocation. This amount was computed by dividing the amount received by the school district during the 2003 fiscal year by the district's ADM less the ADM for the district's correspondence during the 2003 fiscal year, or by \$1,200 per student. Senate Bill 202 also included a transition provision for transportation funding. Beginning July 1, 2004 and ending June 30, 2006, a school district providing student transportation was also eligible to receive additional funding equal to 50 percent of any percentage increase during the second preceding calendar year in the consumer price index for all urban consumers for the Anchorage metropolitan area, as compiled by the Bureau of Labor Statistics, United States Department of Labor.

House Bill 142 (2007, §2) stipulated that the State Department of Education could provide for transportation of students who reside a distance from established schools. To accomplish this, the Department was given various aspects of authority. The Department could require districts to enter into contracts with the Department for the administration, supervision, and operation/subcontracting of the operation of transportation systems for students to and from school. The Department could require all school district transportation contractors and other state-funded transportation recipients to submit an annual report with financial statements and other required operational data. The Department could permit school districts to establish supplementary transportation systems for students ineligible to use state-funded transportation facilities, and districts could be permitted to charge fares or fees for these services. Districts could also use local tax funds to pay all or partial costs of the supplementary transportation system. If a school district entered into a transportation contract, the district would be reimbursed for 90 percent of the cost of operating the transportation system (if transportation is provided by the school district), or 100 percent of the cost of operating the transportation system when the

transportation was provided under a contract with the school district. This reimbursement incentivized for districts at least the consideration of seeking to grow and expand their sending/receiving areas.

From a structural perspective, the Alaska State Legislature sought to create committees and task forces to further study and administer to school districts. In response to studies published by the institute of Social and Economic Research in 2003 and 2004, the Alaska House of Representatives created House Resolution 10 (2005) that established a seven-member task force centered on school district cost factors to evaluate proposals and conclusions pertaining to school district cost differentials. The cost factors could be used to evaluate district efficiencies.

Senate Concurrent Resolution 11 (2007) established the Joint Legislative Education Funding Task Force to examine school district cost differentials and the existing formula for providing state aid for education. The task force was designed to evaluate proposals pertaining to school district cost factors, to recommend additions and improvements to education funding laws, and to take public comments on education funding and school district cost factors. Senate Concurrent Resolution 11 also provided that the Joint Legislative Education Funding Task Force be terminated on October 15, 2007.

House Concurrent Resolution 13 (2008) established the Education Funding District Cost Factor Commission to examine school district cost differentials and create a sustainable model that could be updated to reflect the costs of providing education in Alaska. House Concurrent Resolution 13 provided that the Education Funding District Cost Factor Commission be terminated on April 1, 2011.

Senate Bill 285 (2008) enhanced the authority of the Alaska Department of Education. While not all aspects of Senate Bill 285 are pertinent to this study, several sections of this

legislative action are noteworthy. Senate Bill 285 allowed the Department of Education to establish, maintain, govern, operate, discontinue, and combine regional, area, and special schools. The Department could enter into contracts with school districts to provide more economical or efficient education services, as well as provide for the sale or disposal of abandoned/obsolete buildings and other state-owned school property.

Arkansas

A search of all education-related bills and laws from 1993 through 2012 was conducted utilizing the Arkansas State Legislature website (<http://www.arkleg.state.ar.us>). Approximately 40,000 pieces of legislation were available for review, and 501 of these were discovered using the previously identified search terms as pertaining to education in connection with this study. In reviewing these 501 pieces, 10 bills and acts were identified as possibly being connected to district consolidation and reorganization in the state. Several pieces of legislation were direct in their proposed structural effect on educational organization. Senate Bill 817 (1993) focused on the creation of metropolitan school districts in any Arkansas county that had more than one school district and contained a metropolitan area of one or more cities with combined populations of 75,000 or more citizens and within which one or more school districts had failed to meet constitutional desegregation requirements. The creation of these metropolitan districts would result in the elimination of the smaller districts in the surrounding areas.

Based upon review of Arkansas state legislature activity, the year 2003 stands out when examined through a district consolidation perspective. Senate Bill 71 (2003) provided a mechanism for the State Board of Education to consider a petition from the residents of an area within a school district who seek an adjustment or change in boundary lines with an adjoining school district. The petition was required to contain a statement of the geographic features,

including but not limited to roads, distances to school, etc. that caused boundary adjustment to be in the best interest of students. As long as the petition included proof that public notice of the contents of the petition was provided, to the public via newspaper and general circulation, the State Board of Education could consider adjusting district boundaries, resulting in consolidation.

House Bill 1106 (2003) proposed to amend Arkansas Code Title 6, Chapter 13, by providing guidelines surrounding consolidation. Specifically, House Bill 1106 proposed that, beginning February 1, 2004, and occurring every February 1st thereafter, the state department of education would publish a consolidation list that included all school districts with fewer than 500 students in average daily membership (ADM) in both of the preceding two years. The list would exclude districts whose ADM had been at least 400 students but less than 500 students and the district's ADM had increased by at least 12% over a period of 10 school years immediately preceding the current school year. House Bill 1106 outlined consolidation procedures. Districts on the list could voluntarily consolidate with or be annexed by another existing school district by filing a petition for approval no later than March 15. School districts that did not receive approval of their petitions would be administratively consolidated by the state board no later than June 1.

Act 60 (2003), subtitled the Public Education Reorganization Act, expanded the scope of consolidation procedures outlined in Senate Bill 71 (2003) and House Bill 1106 (2003) to include districts whose ADM had been 350 students. Act 60 amended the voluntary consolidation petition timeline to April 1 and provided consolidation funding, specifically eight hundred dollars multiplied by the consolidated ADM plus seven hundred dollars multiplied by consolidated national school lunch student total. These administrative consolidation assistance funds may be used by the school districts for any purpose.

Review of Arkansas legislative actions revealed items that may have influenced consolidation and reorganization through procedural guidelines. House Bill 1301 (1993) proposed the establishment of a public school choice program that would enable any pupil to attend a school in a district where the pupil does not reside, if certain stipulations were satisfied. These stipulations included adoption by school boards of specific standards for acceptance and rejection of applications, submission by April 17 of a formal application by the pupil's parent to the nonresident district, response from the nonresident district within 60 days of receipt of application (including rationale if the application is rejected), and acknowledgment that the responsibility for transportation to the nonresident district lies with the pupil's parent (unless the nonresident district opts to provide transportation). This would potentially allow for districts to expand their receiving areas without necessarily incurring additional transportation costs.

House Bill 2003 (1993) proposed the creation of a Public School Finance Study Committee. One House member of the Joint Interim Committee on Education, one Senate member of the Joint Interim Committee on Education, one at-large member of the House (appointed by the Speaker of the House), one at-large member of the Senate (appointed by the President Pro Tem of the Senate), the Director of the Department of Education (or designee), one member appointed by the Arkansas School Board Association, two public school superintendents (one from a district of fewer than 1,000 students and one from a district of greater than 1,000 students), and one member appointed by the Arkansas Education Association comprised this committee. The role of the committee was to study the School Finance Act and other laws relating to public school funding, to determine the feasibility of revising such laws to clarify and simplify them, and to assure that public funds are distributed equitably and fairly. The ability to

interpret feasibility and to revise school funding laws could have an impact on school and district size and number.

Senate Bill 432 (1997, §14) sought to amend the powers of the State Board of Elementary and Secondary Education. Some of these proposed amended powers could have had an influence on consolidation and reorganization, namely the authority to prepare and distribute plans for the construction and equipment of schools, the authority to approve plans and expenditures of public school funds for all new school buildings, the authority to supervise the operation of school district budgets, and the authority to take any actions necessary to increase the efficiency of the state public schools.

Act 1386 (2001) directed the State Board of Education to conduct a study of the structure of public elementary and secondary education, with the results to be presented to the House and Senate Interim Committees on Education no later than September 1, 2002. Facets of the study could potentially influence educational consolidation and reorganization. These facets include identifying ways and means of improving the efficiency of elementary and secondary education, examining the structures of education in other states to see if changes should be made to the Arkansas system, reviewing the responsibilities of the State Board of Education and the local boards to determine if changes should be made, and determining the level of funding needed to offer a quality education program to all students.

Act 1397 (2005) provided a mechanism for closing an isolated school. The legislation defined an isolated school as a school within a district that is subject to administrative consolidation or annexation. Such a school was designated to remain open unless the school board of the receiving district adopted a motion to close all or part of the isolated school. The motion to close the isolated school could be carried through unanimous vote of the full board.

Closing of an isolated school could also be accomplished through a majority vote of closing by the local school board and a subsequent majority vote of closing by the State Board of Education.

Act 1424 (2005) created the Academic Facilities Oversight Committee and the Advisory Committee on Public School Academic Facilities. The Oversight Committee reviewed and recommended policies and criteria for the repair, remodeling, maintenance, renovation, and construction of public school academic facilities. This committee reviewed the effectiveness of methods used to fund the cost of appropriate public school academic facilities and equipment. The Academic Facilities Oversight Committee had the authority to appoint members to the Advisory Committee on Public School Academic Facilities. The role of this advisory committee was to assist the Division of Public School Academic Facilities and Transportation. Centralized control over policies and criteria involving such aspects of school facilities could allow the state to mandate school closings and promote consolidation and reorganization.

California

A search of all education-related bills and laws from 1993 through 2012 was conducted utilizing the California State Legislature website (<http://www.legislature.ca.gov>). Approximately 57,000 pieces of legislation were available for review, and 612 of these were discovered using the previously identified search terms as pertaining to education in connection with this study. In reviewing these 612 pieces, 6 bills and acts were identified that could have shaped district consolidation and reorganization in the state.

Review of California legislative actions revealed items that may have influenced consolidation and reorganization through procedural guidelines. One facet of Assembly Bill 1114 (1993) required the governing board of each school district to establish a policy of open

enrollment for residents within the district whereby a parent/guardian of a school age could, subject to specified limitations, select the schools within the district a child could attend, irrespective of the child's residence location within the district. Parents' ability to select a particular school within the district could affect enrollment numbers and impact other district schools.

Another procedural bill was Assembly Bill 3295 (1994) which proposed the extension of existing state law. Existing state law required each county committee on school district organization to formulate plans and recommendations for the organization of the school district in the county. Existing law also authorized the State Board of Education to approve proposals for the reorganization of districts if the Board determined the existence of special circumstances. Assembly Bill 3295 stipulated how the county organization committees should formulate plans and recommendations for the organization of the districts in a county (or portion of a county) with a portion of one or more adjacent counties. These plans were to be based upon the idea that a unified school district was the most desirable form of school district in the state, and that a single countywide unified school district should be formed when the inclusive kindergarten through grade 12 enrollment is less than an amount to be determined by the State Board of Education.

Assembly Bill 2628 (1994) examined the percentage of signatures of registered voters required to petition a reorganization of one or more school districts. Assembly Bill 2628 sought to reduce this percentage from 25% to 10% of registered voters. This bill also sought to reduce the voter percentage required for a county committee on school district organization to hold a hearing upon receipt of a reorganization petition from 10% to 5% of registered voters.

Senate Bill 300 (1997) sought to establish the Commission on School District Consolidation and Reorganization, which was to be a panel of eleven members: six appointed by the governor, two appointed by the Senate Committee on Rules, two appointed by the Speaker of the Assembly, and the Superintendent of Public Instruction (or a designee). The governor would name the chair of the committee. This committee was to conduct a study on the feasibility of increased school district reorganization and consolidation across the state. The study itself was to address consolidation and reorganization from various perspectives. The first of these was an evaluation of the results proposals that called for reorganization and consolidation in other states. The committee's study was also required to explore the desirability and feasibility of the following: converting all school districts into unified K-12 inclusive districts, ensuring each unified district would have no less than 10,000 students and no more than 25,000 students in average daily attendance, creating countywide unified districts in counties with less than 15,000 students, and creating regional offices of education to replace county offices of education. These regional offices would work directly with the State Department of Education and provide support services to school districts.

The California legislature generated several bills that could have had a financial influence on public school consolidation and reorganization. Assembly Bill 3236 (1994) proposed the creation of a school finance task force to study the potential need to reform the existing school finance system. Five members of this task force would be appointed by the Speaker of the House, five members would be appointed by the Governor, and five members would be appointed by the Superintendent of Public Instruction.

Assembly Bill 235 (2003) could have had a financial influence on consolidation and reorganization through its focus on student transportation. Specifically, Assembly Bill 235

exhibited the legislative intent to define the requirements of a student transportation funding formula that would optimize the distribution and use of funds spent by school districts on student transportation services. The bill required a Legislative Analyst to review the strengths and limitations of the existing transportation system, to consider alternative ways to allocate transportation funding among school districts, and to develop options for the Legislature to consider regarding changes to the current transportation funding formula. The authority to change this formula could have an effect on the services districts are willing to provide. All findings and recommendations were to be presented in a report to the Legislature.

Illinois

A search of all education-related bills and laws from 1997 through 2012 was conducted utilizing the Illinois State Legislature website (<http://www.ilga.gov>). The Illinois website did not document legislation prior to the 90th General Assembly (1997-1998). Approximately 76,000 pieces of legislation from 1997-2012 were available for review, and 12 of these were discovered using the previously-identified search terms as potentially connected to district consolidation and reorganization in the state.

Several pieces of legislation centered on the financial aspects of potential consolidation and reorganization. House Bill 3313 (2000) proposed a state grant for school construction following consolidation or annexation or following the creation of a cooperative high school. In order to be eligible for the grant, the construction project must begin within two years after the effective date of the consolidation, annexation, or creation of the cooperative high school.

House Bill 2611 (2003) sought to provide supplementary state aid to school districts experiencing significant growth. If a district's student membership increased more than 10% over the course of two consecutive years, the amount of general state aid for the next school year

would increase by the portion of the percentage above the 10% increase in student membership over the preceding two years.

House Bill 4431 (2004) proposed the creation of fast-growth grants. Districts with over 10,000 students in average daily membership (ADM) that experienced an increase in student membership exceeding 1.5% over the course of two consecutive years would be eligible for specified State Board of Education grants. Districts with ADM below 10,000 students that experienced an increase in student membership exceeding 10% over the course of two consecutive years would be eligible for specified State Board of Education grants. The State Board of Education would determine the per pupil grant amounts based upon the needs of each district.

House Bill 3108 (2011) proposed block grant funding. Beginning with the 1996 fiscal year, and for each following year, the State Board of Education could award to school districts with greater than 500,000 inhabitants a general education block grant and an educational services block grant. This would be in lieu of distributing to the districts separate state funding for specified programs.

A number of legislative actions could have influenced public school and district consolidation and reorganization via structural changes. House Bill 1473 (1999) sought to create countywide districts. The State Board of Education, in conjunction with all school districts and school boards, would develop and enact a plan under which all districts would be organized by county boundaries. Further, there would no longer be only elementary and only high school districts. These would be annexed into the countywide unit school districts.

House Bill 3910 (2000) specifically targeted two districts. House Bill 3910 proposed the consolidation of the Thornton Township High School District 205 and the Dolton School District 148.

House Bill 325 (2001) proposed the establishment of a Department of School District Organization. This would assist local school districts in studying school district organization problems and issues in order to improve educational opportunities for students. Section 7 of House Bill 325 allowed school district boundaries lying entirely within any educational service region be changed by detachment, annexation, division, or dissolution by the regional board of school trustees or by the State Superintendent of Education as a result of petitions from the boards of education or the voters of the affected districts.

House Bill 3001 (2003) sought to create the Small Schools Task Force. This group was to be composed of thirteen people including the State Superintendent of Education (or designee), House of Representative members, Senate members, teachers, Illinois Federation of Teachers members, Illinois Statewide School Management Alliance members, and members appointed by the Chicago Board of Education. The Small School Task Force was created to study the effectiveness of schools with a population under 400 students.

House Bill 4281 (2004) stated that any school district with a population below 5,000 students would be dissolved and its territory annexed by the regional board of school trustees upon the filing of a request to dissolve. If the majority of the registered voters in a school district with less than 5,000 students file a petition that resulted in the annexation of the district to another district, provided the regional board of trustees approved this petition, the question of dissolution and annexation would then be submitted to the electors in each affected school district. Similar legislation to this was introduced as House Bill 363 (2005).

House Joint Resolution 6 (2011) created the School District Realignment and Consolidation Task Force within the State Board of Education. This task force was designed to examine the number of school districts in the state of Illinois, to determine the optimal enrollment for a school district, and to explore where consolidation and realignment would be beneficial. Other goals of the task force included reducing money spent on duplication of efforts, improving the education of students by having fewer obstacles between qualified teacher and their students, and lowering the property tax burden.

Senate Bill 3494 (2012) called for a district consolidation report. The State Board of Education was to conduct a study on the feasibility and the cost saving benefits of consolidating specific school districts within the same geographic area. The study was to include recommendations on which districts should be consolidated. The State Board of Education was to compile the results of this study and present these to the General Assembly and the Governor no later than January 1, 2014. The State Board of Education was then to conduct public hearings in each district recommended for consolidation within 90 days after submission of the report to the General Assembly. The General Assembly was then to vote on accepting or rejecting the report's consolidation recommendations.

Kansas

A search of education-related bills and laws from 1996 through 2012 was conducted utilizing the Kansas State Legislature website (<http://kslegislature.org/li>). The Kansas website did not document legislation prior to 1996. Approximately 2,100 pieces of education legislation from 1996-2012 were available for review, and 20 of these were discovered using the previously identified search terms as pertaining to education that could have shaped district consolidation and reorganization in the state.

House Bill 2668 (2002) centered on computing state financial aid for districts formed by consolidation. House Bill 2668 proposed that the state board of education combine the state financial amount for each of the consolidating districts in the school year prior to consolidation. If consolidation occurred prior to July 1, 2005, the combined state aid sum would serve as the consolidated district's aid for the next four years. If consolidation occurred after July 1, 2005, the combined state aid sum would serve as the consolidated district's aid for the next three years.

House Bill 2904 (2002) proposed that, beginning on July 1, 2002, each school district should annually collect statistics and financial data in such a manner as to be able to report on all facets of school and district operations, salaries, fund transfers, and expenditures. House Bill 2904 stipulated that each individual school and administrative building, as well as each district, complete these reports in a standard form including a minimum of three columns itemizing the current year, the previous year, and the increase or decrease between the two years.

Senate Bill 41 (2010) sought to provide guidelines for calculating state financial aid to school districts that consolidated prior to July 1, 2011 based upon student enrollment numbers. If any of the former schools had an enrollment less than 150 students on September 20 of the previous school year, the state financial aid of the newly consolidated district will be the greater of (a) the amount received in the school year in which the consolidation was completed, or (b) the amount of the district's aid for the two years following the consolidation year. If all of the former districts had an enrollment of at least 150 students but any had less than 200 students on September 20 of the school year preceding consolidation, the state financial aid of the newly consolidated district will be the greater of (a) the amount received in the school year in which the consolidation was completed, or (b) the amount the district would receive prior to the amendment of Section 1 of Senate Bill 41. This amount would be the district's aid for the three

years following the consolidation year. If all of the former districts had an enrollment of 200 or more students on September 20 of the year preceding consolidation, the state financial aid of the newly consolidated district will be the greater of (a) the amount received in the school year in which the consolidation was completed, or (b) the amount the district would receive prior to the amendment of Section 1 of Senate Bill 41. This amount would be the district's aid for the four years following the consolidation year. If consolidation involved the consolidation of three or more school districts, regardless of student enrollment, the state financial aid of the newly consolidated district will be the greater of (a) the amount received in the school year in which the consolidation was completed, or (b) the amount the district would receive prior to the amendment of Section 1 of Senate Bill 41. This amount would be the district's aid for the four years following the consolidation year. House Bill 2100 (2011) sought to apply the same finance guidelines presented in Senate Bill 41 to school districts' general supplemental aid.

House Bill 2360 (2011), also known as the Kansas Uniform Accounting and Reporting Act, required the state board of education to develop and maintain a uniform reporting system for the receipts and expenditures of school districts. This reporting system should include budgetary and proprietary accounts, and allow a person to search the data and allow for a comparison of data by school district. All accounting records maintained by school districts would be coordinated with this accounting system and allow districts to submit reports and statements required by the state board. These required annual reports would encompass receipts and expenditures of the activity fund accounts and the construction fund accounts and would be presented in a manner established by the state board of education. Codifying these district data would make it easier for the State Board of Education to compare district costs and possibly foster further efficiency legislation that could impact district structure and operations.

Several pieces of legislation centered on procedural aspects of potential consolidation and reorganization. House Bill 2613 (2006) addressed logistics regarding transportation of students from sending districts to receiving districts. House Bill 2613 allowed the parent/legal guardian of a student to apply to the board of education of a sending school district on or before July 15 of the current school year for authority for the student to be provided transportation from the student's residence to school and from school to the student's residence by the receiving school district. Upon receipt of such an application, the sending district was to contact the receiving district to inquire about the receiving district's willingness to provide this transportation. If the receiving district was willing to provide transportation, the board of the sending district would issue an authorization of this transportation. The student would then be counted in the enrollment data of the receiving school district and receive the requisite state funding. This could incentivize districts' willingness to accept students from other areas.

House Bill 2937 (2006) called for the creation of county superintendent positions. On or before July 1, 2007, school districts would be required to consolidate administrative functions and services of all districts located in the county into a single office of administration that would be under the direction and supervision of the superintendent of county districts. This consolidation would require school districts to enter into agreements that establish provisions for the budget of the office of the county superintendent, compensation of the county superintendent, the powers, duties and functions of the county superintendent, and any other provisions deemed necessary.

Section 2 of Senate Bill 514 (2006) sought to give boards of education the authority to permit the enrollment and attendance of pupils who were not residents of the district. Senate Bill 514 stated that the receiving district could permit nonresidents to attend school without charge or

could charge nonresidents to offset the cost of providing such attendance. The potential increase in ADM could impact the state funding received by the district.

House Bill 2092 (2007) related to students who were residents of another state. House Bill 2092 sought to allow receiving school districts to enter into contracts with sending school districts where the sending districts would agree to pay the costs of educating the students being sent to the receiving districts. Any receiving district failing to enter into a contract would not be allowed to count these students in their enrollment numbers. This could incentivize a district's willingness to expand its enrollment at little cost. All receiving districts failing to enter into a contract would be required to submit a hardship application to the state board of education. These hardship applications needed to provide a detailed description of the school district's efforts to negotiate with the sending district (including copies of pertinent documents and narratives describing negotiation sessions), enrollment data, and any other information requested by the state board of education.

Section 2 of Senate Bill 70 (2007) stated that the board of education of any district may permit students who are not residents of the district to enroll in and attend schools in the district. The board could permit this attendance without charge or could charge for this attendance in an effort to offset costs of providing such attendance.

House Bill 2969 (2008) sought to define "virtual school" and set parameters as to how virtual schools could deliver appropriate instruction. A virtual school was defined as any school or educational program that offers credit, uses distance-learning technologies with mainly internet-based methods to deliver instruction, involves asynchronous learning, requires pupils to make academic progress, requires students to demonstrate competence of subject matter, and requires age-appropriate students to complete state assessments. The potential success of virtual

schools could negatively impact the need for physical schools. House Bill 2969 stated that virtual schools would be under the general supervision of the state board of education.

Several pieces of legislation centered on structural aspects of potential consolidation and reorganization. House Bill 2387 (1997) sought to establish a task force to examine the impact of class size on education quality in kindergarten through grade three. This eight member group was to be composed of three people from the general public (appointed by the governor), four legislators (one appointed by the speaker of the house of representatives, the minority leader of the house of representatives, the president of the senate, and the minority leader of the senate), and the commissioner of education (or designee). The task force was to conduct a comprehensive study evaluating the impact of class size on student performance/academic achievement, evaluating the impact of class size on classroom order/discipline, and reviewing initiatives in other states that address and improve student-teacher ratio.

House Concurrent Resolution 5007 (1998) directed the State Board of Education to undertake a study of school district organization to determine the optimal school district configuration.

House Bill 2951 (2002) related to the closing of school buildings, procedures involved in such closings, etc. Section 1, Part C, subsection (d) of House Bill 2951 stated that the board of education of any unified school district with 1,600 or more enrolled students could close any of its schools at any time the board of education determined the closing of such buildings would improve the school system of the unified school district. This type of school closing required only a majority vote of the members of the board of education and no other approval.

Senate Bill 551 (2002) related to state financial aid for any district formed by consolidation and sought to establish an amended funding formula. If consolidation commenced

in the 2001-2002 school year and was effectuated prior to July 1, 2004, the state financial aid for the consolidated district would be the amount the district was set to receive in the year consolidation occurred. For the next succeeding three years, the state financial aid for such districts would be the greater of: (a) the amount received in the previous year, or (b) the amount the districts would receive under the amended funding formula.

House Bill 2209 (2003) sought to establish guidelines pertaining to school district consolidation. House Bill 2209 stated that on or before July 1, 2005, school districts in a county having a population of 10,000 or less and containing two or more districts within the county boundaries were to consolidate into one unified school district. School districts located in more than one county would be considered part of the county where the majority of the land lying within the boundaries of such county is located. Upon consolidation, the unified school district would assume and agree to pay all bonded indebtedness of the former districts of which it is comprised, unless the agreement to consolidate provides otherwise. Assets of the unified school district would be transferred to the consolidated district.

House Bill 2210 (2003) was connected to House Bill 2209 (2003) from an administrative perspective. Relating to consolidation into unified school districts, House Bill 2210 stated that consolidated school districts would also consolidate administrative services, such consolidated administrative services would be referred to as administrative services of the county in which they are contained, and the superintendent's office would be located in the county seat.

House Bill 2253 (2003) required the state board of education to conduct a study of all districts having 400 students or fewer and less than 200 square miles of territory. The study was to commence on July 1, 2003, and was to consider numerous factors. Among these were district enrollment, enrollment trends, educational programs, support services, pupil/teacher ratios,

teacher/administrator ratios, general fund budget, general fund budget per pupil, capital investments, school transportation costs, condition and utilization of school facilities, number of pupils per square mile, etc. Upon completion and analysis of the study, the state board of education would determine reasons for the low enrollment. If these reasons were not the result of unique circumstances over which the district had no control, if disorganization of the district and attaching its territory to an adjoining district would not impose extreme hardship on students, and if attachment to an adjoining district would improve the educational system and equalize benefits and burdens, the state board of education would issue an order of disorganization and attachment to an adjoining district as of July 1, 2004. The order of the state board of education to disorganize a district would specify the disposition of property, moneys, and records. If, prior to July 1, 2004, any such district had entered into an agreement for consolidation and such agreement had been approved by the state board of education, no order of consolidation would be required.

The provisions of House Bill 2625 (2006) offered an alternative method for districts to enter into interlocal cooperation agreements when districts sought to create one or more shared schools. The interlocal cooperation agreement would establish a board of directors to govern the operations of the shared school and would provide for a certified school administrator to manage the shared school and oversee all administrative functions. All interlocal cooperation agreements required approval by the state board of education.

House Bill 2627 (2010) permitted two or more school districts to discuss issues related to the consolidation of such districts and enter into agreements to form one consolidated unified school district. House Bill 2627 permitted boards of education of three or more school districts to

discuss issues related to the consolidation of such districts and enter into agreements to form two consolidated unified school districts.

Nebraska

A search of all education-related bills and laws from 1993 through 2012 was conducted utilizing the Nebraska State Legislature website (<https://nebraskalegislature.gov>). Every legislative session from 1993 through 2012 was searched using the previously identified search terms as pertaining to education in connection with this study. Approximately 1,800 pieces of education legislation pertaining to these search terms were available for review, and 24 of these were discovered that could have influenced district consolidation and reorganization in the state.

Several pieces of legislation centered on the financial aspects of potential consolidation and reorganization. Legislative Bill 863 (1997) expressed the intent of the state to utilize uniform taxation concerning districts and provide for the potential reorganization of districts.

Legislative Bill 1251 (2002) sought to create the Public Education Finance Study Commission. This commission would conduct a thorough review of the financing of the K-12 public education system in the state and prepare a report with recommendations and a plan to implement these. The findings of such a financial report could affect the funding and operations of districts, which could in turn impact district and school organization.

Legislative Bill 717 (2005) sought to create the Reorganization Building Aid Commission to provide building aid to any Class II or Class III school districts that had reorganized pursuant to a reorganization plan or petition approved by the State Committee for the Reorganization of School Districts. Legislative Bill 717 delineated all requirements, timelines, etc. The Reorganization Building Aid Commission would process the requests and

documentation completed by school districts seeking building aid. The Department of Education would make the final decisions and final calculations of aid.

A number of legislative actions could have shaped public school and district consolidation and reorganization via structural changes. Legislative Bill 785 (2003) mandated that, beginning in the 2005-2006 school year, all Nebraska school districts shall have a minimum of 1,600 students and shall offer instruction for kindergarten through grade 12. Legislative Bill 785 also stipulated that any districts not meeting these requirements shall only receive fifty percent of their entitled funding through the Tax Equity and Education Opportunities Support Act.

Several bills in 1993 focused on specific types of districts. Legislative Bill 556 (1993) sought to require the merger of Class I and Class VI districts. Similar legislation to this was introduced as Legislative Bill 999 (1996), again focusing on the required merger of Class I and Class VI school districts.

Legislative Bill 684 (1993) wanted to change the provisions for the boundaries of Class IV districts, and Legislative Bill 454 (1993) required the merger, affiliation, or dissolution of Class VI school districts. In keeping with the idea of changing provisions as they relate to school districts, the state legislature proposed Legislative Bill 742 (1997) that sought to alter provisions for the merger of Class I and Class VI school districts. Legislative Bill 629 (1998) also examined the current state of school districts as it sought to change provisions related to the overall classifications of public school districts.

Legislative Bill 529 (1995) sought to establish the Commission for the Reconfiguration of the Omaha Public School District, while Legislative Bill 600 (1995) proposed providing incentives for reorganized school districts. Legislative Bill 1234 (1996) stated the overall intent

of the legislature to examine and pursue school district reorganization where applicable throughout the state. Similarly, Legislative Bill 292 (1997) sought to require the Nebraska State Board of Education to develop a plan for widespread school district reorganization. Legislative Bill 1372 (1996) focused on changing the provisions related to annexation and Class III school districts.

Legislative Bill 272 (1999) sought to create the State Committee for the Reorganization of School Districts. The main purpose of this committee was to monitor school district mergers and affiliations, and to ensure compliance with procedures governing changes in district boundaries, reorganizations, etc. Legislative Bill 272 established guidelines explaining how districts would be affected and adjusted in the presence of changes to existing district structures.

Legislative Bill 1252 (2000) was called the Nebraska Schools Construction Alternative Act. Its purpose was to authorize school districts to enter into design-build contracts or construction management contracts for a public project if the school district follows the guideline set forth in the bill. Legislative Bill 1252 never passed beyond committee consideration but was reintroduced the following year as Legislative Bill 391 (2001).

Legislative Bill 1048 (2004) outlined parameters by which the State Committee for the Reorganization of School Districts could issue orders for the consolidation of school districts. Legislative Bill 1048 also explained how properties of reorganized districts were to be processed.

Legislative Bill 1106 (2004) addressed numerous aspects of public school district policies, enrollment guidelines, etc. Section 6 of Legislative Bill 1106 stated that the State Committee for Reorganization of School Districts had the authority to dissolve school districts that failed to comply with guidelines, where votes at an annual election were evenly divided over

contracting with a neighboring district, or where the governing body of the district was evenly divided in its vote regarding the contraction of school districts.

Legislative Bill 1108 (2004) allowed the State Committee for the Reorganization of School Districts to adjust school districts. Specifically, Legislative Bill 1108 allowed the committee to create new school districts from other districts, dissolve any school district, change the boundaries of any school district, or affiliate a Class I district with one or more other districts upon receipt of a petition signed by more than fifty percent of the legal voters of each affected district.

Section 6 of Legislative Bill 126 (2005) articulated the Legislature's goal of encouraging district consolidation. Legislative Bill 126 stated that orderly and appropriate reorganization could contribute to the tax equity, educational effectiveness, and cost efficiency. Legislative Bill 126 further stated a need for greater flexibility in school district reorganization options and procedures.

Legislative Bill 1050 (2006) called for the Education Committee of the Legislature to appoint a study committee to examine the costs and effects of requiring a single countywide school district in each county in Nebraska. Legislative Bill 1050 never passed, but it was reintroduced as Legislative Bill 991 (2012).

Oklahoma

A search of all education-related bills and laws from 1993 through 2012 was conducted utilizing the Oklahoma State Legislature website (<http://www.oklegislature.gov>). Every legislative session from 1993 through 2012 was searched using the previously identified search terms as pertaining to education in connection with this study. Approximately 3,500 pieces of

education legislation pertaining to these search terms were available for review, and 24 of these were discovered that could have influenced district consolidation and reorganization in the state.

Several pieces of legislation centered on the financial aspects of potential consolidation and reorganization. House Bill 1553 (1993) proposed the creation of the School Consolidation Assistance Fund. This fund would provide a single one-year allocation of funds to voluntarily consolidated school districts or districts that have received all or part of a territory and all or part of the students of a school district dissolved by voluntary annexation. Senate Bill 581 (2007) sought amend the proposed School Consolidation Assistance Fund in terms of average daily membership (ADM) parameters.

There was evidence of procedural aspects of potential consolidation and reorganization. House Concurrent Resolution 1015 (1993) directed school districts, at the time they were developing construction or renovation plans, to investigate and consider the inclusion of wiring and other equipment necessary for distance learning. Advancements allowing for effective distance learning could impact the need for teaching staff, classroom, schools, etc.

A number of legislative actions could have influenced public school and district consolidation and reorganization via structural changes. House Bill 1902 (1994) discussed the consolidation of two or more school districts in accordance with standards, rules, and procedures established by the State Board of Education. When such consolidation occurred, the State BOE would conduct studies of wealth, population, terrain, and other factors necessary to determine boundary locations and proposed district size to ensure an efficient and effective administrative structure. Prior to consolidation, the districts involved should develop a plan for actions during and after consolidation. The plan should include agreements relating to school site closing, utilization of property and equipment, etc.

Senate Bill 52 (1995) sought to create the Parental School Choice Act. This would allow parents to complete an application for enrollment in a school district regardless of the applicant's school district residence. School districts could deny such transfers should the transfers cause the number of students in classes to exceed state-established limits.

House Bill 1906 (1995) sought to enact the Education Choice Act, highlighting State Board of Education-created policies and guidelines to facilitate the transfer of students among districts in response to parent applications for transfer. These guidelines were to be based upon what was in the best educational interests of students. The Education Choice Act was proposed again as House Bill 2169 (1996).

Senate Bill 1431 (1998) sought to authorize the transfer of students from low-performing school districts and high challenge school districts. Parents of students in these districts seeking a transfer would complete an application and the receiving districts would be entitled to receive corresponding state aid funding.

House Resolution 1021 (2001) stated that the Oklahoma House of Representatives requested the State Board of Education adopt standards and guidelines on internet-based instruction that would address curriculum, instruction, teacher certification, accreditation, management, student assessment, and evaluation.

House Bill 2919 (2002) authorized the Office of Accountability, under the direction of the Education Oversight Board, to research, develop, implement, and administer a performance review of school districts. This review would determine the efficiency and effectiveness of the budgets and operations of school districts that exceeded previously established expenditure limits. This performance review proposal was presented again as House Bill 1292 (2005).

House Bill 1578 (2011) focused on elementary school districts. House Bill 1578 stated that, by July 1, 2012, all elementary school districts would voluntarily consolidate with one or more independent school districts, and would develop a plan addressing the division of any debts, obligations, property, and other assets. House Bill 1578 authorized the State Board of Education to consolidate any elementary districts not consolidated by the deadline.

Senate Bill 1193 (1994) created a mechanism for annexing all or part of the territory of one school district by another school district (or two or more) when this action was approved at an annexation election called by the State Superintendent of Public Instruction. Senate Bill 1193 delineated the processes involved in such annexation, mandated time lines, established election requirements, etc. Senate Bill 614 (1995) sought to clarify language in Senate Bill 1193. Most clarification centered on amending the phrase “an entire district” to “all or part of a school district.” Senate Bill 614 also addressed specific annexation requirements and annexation election procedures. House Bill 2081 (1996) also addressed the topic of annexation. House Bill 2081 provided stipulations and exceptions to annexation and sought to establish consolidation on a more conditional basis.

House Bill 1827 (1995) expressed the intent of the state legislature to dramatically reduce staff and administrative support of the State Department of Education and the bureaucracies of individual school districts.

House Bill 1783 (2005) sought to create the Administrative Reorganization and Consolidation Commission. This Commission would be responsible for establishing guidelines for reorganization and consolidation of school district administration, monitoring the implementation of guidelines, and making recommendations for continued reorganization and consolidation. Factors taken into consideration when reorganizing and consolidating include

average daily membership, transportation area, academic performance of the school districts, administrative and fiscal efficiency, and an open superintendent position due to retirement or resignation.

Senate Bill 423 (2005) sought to create the Task Force on School District Administrative Reorganization or Consolidation. The purpose of this group was twofold: determine monetary savings through the reorganization and consolidation of school district administrative functions and identify effects reorganization and consolidation could have on efficiency and academic functions. The Task Force, consisting of nineteen members, would review and analyze school district data collected by the State Department of Education.

House Bill 1815 (2007) established the School Administrative Restructuring Act. On February 1, 2008, and each January 1 thereafter, the State Department of Education would publish an administrative restructuring list comprised of all school districts with an average daily membership below five hundred students over the previous two years. Districts on this restructuring list could voluntarily restructure or annex. To accomplish this, the listed district would submit a petition for approval by the State Board of Education. The State Board of Education would administratively restructure districts on the restructuring list opting against voluntary restructuring/restructuring petition submission. The concept of the School Administrative Restructuring Act was presented again on House Bill 1098 (2009) and House Bill 1281 (2011).

House Bill 1705 (2009) sought to create the School District Restructuring Act. Similar to the practice of assembling a restructuring list presented in House Bills 1815, 1098, and 1281, House Bill 1705 wanted a State Board of Education-compiled list of districts with fewer than seven thousand students and more than fourteen thousand students from the previous two years.

Schools on this list would be given the option to petition for voluntary restructuring or they would be subject to restructuring at the hands of the State Board of Education. This restructuring would result in districts with an average daily membership of more than seven thousand students and less than fourteen thousand students.

House Concurrent Resolution 1003 (2009) established the Task Force on School Consolidation. The purpose of this fifteen-member group was to study and make recommendations relating to school consolidations based upon geographic size and proximity to neighboring schools.

House Bill 1289 (2011) created the School District County Restructuring Act. This Act would restructure all school districts in each county into one consolidated district per county. Districts in Tulsa County, Oklahoma County, Rogers, County, Cleveland County, and Canadian County would be exempt from this action. School districts in these particular counties would be restructured into one or more districts with not less than seven thousand students and not more than fourteen thousand students. The School District County Restructuring Act provided an opportunity for voluntarily restructuring/consolidation via submitted petition. The State Board of Education would develop consolidation plans for districts resistant to voluntary consolidation.

Oregon

A search of all education-related bills and laws from 1995 through 2012 was conducted utilizing the Oregon State Legislature website (<http://www.oregonlegislature.gov>). The Oregon website did not document bills and laws prior to the 68th General Assembly (1995-1996). Approximately 3,900 pieces of education legislation were available for review, and 7 of these were discovered using the previously identified search terms as pertaining to education in

connection with this study and could have shaped district consolidation and reorganization in the state.

Senate Bill 89 (2003) sought to define a “high growth school district” as any district that has an average daily membership (ADM) of 5,000 students or more and an increase of 6 percent or more over the three most recent school years, not including the current school year. Senate Bill 89 proposed that high growth school districts should have an additional funding amount added to the weighted average daily membership (ADMw) of the district. Specifically, the equation for calculating this additional amount was: (school district’s ADM for the current school year – school district’s ADM for the prior year) X 0.5.

Section 6 Part 9(a) of Senate Bill 819 (2003) focused on incentivizing the potential merging of high schools. Specifically, if two high schools merge, and at least one of the high schools was previously classified as a small high school, the Department of Education would add an additional funding amount to the ADMw of the school district in which the newly merged high school was located.

Senate Bill 727 (2003) sought to direct school districts to establish high technology classrooms and to provide students and staff with computers. Specifically, each district would establish at least one high technology classroom for every 300 students within the schools of a school district. The funding for this would be available through a high technology grant program administered but the Department of Education under the State Board of Education. Senate Bill 727 also sought to direct the governor to establish an advisory committee to develop designs for high technology classrooms, to identify manufacturers of appropriate equipment, and to develop a list of approved distance and online courses suitable for students in kindergarten through grade 12.

House Bill 3103 (2003) sought to create a 19 member Task Force on School Consolidation to study and make recommendations on consolidating school districts in rural, urban, and suburban areas of the state. The task force would examine administrative savings and efficiencies that could be gained through consolidation, and compare Oregon's multidistrict school system structure with those of other states for the ultimate purpose of developing feasible recommendations about consolidating school districts.

House Bill 3171 (2003) proposed the creation of the Task Force on School District and Education Service District Organization. The purpose of the task force was to study and make recommendations on the organization of school districts and education service districts. To accomplish this, the task force was to examine administrative and program savings and efficiencies that could be gained through reorganizing education service districts and school districts. The task force would also compare administrative and program costs in Oregon with similar costs in other states to ultimately make recommendations in reducing costs as part of developing a plan to reorganize school districts and education service districts.

House Bill 3225 (2003) specified that, beginning July 1, 2006, each county in Oregon would have one school district. House Bill 3552 directed boards of county commissioners to call a special election on November 4, 2003, to elect new district school boards. These new school boards were to develop plans to establish one school district per county.

Senate Bill 47 (2007) sought to have the Department of Education establish a system for reviewing the business practices of school districts, specifically: select school districts for review, designate which activities to review, determine standards of business practices based on best practices, appoint efficiency review teams to conduct reviews, report review findings to districts, and assist districts in responding to reviews. Senate Bill 47 called for the establishment

of an Efficiency Review Advisory Panel to advise the Department of Education on all of these points.

South Carolina

A search of all education-related bills and laws from 1993 through 2012 was conducted utilizing the South Carolina State Legislature website (<http://www.scstatehouse.gov>). Based upon the organization of the state legislature website, every legislative session from 1993 through 2012 was searched via the subject “education” and the subject “schools and school districts.” Approximately 4,100 pieces of education legislation were available for review, and 23 of these were discovered using the previously identified search terms as pertaining to education in connection with this study and that could have influenced district consolidation and reorganization in the state.

House Concurrent Resolution 3891 (1995) sought to establish a Joint Legislative Ad Hoc Committee to study and develop a plan for the implementation of a voucher system for financing public education in South Carolina. The Senate President and the Speaker of the House of Representatives would each appoint three members to this committee. The committee would generate a study that would consider the following: a phased-in approach to the voucher system, first preference to families below the poverty level, phasing in high school grades first, options for public and private school attendance, basing the voucher amount on family income, and transportation as part of the voucher system.

A number of legislative actions could have impacted public school and district consolidation and reorganization via procedural directives. Senate Bill 113 (1995), also called the South Carolina Public School Choice Act of 1995, established procedures to enable students to attend school in districts in which the student did not reside, subject to restrictions. Students

accepted into nonresident districts counted in the average daily membership (ADM) of the nonresident district. Parents could submit applications to nonresident districts and the nonresident districts were required to establish and utilize specific standards for the acceptance and rejection of these applications. It is noteworthy that the responsibility of transportation of students to nonresident districts fell to the parents of the students unless the nonresident district opted to provide transportation.

Act 389 (1996) began as House Bill 3905 (1995). This legislation stated that, provided enrollment requirements were met, a student may attend school in a nonresident district as long as the student's parent/guardian paid an amount equal to the prior year's local revenue per child and debt services to the district of enrollment. The nonresident district could waive all or a portion of this amount. It is worth noting that the state legislature passed House Bill 3905 (which became Act 389) despite a veto.

House Bill 4019 (1997) sought to amend South Carolina Code by adding a section that would require school districts to maintain a minimum size based upon enrollment numbers. House Bill 4019 also sought to provide procedures necessary to consolidate districts that fell below the minimum enrollment requirements.

House Bill 4335 (2000) sought to amend South Carolina Code by adding a section that would establish procedures and time lines allowing students to transfer schools. Specifically, beginning with 2001-2002, students attending schools receiving an unsatisfactory improvement rating (based upon state report card ratings) could transfer to any public school within the district or any public school outside of the district provided that the receiving school has received an average (or higher) improvement rating. Beginning with the 2002-2003 school year, if a school received an unsatisfactory overall rating on its report card for two consecutive years, students at

the schools could transfer to any public school within the district or any public school outside of the district if the receiving school had an overall rating of average or higher. The sending school district was required to pay the receiving school district the equivalent of the statewide average of the local student base cost multiplied by the appropriate pupil weighting set forth in state code. Finally, the State would provide for all transportation costs of transferring students.

House Bill 4489 (2006) sought to establish a Public School Enrollment Choice Program for all schools districts in the state. Beginning in 2007-2008 school year and for each succeeding school year, a parent residing in South Carolina could enroll his/her child in any school district without being required to pay tuition. House Bill 4489 sought to establish application procedures for parents and application review/acceptance/denial procedures for districts. Creating a mechanism for nonresident students to change districts could impact the structures of the sending and receiving districts. Nonresident districts would receive one hundred percent of the base student cost from the State.

Senate Bill 471 (2008) proposed that the State Department of Education establish the Office of School Choice and Innovation. This office would provide school districts with information on various school choice programs, best practice information, staff development information, assistance in planning for transportation needs, and technical assistance for developing and implementing public school choice and open enrollment programs throughout the state. Following a series of town meetings held throughout the state, the Office of School Choice and Innovation would conduct a statewide inventory designed to assess the public's knowledge of school choice. The inventory would also collect information on district growth projections, choice programs already available in districts, and choice options preferred by parents. For the 2007-2008 school year, the Office of School Choice and Innovation would

establish a School District Choice and an Open Enrollment pilot program. District participation in the pilot program would be voluntary. Senate Bill 471 never passed beyond committee consideration but was amended and introduced into the South Carolina Senate as Senate Bill 1267 (2012). The amendments included adjusting the years in which the legislation would take effect and the removal of the establishment of the Office of School Choice and Innovation.

House Bill 4391 (2008) sought to establish the South Carolina Public School Choice Program. Beginning with the 2009-2010 school year, school districts would be required to develop and implement a public school choice program that would provide a choice option for elementary, middle, and high school students. School districts could also establish open enrollment programs, complete with all necessary requirements and procedures for these programs to function.

House Bill 3102 (2009) sought to amend South Carolina Code requiring a school district to maintain an average daily membership of ten thousand students or greater to receive state funding.

House Bill 3737 (2009) sought to establish a public school choice program. The State Department of Education would provide school districts with information on various school choice programs. During the 2009-2010 school year, school districts would convene a school choice committee to develop an action plan (to be included in the school renewal plan) providing parents and students with choice options within the district, including timeline and budget information. Beginning in the 2010-2011 school year and continuing thereafter, school districts would begin implementation of school choice programs.

Act 526 (1996) began as Senate Bill 1375 (1996). Effective July 1, 1997, Orangeburg County would consist of three school districts known as Orangeburg County Consolidated

District Three, Orangeburg County Consolidated District Four, and Orangeburg County Consolidated District Five. This marked the consolidation of eight districts into three districts.

Senate Bill 1089 (2002) sought to consolidate school districts in Marion County. Senate Bill 1089 proposed that the three school districts of Marion County consolidate into one district known as the School District of Marion County, effective July 1, 2002.

Senate Bill 273 (2003) sought to amend South Carolina Code by providing that, effective July 1, 2004, the area of each county constitute one school district and that no county would have multiple districts within its boundaries. House Bill 3501 (2003) sought the same. House Bill 3340 (2009) sought to have one school district per county, effective July 1, 2011. House Bill 3238 (2011) sought to have one district per county, effective July 1, 2013.

House Bill 4327 (2006) called for the Education Oversight Committee to review the organization of schools districts in the state and to recommend changes to district boundaries to ensure districts have the capacity to support high student achievement and to achieve maximum impact from all resources. The Education Oversight Committee would establish an advisory group to define parameters for all criteria and evidence in the review of school districts.

House Bill 4488 (2006) sought to enact the South Carolina School District Reorganization and Realignment Act of 2006. This would call for the Education Oversight Committee to study all facets of optimal school district size (geographic and student enrollment capacity), organization, and operation (including economies of scale), and to provide recommendations, implementation procedures, time lines, etc.

Senate Joint Resolution 352 (2009) sought to create a South Carolina Joint Committee on School Consolidation. This committee would include one member appointed by the President Pro Tempore of the Senate, one member appointed by the President of the Senate, two members

appointed by the Speaker of the House of Representatives, one member appointed by the Chairman of the Senate Education Committee, one member appointed by the Chairman of the House Education and Public Works Committee, one member appointed by the Chairman of the Senate Finance Committee, one member appointed by the Chairman of the House Ways and Means Committee, one member appointed by the Governor, the Superintendent of Education (or designee), and the Chairman of the Education Oversight Committee (or designee). The ultimate goal of the committee would be to determine the viability of consolidating school districts and develop a plan so that each county in the state would have only one school district. To accomplish this, the committee would study the current organization of South Carolina school districts and factors such as geography, demographics, student population, fiscal impact on the state and county, impact on the ability of students to achieve at high levels, impact on student performance, administrative consolidation, and governance.

House Joint Resolution 3495 (2011) and Senate Joint Resolution 432 (2012) sought to create a committee to study the cost effectiveness and feasibility of consolidating school districts within individual counties. The committee would also consider potential savings from centralization of programmatic and administrative functions of the districts.

Act 304 (2012) began as House Bill 4632 (2012). This legislation formed all school districts in Marion County into a single district entitled the “Marion County School District,” effective July 1, 2012. Act 304 was signed into law by the Governor on April 23, 2012.

States Exhibiting Consolidation (1993–2012)

Analysis of district and school data throughout the United States, specifically total districts per state, total schools per state, total students per state, mean students per district, mean students per school, and total school-age children per state revealed nine states exhibiting

consolidation: Alaska, Arkansas, California, Illinois, Kansas, Nebraska, Oklahoma, Oregon, and South Carolina. Given the variability in size, geography, demography, etc., there are stark differences within this group of Downward Trending States (DTS):

- State student enrollment totals ranged from slightly over 100,000 to slightly over 5,000,000.
- District totals ranged from over 1000 to under 100.
- Students per district ranged from over 6500 to under 500.

Different amounts of proposed and enacted legislation were identified in the DTS:

- Kansas, Nebraska, Oklahoma, and South Carolina each had between 23 and 24 legislative actions associated with consolidation.

- Alaska, Arkansas, and Illinois each had between 10 and 12 legislative actions associated with consolidation.

- California and Oregon each had between 6 and 7 legislative actions associated with consolidation.

Despite the quantitative differences noted across DTS, this study identified qualitative similarities in the types of legislative actions that were proposed and enacted.

Factors and Characteristics Associated with Consolidation Legislation

This study sought to explore and identify legislative trends in states exhibiting public school system consolidation. In examining all proposed legislation that could have been connected to consolidation and reorganization in the previously identified DTS, it was necessary for this study to categorize these bills and laws based upon their focus. Three overarching factors emerged as the backbones of proposed and enacted consolidation legislation: financial legislation, procedural legislation, and structural legislation.

Proposed legislation connected in any way with funding was categorized as financial legislation. These bills contained stipulations connected to transportation costs, transportation funding formulas, and enrollment funding formulas. Also included within this category were any bills or laws that provided monetary incentives for districts that experienced significant growth and the allotment of grant money for construction in districts following consolidation. Any bills or laws that called for the creation of committees or task forces to examine allocation of funds, budgeting actions, etc. were also placed in this category.

A number of proposed and approved legislative actions were categorized by this study as having procedural connections to public schools and districts. Any bills and laws that centered on class size, enrollment numbers, and the impact these could have on the number of schools in a district were placed in this category. Legislative actions that addressed the creation of public school choice programs and open enrollment guidelines were considered to have a procedural connection to schools and districts. The creation of new programs that could impact the actual number of students in physical attendance but not impact actual enrollment numbers (e.g. virtual schools and distance learning) were placed in the procedural category, as were any legislative actions that created committees and task forces to oversee use of current facilities and study efficiency.

A number of proposed bills and laws were categorized in this study as having structural connections to schools and school districts. Legislative actions that examined district boundaries and structural stipulations for newly created districts were placed in this category, as were any bills or laws that called for direct consolidation based on total district enrollment. Bills seeking to localize direct power of state boards of education over school districts, create county districts, consolidate superintendencies/school administration, redefine parameters for school

classifications (e.g. adjusting grade bands within schools), and amend classifications of districts based upon factors such as size and type were deemed structural. Finally, any legislative actions that included the creation of committees or task forces to study the structural efficiencies of existing districts, examine district organizational procedures, etc. were included in the structural category as well.

This study identified a total of 138 legislative actions that could be connected to consolidation and reorganization in the nine downward trending states. Table 3 displays the frequency of the three types of legislative action identified in this study. Structural bills and laws accounted for 64% of the legislative actions identified in this study, financial actions accounted for 19%, and procedural actions accounted for 17%.

While all downward trending states (DTS) experienced legislative actions related to finance, procedure, or structure as overarching classifications, there were differences in the prevalence, logistics, and frequency of these across states.

Table 3

Breakdown of Identified Legislative Actions by Category

State	Legislative actions			Total
	Financial	Procedural	Structural	
Alaska	5	4	3	12
Arkansas	2	1	7	10
California	2	1	3	6
Illinois	4	0	8	12
Kansas	5	6	9	20
Nebraska	3	0	21	24
Oklahoma	2	1	21	24
Oregon	2	1	4	7
South Carolina	2	4	17	23

State legislatures in California and Illinois related to consolidation and reorganization similarly. Both states focused primarily on proposing structural changes, proposing financial changes as a secondary focus, and proposing procedural changes as a third. The most frequent mechanism involved the creation of task forces and commissions to examine more closely the merits and feasibility of consolidation. California's Senate Bill 300 (1997) called for the creation of the Commission on School District Consolidation and Reorganization while Illinois's House Bill 325 (2001) sought the creation of the Department of School District Organization and Illinois's House Bill 3001 (2003) sought the creation of the Small Schools Task Force to study school district organization issues. Illinois's House Joint Resolution 6 (2011) sought the creation of the School District Realignment and Consolidation Task Force within the State Board of Education. The purpose of this task force was to examine school districts to determine optimal size and explore where consolidation and reorganization would be beneficial. Illinois went a step further than California in Senate Bill 3494 (2012) which called for a district consolidation report that would explore the feasibility and cost saving benefits of consolidating specific districts within the same region of the state.

The Illinois State Legislature was more overt in its focus on consolidation through structural levers than California. Illinois' House Bill 4281 (2004) and House Bill 363 (2005) sought to dissolve any school districts with fewer than 5,000 students, and House Bill 1473 (1999) called for the creation of countywide districts. House Bill 3910 (2000) was very specific in calling for the consolidation of Thornton Township High School District 205 and Dolton School District 148. California called for no such outright consolidation of districts by name, nor did California consider the formation of county districts. California and Illinois shared the structural approach of efficiency analysis when it came to consolidation and reorganization, but

Illinois went a step further with its proposed authoritarian dissolution of “small” districts and proposed creation of county districts.

California and Illinois both examined financial aspects of consolidation and reorganization. As seen in its proposed structural legislation, California opted for efficiency analyses with its financial bills: Assembly Bill 3236 (1994) called for the creation of a school finance task force to study the need to reform school finance practices, and Assembly Bill 235 (2003) examined the current school transportation funding formula.

Illinois took a different financial approach as it sought to incentivize consolidation and reorganization. While large districts (greater than 500,000 inhabitants) could receive block grant funding via House Bill 3108 (2011), districts that experienced rapid growth could receive “fast-growth grants” (H.R. 4431, 2004) and supplemental state aid (H.R. 2611, 2003). House Bill 3313 (2000) called for state grants for school construction following consolidation, annexation, or creation of a cooperative high school.

California and Illinois approached proposed consolidation mainly through structural efficiency analyses. While California also sought to employ efficiency analyses through financial levers, Illinois sought to incentivize consolidation and reorganization through financial means. California’s methods could be seen as more passive, as if the district and school consolidation/reorganization was not viewed as a pressing issue. Illinois’ structural efficiency analyses, coupled with proposed financial incentives for consolidation/reorganization could be an indication that Illinois views changes in public school structure as a more pressing topic.

From a standpoint that could incentivize consolidation and reorganization, Alaska, Kansas, and Oklahoma sought to create and amend proposed legislation that would provide additional funding to consolidating/reorganizing districts. Alaska discussed additional

construction funding based on enrollment (S. 131, 2003) and transportation funding based on higher enrollment (S. 202, 2003). Kansas sought to augment financial aid for consolidating districts (S. 551, 2002) and to permit districts receiving students from outside district boundaries to enter into contracts where the sending districts would pay certain costs (H.R. 2092, 2007). Kansas sought to amend guidelines for calculating state financial aid to school districts that consolidated prior to a given date (H.R. 2100, 2011; S. 41, 2010), as well as state financial aid for all districts formed by consolidation (H.R. 2668, 2002). Through House Bill 1553 (1993), Oklahoma sought to create the School Consolidation Assistance Fund to provide funding allocations to districts that consolidated voluntarily. Oklahoma Senate Bill 581 (2007) sought to amend House Bill 1553 through wider average daily membership parameters.

Alaska, Kansas, and Oklahoma also sought to address consolidation and reorganization through financial analyses and codifying fiduciary reporting mechanisms. Alaska sought to examine school cost differentials and state aide formulae via the Educational Funding Task Force (H.R. Con. Res. 10, 2005; S. Con. Res. 11, 2007) and sought to create the Funding District Cost Factor Commission (H.R. Con. Res. 13, 2008). Through House Bill 2904 (2002), Kansas sought to require districts to collect statistics and financial data (salaries, school/district operational costs, fund transfers, and expenditures). Kansas also sought to create the Uniform Accounting and Reporting Act to require the State Board of Education to develop and maintain a uniform reporting system for all district receipts and expenditures (H.R. 2360, 2011). Oklahoma's attempt at analysis came through attempting to create the Task Force on School District Administration, Reorganization, or Consolidation (S. 423, 2005) to determine monetary saving through reorganization and consolidation. The task force would also identify the effects consolidation and reorganization would have on efficiency and academic functions.

Alaska, Kansas, and Oklahoma were similar in their procedural perspectives on consolidation and reorganization. Alaska and Kansas sought to analyze the logistics regarding transportation as a result of school and district boundary changes (H.R. 142, 2007; H.R. 2613, 2006). Alaska, Kansas, and Oklahoma sought to amend school organization by adjusting school categories or grade bands contained therein (H.R. 174, 1993; H.R. 450, 1998), permitting districts to discuss issues related to consolidation (H.R. 2627, 2010), allowing unified districts of certain sizes to close any of its schools to improve the school system (H.R. 2951, 2002), and transferring students from low performing districts to high performing districts (S. 1431, 1998). Kansas and Oklahoma sought to give parents more choice in public education via mechanisms for allowing nonresidents to attend district schools (S. 52, 1995; S. 514, 2006). Kansas and Oklahoma also sought to explore distance learning through internet-based instruction (H.R. Con. Res. 1015, 1993; H.R. Res. 1021, 2001) and virtual schools (H.R. 2969, 2008).

From a top-down structural standpoint, Alaska, Kansas, and Oklahoma sought to require consolidation and reorganization based on total enrollment and district boundaries (H.R. 452, 2002; H.R. 480, 2004; H.R. 1705, 2009; H.R. 2253, 2003; S. 1193, 1994). Alaska opted for authoritarian legislation that would affect district structure consolidation by proposing a bill that would increase Department of Education power to govern, operate, and consolidate districts (S. 285, 2008) and Oklahoma sought to restructure configurations to create one school district per county (H.R. 1289, 2011). From 2007-2011, Oklahoma also sought top-down restructuring through three attempts to establish the School Administrative Restructuring Act (H.R. 1098, 2009; H.R. 1281, 2011; H.R. 1815, 2007). Kansas and Oklahoma proposed studies of school district organization to determine optimal configuration (H.R. Con. Res. 1003, 2009; H.R. Con.

Res. 5007, 1998), clearly implying their belief there is an identified “optimal” configuration that effectively meets the needs of students.

Evidence of proposed legislation exists to address consolidation and reorganization through financial, procedural, and structural means that ultimately focused on efficiency. Whether the proposed bills mandated certain school and district changes/realignments, or whether the proposed bills created task forces and committees to identify optimal district size and configuration, the driving force to consolidate and reorganize the state public schools system was a desire for a more efficient public education system in these states.

For the remaining DTS (Arkansas, Nebraska, Oregon, and South Carolina) there was limited evidence of financial legislative action. Several of these states sought to create various forms of public school finance committees (H.R. 2003, 1993), finance study commissions (Legis. B. 1251, 2002), and adjustments to funding and taxation of school districts (Legis. B. 126, 2005; Legis. B. 717, 2005; Legis. B. 863, 2007; S. 89, 2003).

There was also limited evidence of procedural legislative action within Arkansas, Nebraska, Oregon, and South Carolina. Procedural actions here centered mainly on school choice (Act 389, 1996; H.R. 1301, 1993; H.R. 3737, 2009; H.R. 4335, 2000; H.R. 4391, 2008; H.R. 4489, 2006; S. 113, 1995; S. 471, 2008). South Carolina and Oregon also sought to examine innovation and technological advances to address consolidation and reorganization (S. 471, 2008; S. 727, 2003).

Arkansas, Nebraska, Oregon, and South Carolina focused on structural levers when examining consolidation and reorganization. Some of these structural actions were seen in other DTS, namely the creation of task forces and commissions to examine potential efficiency benefits of consolidation and reorganization (Act 1386, 2001; Act 1424, 2005; H.R. 3103, 2003;

H.R. 3171, 2003; H.R. 4327, 2006; H.R. 4488, 2006; H.R.J. Res. 3495, 2011; Legis. B. 991, 2012; Legis. B. 1050, 2006; Legis. B. 1234, 1996; S. 47, 2007; S.J. Res. 352, 2009; S.J. Res. 432, 2012).

What stands out about Arkansas, Nebraska, Oregon, and South Carolina is the number of direct authoritarian legislative actions geared toward school and district consolidation. There were noticeable similarities in the ways these states approached this top-down course of action. The mechanism most directly related to consolidation was the required creation or reconfiguration of metropolitan or county school districts (Act 304, 2012; Act 526, 1996; H.R. 1106, 2003; H.R. 3225, 2003; H.R. 3238, 2011; Legis. B. 529, 1995; S. 273, 2003; S. 817, 1993). While many DTS sought to create committees to analyze the appropriateness and potential advantages of consolidation and reorganization, both South Carolina's and Nebraska's state legislatures went one step further. These states sought the creation of committees whose sole purpose was to outline parameters and monitor compliance in mandated consolidative efforts without conducting any analyses or studies to determine appropriate best-practice configurations (H.R. 4019, 1997; Legis. B. 272, 1999; Legis. B. 1048, 2004; Legis. B. 1106, 2004; Legis. B. 1108, 2004).

Nebraska's primary approach to structural consolidation involved examining the current functioning of all school districts in order to change provisions related to the overall classifications of these districts (Legis. B. 629, 1998). In addition to requiring the State Board of Education to develop a plan for general widespread district reorganization (Legis. B. 292, 1997), the Nebraska state legislature sought the outright merger of Class I and Class IV districts (Legis. B. 556, 1993; Legis. B. 999, 1996). The state legislature also sought to alter provisions for the merger of Class I and Class VI districts (Legis. B. 742, 1997). Provisions related to the

annexation of Class III districts (Legis. B. 1372, 1996) and boundary changes to Class IV districts (Legis. B. 684, 1993) were identified, as was the merger, affiliation, or dissolution of Class IV districts (Legis. B. 454, 1993). Arkansas took a cue from Nebraska in Senate Bill 71 (2003) when the state legislature proposed the adjustment of district boundary lines. Arkansas went a step further in Act 1397 (2005) when it created mechanisms for closing isolated schools.

Overall Legislative Patterns by Year

Table 4 displays the greatest number of legislative actions by year in each DTS. This affords the opportunity to examine possible trends in the timing of proposed bills and laws. Viewing all downward trending states simultaneously through financial, procedural, and structural lenses, no single legislative year evidenced itself as the most prevalent when it came to total legislative actions. However, there was a degree of commonality among several states. The state legislatures in Arkansas and California were most active in relation to legislation identified in the 1993-1994 legislative year. Nebraska and Oklahoma saw the greatest frequency of legislative actions in 1995-1996, while Kansas stood alone with its highest frequency in 2001-2002. The legislative year 2003-2004 saw the most activity in Alaska, Illinois, and Oregon. South Carolina stood alone with its highest frequency in 2011-2012. Given the probability that the views of people in positions of political influence could change over time, not to mention that elections could alter the configuration of individuals making decisions and recommendations that could affect public schools and districts, a deeper historical and political investigation could add to a deeper understanding of changes in public education in the DTS.

Table 4

Year with Greatest Number of Legislative Actions by State

State	Legislative year	Legislative actions
Alaska	2003–2004	3
Arkansas	1993–1994	3
California	1993–1994	4
Illinois	2003–2004	4
Kansas	2001–2002	4
Nebraska	1995–1996	5
Oklahoma	1995–1996	6
Oregon	2003–2004	6
South Carolina	2011–2012	6

CHAPTER V: CONCLUSION

Commonalities in Legislative Actions

Given the high degree of variability within states when it comes to public education, as well as the high degree of variability between states throughout the country, very little is actually “common” when it comes to a common public education in the United States of America. Essentially, “the most important truth regarding US public schools is that our education system is actually fifty-one separate educational systems providing vastly different resources, on average, and with vastly different outcomes,” (Baker, 2018, p. 6). The spectrum of differences in terms of local, municipal, county, and state educational challenges faced by states makes it challenging to find comparable similarities to study. Even with this high degree of heterogeneity, the current study sought to examine the types of legislative actions occurring in states that have evidenced school and district consolidation and reorganization in the hope of discovering some connection between the changing organization of schools/districts and state-level legislation.

After reviewing the actions of the law-making bodies of the downward trending states (DTS), two basic cornerstone perspectives came to the fore: the classic motivation for increased efficiency in public schooling is alive and well, and the ultimate question of the optimal school and district size still eludes us. This latter point is most evident in the high “failure rate” of consolidation and reorganization bills. Across all DTS, education legislation committees rarely reached consensus on how best to approach improving the public education systems in their respective states. In attempting to increase cost-effectiveness/efficiency while also seeking to ensure high quality public education services for all students, very few bills became laws, as no one seemed to know in what direction to proceed, much less to agree on the aspects on which to focus. One can see that the desire to balance maximizing the efficiency of schools/districts with

having these educational organizations produce well-educated students still exists today. Putting it in the terms used by economists applying an industrial model to education, there is still a failure to identify the ultimate output of the organization before seeking to alter the organization's systems of production. If the desired output is the lowest per-pupil cost, it would make the most sense to focus on altering the current mechanisms of educational finance, procedure, and structure accordingly. However, if the desired output is the best possible education for all students, it becomes increasingly complicated as the concepts of "most efficient" and "most cost effective" may not elicit school organizations that are best for student learning and development.

The findings of this study suggest that the legislatures of the downward trending states have focused their potential consolidating and reorganizing actions on the finances, procedures, and structures of public schooling in their respective states. Some proposed and enacted legislation sought to form committees to compile data, analyze courses of action, and ultimately provide options for how their states should proceed when seeking to optimize public education. Other proposed and enacted legislation moved directly into action when it came to reorganizing and consolidating districts and schools. The overwhelming majority of consolidation and reorganization legislation never made it out of the committee approval phase. Some proposed bills originated in education committees and were then transferred to other legislative committees (taxation, finance, etc.) where they ultimately failed. Other proposed bills failed in committee in one legislative year and were reborn or amended in following years, only to again fail to pass committee muster. Here one sees a lack of the necessary continuity and consensus needed to successfully implement legislation, which would seem to originate from having no ultimate educational goal toward which to move.

There were instances where one DTS sought to follow the lead of other states in the hope of replicating another state's approach to public school system organization. Baker's (2018) statement regarding the essence of the US public education system actually being fifty-one different systems with varying resources and outcomes resonates here as well. While states differ greatly in terms of enrollment, demography, geography, legal statutes, etc., they still seek to mimic what other states are doing when it comes to educating their youth. This could be another reason why many bills die in legislative committee, as the one best system has yet to be identified.

Disconnect between Consolidation/Reorganization and Legislation

The focus of this study was to explore the possible connection between states undergoing public school and district consolidation/reorganization and the state legislative actions pertaining to public school education within these states. After utilizing the NCES CCD (2015) website to identify states displaying consolidation and reorganization throughout the United States from 1993 to 2012, this study identified the following Downward Trending States (DTS): Alaska, Arkansas, California, Illinois, Kansas, Nebraska, Oklahoma, Oregon, and South Carolina. Each state's legislature website was searched for bills and laws that could be connected to the district and school downward trends in these states. The search terms used to identify such legislative actions were: public schools, districts, consolidation, reorganization, funding, taxes, facilities, enrollment, construction, cost, and transportation.

A total of 138 legislative actions were discovered through this search, and 12 of these were state congressional resolutions (either house, senate, or concurrent resolutions). Ultimately, 7 of the 138 legislative actions actually became state law. This indicates that there does not seem to be a strong connection between state legislative actions and consolidation or reorganization in

public education institutions. While committees in state legislatures in the DTS clearly discussed the finances, procedures, and structures of public schools and districts, these discussions did not graduate into active legislation and therefore was not able to have a direct connection to the consolidation and reorganization that has been identified. A review of the content of legislative actions revealed that all of the DTS approached consolidative/reorganizational conversations and potential analyses from similar perspectives (i.e. financial, procedural, and structural) but were able to actuate few top-down legal requirements of local public districts and schools. In short, numerous state legislative conversations yielded few actual laws. This study did not attempt to identify a causal relationship between consolidation/reorganization and state bills and laws, and the results of the current analysis indicated almost no connection between state-level legislative actions and local school district consolidation and reorganization.

The lack of connection between state-level legislative actions and consolidation and reorganization of local-level public schools and districts highlights a link between historical perspectives and present-day perspectives on what is best when it comes to the educational system of the United States. As previously discussed in the literature review chapter of this study, historical decisions about restructuring education in the United States have been based on economic principles (i.e. economies of scale) and educational principles (i.e. identifying the “best” organizational designs to deliver an optimal education), yet the application of these principles did not fully address all aspects of education as there was no consensus in identifying the output “unit” of the system (per-pupil cost, student achievement, etc.), as well as no definitive discovery in the ongoing search for the one best education system. In reviewing current proposed and enacted legislation related to consolidation and reorganization, there remains no consensus on optimal educational efficiency and no consensus on optimal

district/school configuration. To summarize the findings of this study as it sought to examine current consolidation and reorganization trends as compared to historical consolidation and reorganization trends: the more things change, the more they stay the same.

Limitations

Certain limitations could have influenced the qualitative findings of this study. The purpose of using the eleven search terms was to locate legislative actions in the DTS that could have shaped consolidation and reorganization in those state. It is possible that additional search terms could uncover other legislative actions that this study did not identify.

State legislature websites were accessed to identify legislative actions pertinent to the current study. Each of the legislature websites presented challenges in completing the task of locating these legislative actions as each site was structured differently in terms of what could be accessed and how historical/archived information could be accessed. Alaska, Oklahoma, and South Carolina allowed for access by legislative year and then by subject, while Arkansas, California, and Nebraska incorporated the ability to use keyword searches (in the case of Nebraska, this involved an “advanced keyword” search). Illinois allowed for access to legislative years via a “site map” function that caused all legislative titles from the given year to be listed. Each title had to be manually reviewed using the study’s search terms to identify pertinent legislative actions. Kansas and Oregon allowed access by year, which generated a list of all legislative actions by number. No subject or keyword search was available. Each numerical legislative action was manually opened and each title was reviewed using the study’s search terms. In all, this was an extremely time-consuming process. Given the differences between state legislature website structure and functionality and the potential human error involved in the search, legislative actions pertinent to this study could have been missed.

Another possible limitation involved the digital archives of three of the DTS as access did not extend back to 1993. Oregon's archives went back to 1995, Kansas' archives went back to 1996, and Illinois' archives went back to 1997. It is possible that historical legislative actions pertinent to this study occurred prior to the website archival cutoffs. Therefore, the study would be unable to identify and analyze these. It would be helpful to researchers if state websites were organized and curated in ways that would enhance the validity and reliability of ongoing research.

Avenues for Further Study

While the quantitative analysis showed that nine states have been consolidating and reorganizing their public school structures from 1993 through 2012, the qualitative analysis of state legislative actions in these states showed an overall lack of enacted laws that could be connected to such consolidation and reorganization. A potential flaw in the current study could have been the use of state-level enrollment, school, and district data. Given the lack of a strong obvious connection between state legislation and public school reorganization and consolidation, the next logical step in examining district and school consolidation/reorganization should be conducted at the local level. A deeper analysis of specific towns, municipalities, etc. within the Downward Trending States could provide more detailed information regarding consolidation and reorganization trends. This deeper analysis could focus on local politics, changes in population, changes in demography, changes in industry, etc. Each of these factors could be connected to alterations to local schools and districts and could provide insights into a closer connection between factors that are linked to downward trends.

Another potential avenue for further study could involve a state-level historical/political analysis within each identified Downward Trending State. Each of the Downward Trending

States studied had a discrepancy between the consolidative/reorganizational bills being considered and those that actually became law. An analysis of the political affiliations of elected officials, changes in elected officials, and other pressing state-level concerns during the time period examined in this study could elicit insights into the reasons behind the successes and failures of education legislation.

Finally, the most impactful avenue for further study from a practitioner's perspective could focus on student outcomes in the Downward Trending States. The current study identified nine states that exhibited adjustments to the overall organization of their public school systems during the 1993-2012 timeframe. Once the Downward Trending States were identified, the study focused on the legislative actions themselves. One of the observations of this study was that there remains an overall lack of focus and consensus on what should be the primary outcome when legislatures consider consolidation and reorganization. If the ultimate goal of public schooling is to meet the educational and developmental needs of the students served by the districts and schools, the students should be the center of all analyses. Future studies could analyze standardized test performance, graduation rates, attendance data, and disciplinary data of students in the Downward Trending States over the 1993-2012 consolidative/reorganizational timeframe. Until students are the primary focus of discussions and actions to improve public education, states will not be able to find the optimal organization template that best serves student needs.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A: Legislative Actions by State

State	Legislative Action Number	Year	Description	Enacted (Y/N)	Classification
Alaska	HB 174	1993	Separated types of districts into three classes and determined regional attendance boundaries	N	Structural
Alaska	HB 450	1998	Amended definitions of middle/junior high schools and secondary schools	N	Procedural
Alaska	SB 95	1999	Amended definitions of middle/junior high schools and secondary schools	N	Procedural
Alaska	HB 145	1999	Created parameters to determine the number of schools in a district	N	Procedural
Alaska	HB 452	2002	Stated the DOE should require consolidation of districts with less than 100 students in ADM for two consecutive years	N	Structural
Alaska	HB 480	2004	Established boundaries of regional attendance areas having 1,000 or more students in ADM	N	Procedural
Alaska	SB 131	2003	Amended existing legislation in the area of funding public school construction	N	Financial
Alaska	SB 202	2003	Amended student transportation funding formulae	N	Financial

Alaska	HB 142 Section 2	2007	Empowered State DOE to provide transportation via subcontracting and supplementary transportation systems	N	Financial
Alaska	HR 10	2005	Established task force to evaluate district efficiencies	N	Financial
Alaska	SCR 11	2007	Examined district cost factors, cost differentials, and efficiencies	N	Financial
Alaska	SB 285	2008	Allowed State DOE to establish, maintain, govern, operate, discontinue, and combine regional, area, and special districts	N	Structural
Arkansas	SB 817	1993	Created metropolitan districts in any county with more than one district and a metropolitan area of one or more cities with populations of 75,000 or more	N	Structural
Arkansas	SB 71	2003	Authorized State DOE to consider adjusting district boundary lines	N	Structural
Arkansas	HB 1106	2003	Proposed State DOE publish annual consolidation list of districts meeting various criteria	N	Structural
Arkansas	Act 60	2003	Public Education Reorganization Act expanded scope of consolidation procedures	Y	Structural
Arkansas	HB 1301	1993	Established in-district school choice program	N	Procedural

Arkansas	HB 2003	1993	Created Public School Finance Study Committee	N	Financial
Arkansas	SB 432 Section 14	1997	Amended powers of State Board of Elementary and Secondary Education	N	Structural
Arkansas	Act 1386	2001	Directed State BOE to study the structure of public elementary and secondary education, analyzing efficiencies, etc.	Y	Structural
Arkansas	Act 1397	2005	Provided a mechanism for defining and closing an isolated school	Y	Procedural
Arkansas	Act 1424	2005	Created Academic Facilities Oversight Committee and Advisory Committee on Public School Academic Facilities	Y	Structural
California	AB 1114	1993	Required governing body of each district to establish open enrollment policy with aspects of parental choice	N	Procedural
California	AB 3295	1994	Stipulated how county committees should formulate plans and recommendations for district organization	N	Structural
California	AB 2628	1994	Reduced voter percentage required to hold hearings on school reorganization	N	Structural

California	SB 300	1997	Established Commission on School District Consolidation and Reorganization to study the feasibility of increased district reorganization and consolidation across the state	N	Structural
California	AB 3236	1994	Created school finance task force to study potential need to reform the school finance system	N	Financial
California	AB 235	2003	Define requirements of student transportation funding formula	N	Financial
Illinois	HB 3313	2000	Proposed a state grant for school construction following consolidation or annexation	N	Financial
Illinois	HB 2611	2003	Provided supplementary state aid to districts experiencing significant growth	N	Financial
Illinois	HB 4431	2004	Proposed the creation of grants for districts experiencing rapid growth	N	Financial
Illinois	HB 3108	2011	Proposed block grant funding to districts meeting certain requirements	N	Financial
Illinois	HB 1473	1999	Sought to create countywide districts	N	Structural
Illinois	HB 3910	2000	Proposed consolidation of Thornton Township High School District 205 and Dolton School District 148	N	Structural

Illinois	HB 325	2001	Established Department of School District Organization to study various district organizational problems	N	Structural
Illinois	HB 3001	2003	Created Small Schools Task Force to study effectiveness of schools with under 400 students	N	Structural
Illinois	HB 4281	2004	Dissolved districts with fewer than 5,000 students	N	Structural
Illinois	HB 363	2005	Dissolved districts with fewer than 5,000 students	N	Structural
Illinois	HJR 6	2011	Created the School District Realignment and Consolidation Task Force within the State BOE	N	Structural
Illinois	SB 3494	2012	Called for State BOE to conduct a consolidation feasibility study and generate a report	N	Structural
Kansas	HB 2669	2002	Proposed the State BOE combine state financial amount for consolidating districts in the school year prior to consolidation	N	Financial
Kansas	HB 2904	2002	Required each school district to collect identified statistics and financial data	N	Financial
Kansas	SB 41	2010	Provided guidelines for calculating state financial aid to consolidated districts	N	Financial
Kansas	HB 2100	2011	Applied guidelines from SB 41 to districts' general supplemental aid	N	Financial

Kansas	HB 2360	2011	Kansas Uniform Accounting and Reporting Act	N	Financial
Kansas	HB 2613	2006	Addressed logistics regarding transportation from sending to receiving districts	N	Procedural
Kansas	HB 2937	2006	Called for the creation of county superintendent positions	N	Procedural
Kansas	SB 514 Section 2	2006	Gave boards of education the authority to permit enrollment and attendance of nonresident pupils	N	Procedural
Kansas	HB 2092	2007	Provided guidelines for receiving districts to enter into contracts with sending districts	N	Procedural
Kansas	SB 70 Section 2	2007	Allowed local BOE to permit attendance of nonresident pupils	N	Procedural
Kansas	HB 2969	2008	Defined "virtual school" and set parameters as to how virtual schools could deliver appropriate instruction	N	Procedural
Kansas	HB 2387	1997	Established task force to examine impact of class size on education quality in kindergarten through grade three	N	Structural
Kansas	HCR 5007	1998	Directed State BOE to undertake a study of district organization to determine optimal district configuration	N	Structural

Kansas	HB 2951	2002	Allowed unified district boards of education with at least 1,600 students to close any of its schools to improve the unified district	N	Structural
Kansas	SB 551	2002	Incentivized consolidation through amendments to funding formula	N	Structural
Kansas	HB 2209	2003	Established guidelines pertaining to school district consolidation	N	Structural
Kansas	HB 2210	2003	Stated consolidated districts would also consolidate administrative services	N	Structural
Kansas	HB 2253	2003	Required State BOE to compile stipulated data on all districts with fewer than 400 students or measuring less than 200 square miles	N	Structural
Kansas	HB 2625	2006	Offered alternative methods for districts to enter into interlocal cooperation agreements when districts sought to create one or more shared schools	N	Structural
Kansas	HB 2627	2010	Permitted two or more districts to discuss issues related to consolidation into one consolidated unified district	N	Structural
Nebraska	LB 863	1997	Expressed the intent of the state to utilize uniform taxation concerning districts	N	Financial

Nebraska	LB 1251	2002	Created the Public Education Finance Study Commission	N	Financial
Nebraska	LB 717	2005	Created the Reorganization Building Aid Commission	N	Financial
Nebraska	LB 785	2003	Mandated all districts to have a minimum of 1,600 students and offer K-12 instruction	N	Structural
Nebraska	LB 556	1993	Required the merger of Class I and Class VI districts	N	Structural
Nebraska	LB 999	1996	Required the merger of Class I and Class VI districts	N	Structural
Nebraska	LB 684	1993	Changed provisions for Class IV district boundaries	N	Structural
Nebraska	LB 454	1993	Required the merger, affiliation, or dissolution of Class VI districts	N	Structural
Nebraska	LB 742	1997	Altered provisions for the merger of Class I and Class VI districts	N	Structural
Nebraska	LB 629	1998	Changed provisions related to overall classification of public school districts	N	Structural
Nebraska	LB 529	1995	Established the Commission for the Reconfiguration of the Omaha Public School District	N	Structural
Nebraska	LB 600	1995	Provided incentives for reorganized districts	N	Structural

Nebraska	LB 1234	1996	Stated the overall intent of the legislature to examine and pursue district reorganization where applicable throughout the state	N	Structural
Nebraska	LB 292	1997	Required the State BOE to develop a plan for widespread district reorganization	N	Structural
Nebraska	LB 1372	1996	Amended provisions related to annexation and Class III districts	N	Structural
Nebraska	LB 272	1999	Created the State Committee for the Reorganization of School Districts	N	Structural
Nebraska	LB 1252	2000	Authorized districts to enter into design-build contracts or construction management contracts for districts following specific expansion guidelines	N	Structural
Nebraska	LB 391	2001	Authorized districts to enter into design-build contracts or construction management contracts for districts following specific expansion guidelines	N	Structural
Nebraska	LB 1048	2004	Outlined parameters by which the State Committee for the Reorganization of School Districts could issue orders for district consolidation	N	Structural

Nebraska	LB 1106	2004	Addressed numerous aspects of public school district policies, enrollment guidelines, etc.	N	Structural
Nebraska	LB 1108	2004	Allowed State Committee for the Reorganization of School Districts to create new districts, dissolve districts, change district boundaries, etc.	N	Structural
Nebraska	LB 126 Section 6	2005	Articulated the legislature's goal of encouraging district consolidation	N	Structural
Nebraska	LB 1050	2006	Called for the Education Committee of the Legislature to appoint a study to examine costs and effects of requiring single countywide districts in Nebraska	N	Structural
Nebraska	LB 991	2012	Called for the Education Committee of the Legislature to appoint a study to examine costs and effects of requiring single countywide districts in Nebraska	N	Structural
Oklahoma	HB 1553	1993	Created the School Consolidation Assistance Fund	N	Financial
Oklahoma	SB 581	2007	Created the School Consolidation Assistance Fund with updated parameters	N	Financial

Oklahoma	HCR 1015	1993	Directed districts to consider the inclusion of wiring and other equipment necessary for distance learning	N	Procedural
Oklahoma	HB 1902	1994	Discussed consolidation of two or more districts in accordance with standards, rules, and procedures established by the State BOE	N	Structural
Oklahoma	SB 52	1995	Created the Parental School Choice Act	N	Procedural
Oklahoma	HB 1906	1995	Established the Education Choice Act	N	Procedural
Oklahoma	HB 2169	1996	Established the Education Choice Act	N	Procedural
Oklahoma	SB 1431	1998	Authorized transfer of students from low-performing districts and high challenge districts	N	Structural
Oklahoma	HR 1021	2001	Requested the State BOE adopt standards and guidelines on internet-based instruction	N	Procedural
Oklahoma	HB 2919	2002	Authorized the Office of Accountability to research, develop, implement, and administer a performance review of school districts	N	Structural
Oklahoma	HB 1292	2005	Authorized the Office of Accountability to research, develop, implement, and administer a performance review of school districts	N	Structural

Oklahoma	HB 1578	2011	Required all elementary schools to consolidate with an independent school district by an established date	N	Structural
Oklahoma	SB 1193	1994	Created a mechanism for annexing all or part of the territory of one school district by another school district	N	Structural
Oklahoma	SB 614	1995	Clarified the language in SB 1193	N	Structural
Oklahoma	HB 2081	1996	Provided stipulations and exceptions to annexation	N	Structural
Oklahoma	HB 1827	1995	Expressed intent of state legislature to reduce staff and administrative of the State DOE and bureaucracies of individual school districts	N	Procedural
Oklahoma	HB 1783	2005	Created the Administrative Reorganization and Consolidation Commission	N	Structural
Oklahoma	SB 423	2005	Created the Task Force on School District Administrative Reorganization or Consolidation	N	Structural
Oklahoma	HB 1815	2007	Established the School Administrative Restructuring Act	N	Structural
Oklahoma	HB 1098	2009	Established the School Administrative Restructuring Act	N	Structural
Oklahoma	HB 1281	2011	Established the School Administrative Restructuring Act	N	Structural

Oklahoma	HB 1705	2009	Created the School District Restructuring Act	N	Structural
Oklahoma	HCR 1003	2009	Established the Task Force on School Consolidation	N	Structural
Oklahoma	HB 1289	2011	Created the School District County Restructuring Act	N	Structural
Oregon	SB 89	2003	Defined "high growth district" and favorably adjusted funding formula for these districts	N	Financial
Oregon	SB 819 Section 6	2003	Monetarily incentivized merging of high schools	N	Financial
Oregon	SB 727	2003	Directed school districts to establish high technology classrooms and provide students and staff with computers	N	Procedural
Oregon	HB 3103	2003	Created the Task Force on School Consolidation to study and recommend consolidating districts throughout the state	N	Structural
Oregon	HB 3171	2003	Created the Task Force on School District and Education Service District Organization	N	Structural
Oregon	HB 3225	2003	Established a timeline for each Oregon county to have one school district	N	Structural
Oregon	SB 47	2007	Required the State DOE to establish a system to review business practices and efficiencies of school districts	N	Structural

South Carolina	HCR 3891	1995	Established a Joint Legislative Ad Hoc Committee to study and develop a plan for a voucher system for financing public education in South Carolina	N	Financial
South Carolina	SB 113	1995	South Carolina Public School Choice Act of 1995	N	Procedural
South Carolina	Act 389	1996	Given certain stipulations, provided a mechanism for students to attend school in nonresident districts	Y	Structural
South Carolina	HB 4019	1997	Required districts to maintain minimum size based on enrollment numbers	N	Structural
South Carolina	HB 4335	2000	Established procedures and timelines allowing students to transfer schools	N	Structural
South Carolina	HB 4489	2006	Established a Public School Enrollment Choice Program	N	Structural
South Carolina	SB 471	2008	Proposed the State DOE establish the Office of School Choice and Innovation	N	Procedural
South Carolina	SB 1267	2012	Amended the parameters of the Office of School Choice and Innovation as conceived in SB 471	N	Procedural
South Carolina	HB 4391	2008	Established the South Carolina Public School Choice Program	N	Structural

South Carolina	HB 3102	2009	Required districts to maintain certain ADM to receive state funding	N	Financial
South Carolina	HB 3737	2009	Established a school choice program	N	Procedural
South Carolina	Act 526	1996	Mandated that Orangeburg County consolidate from eight districts to three districts	Y	Structural
South Carolina	SB 1089	2002	Sought to consolidate all districts in Marion County into one district	N	Structural
South Carolina	SB 273	2003	Sought to create one school district per county	N	Structural
South Carolina	HB 3501	2003	Sought to create one school district per county	N	Structural
South Carolina	HB 3340	2009	Sought to create one school district per county	N	Structural
South Carolina	HB 3238	2011	Sought to create one school district per county	N	Structural
South Carolina	HB 4327	2006	Called for Education Oversight Committee to review and recommend changes to school district boundaries	N	Structural
South Carolina	HB 4488	2006	Sought to enact the South Carolina School District Reorganization and Realignment Act of 2006	N	Structural
South Carolina	SJR 352	2009	Created a South Carolina Joint Committee on School Consolidation	N	Structural
South Carolina	HJR 3495	2011	Created a committee to study cost effectiveness and feasibility of consolidating districts within individual counties	N	Structural

South Carolina	SJR 432	2012	Created a committee to study cost effectiveness and feasibility of consolidating districts within individual counties	N	Structural
South Carolina	Act 304	2012	Formed all school districts in Marion County into one single district	Y	Structural

Appendix B: Legislative Actions by Classification

State	Legislative Action Number	Year	Description	Enacted (Y/N)	Classification
Alaska	SB 131	2003	Amended existing legislation in the area of funding public school construction	N	Financial
Alaska	SB 202	2003	Amended student transportation funding formulae	N	Financial
Alaska	HB 142 Section 2	2007	Empowered State DOE to provide transportation via subcontracting and supplementary transportation systems	N	Financial
Alaska	HR 10	2005	Established task force to evaluate district efficiencies	N	Financial
Alaska	SCR 11	2007	Examined district cost factors, cost differentials, and efficiencies	N	Financial
Arkansas	HB 2003	1993	Created Public School Finance Study Committee	N	Financial
California	AB 3236	1994	Created school finance task force to study potential need to reform the school finance system	N	Financial
California	AB 235	2003	Define requirements of student transportation funding formula	N	Financial
Illinois	HB 3313	2000	Proposed a state grant for school construction following consolidation or annexation	N	Financial
Illinois	HB 2611	2003	Provided supplementary state aid to districts experiencing significant growth	N	Financial

Illinois	HB 4431	2004	Proposed the creation of grants for districts experiencing rapid growth	N	Financial
Illinois	HB 3108	2011	Proposed block grant funding to districts meeting certain requirements	N	Financial
Kansas	HB 2669	2002	Proposed the State BOE combine state financial amount for consolidating districts in the school year prior to consolidation	N	Financial
Kansas	HB 2904	2002	Required each school district to collect identified statistics and financial data	N	Financial
Kansas	SB 41	2010	Provided guidelines for calculating state financial aid to consolidated districts	N	Financial
Kansas	HB 2100	2011	Applied guidelines from SB 41 to districts' general supplemental aid	N	Financial
Kansas	HB 2360	2011	Kansas Uniform Accounting and Reporting Act	N	Financial
Nebraska	LB 863	1997	Expressed the intent of the state to utilize uniform taxation concerning districts	N	Financial
Nebraska	LB 1251	2002	Created the Public Education Finance Study Commission	N	Financial
Nebraska	LB 717	2005	Created the Reorganization Building Aid Commission	N	Financial

Oklahoma	HB 1553	1993	Created the School Consolidation Assistance Fund	N	Financial
Oklahoma	SB 581	2007	Created the School Consolidation Assistance Fund with updated parameters	N	Financial
Oregon	SB 89	2003	Defined "high growth district" and favorably adjusted funding formula for these districts	N	Financial
Oregon	SB 819 Section 6	2003	Monetarily incentivized merging of high schools	N	Financial
South Carolina	HCR 3891	1995	Established a Joint Legislative Ad Hoc Committee to study and develop a plan for a voucher system for financing public education in South Carolina	N	Financial
South Carolina	HB 3102	2009	Required districts to maintain certain ADM to receive state funding	N	Financial
Alaska	HB 450	1998	Amended definitions of middle/junior high schools and secondary schools	N	Procedural
Alaska	SB 95	1999	Amended definitions of middle/junior high schools and secondary schools	N	Procedural
Alaska	HB 145	1999	Created parameters to determine the number of schools in a district	N	Procedural
Alaska	HB 480	2004	Established boundaries of regional attendance areas having 1,000 or more students in ADM	N	Procedural

Arkansas	HB 1301	1993	Established in-district school choice program	N	Procedural
Arkansas	Act 1397	2005	Provided a mechanism for defining and closing an isolated school	Y	Procedural
California	AB 1114	1993	Required governing body of each district to establish open enrollment policy with aspects of parental choice	N	Procedural
Kansas	HB 2613	2006	Addressed logistics regarding transportation from sending to receiving districts	N	Procedural
Kansas	HB 2937	2006	Called for the creation of county superintendent positions	N	Procedural
Kansas	SB 514 Section 2	2006	Gave boards of education the authority to permit enrollment and attendance of nonresident pupils	N	Procedural
Kansas	HB 2092	2007	Provided guidelines for receiving districts to enter into contracts with sending districts	N	Procedural
Kansas	SB 70 Section 2	2007	Allowed local BOE to permit attendance of nonresident pupils	N	Procedural
Kansas	HB 2969	2008	Defined "virtual school" and set parameters as to how virtual schools could deliver appropriate instruction	N	Procedural
Oklahoma	HCR 1015	1993	Directed districts to consider the inclusion of wiring and other equipment necessary for distance learning	N	Procedural
Oklahoma	SB 52	1995	Created the Parental School Choice Act	N	Procedural

Oklahoma	HB 1906	1995	Established the Education Choice Act	N	Procedural
Oklahoma	HB 2169	1996	Established the Education Choice Act	N	Procedural
Oklahoma	HR 1021	2001	Requested the State BOE adopt standards and guidelines on internet-based instruction	N	Procedural
Oklahoma	HB 1827	1995	Expressed intent of state legislature to reduce staff and administrative of the State DOE and bureaucracies of individual school districts	N	Procedural
Oregon	SB 727	2003	Directed school districts to establish high technology classrooms and provide students and staff with computers	N	Procedural
South Carolina	SB 113	1995	South Carolina Public School Choice Act of 1995	N	Procedural
South Carolina	SB 471	2008	Proposed the State DOE establish the Office of School Choice and Innovation	N	Procedural
South Carolina	SB 1267	2012	Amended the parameters of the Office of School Choice and Innovation as conceived in SB 471	N	Procedural
South Carolina	HB 3737	2009	Established a school choice program	N	Procedural
Alaska	HB 174	1993	Separated types of districts into three classes and determined regional attendance boundaries	N	Structural

Alaska	HB 452	2002	Stated the DOE should require consolidation of districts with less than 100 students in ADM for two consecutive years	N	Structural
Alaska	SB 285	2008	Allowed State DOE to establish, maintain, govern, operate, discontinue, and combine regional, area, and special districts	N	Structural
Arkansas	SB 817	1993	Created metropolitan districts in any county with more than one district and a metropolitan area of one or more cities with populations of 75,000 or more	N	Structural
Arkansas	SB 71	2003	Authorized State DOE to consider adjusting district boundary lines	N	Structural
Arkansas	HB 1106	2003	Proposed State DOE publish annual consolidation list of districts meeting various criteria	N	Structural
Arkansas	Act 60	2003	Public Education Reorganization Act expanded scope of consolidation procedures	Y	Structural
Arkansas	SB 432 Section 14	1997	Amended powers of State Board of Elementary and Secondary Education	N	Structural
Arkansas	Act 1386	2001	Directed State BOE to study the structure of public elementary and secondary education, analyzing efficiencies, etc.	Y	Structural

Arkansas	Act 1424	2005	Created Academic Facilities Oversight Committee and Advisory Committee on Public School Academic Facilities	Y	Structural
California	AB 3295	1994	Stipulated how county committees should formulate plans and recommendations for district organization	N	Structural
California	AB 2628	1994	Reduced voter percentage required to hold hearings on school reorganization	N	Structural
California	SB 300	1997	Established Commission on School District Consolidation and Reorganization to study the feasibility of increased district reorganization and consolidation across the state	N	Structural
Illinois	HB 1473	1999	Sought to create countywide districts	N	Structural
Illinois	HB 3910	2000	Proposed consolidation of Thornton Township High School District 205 and Dolton School District 148	N	Structural
Illinois	HB 325	2001	Established Department of School District Organization to study various district organizational problems	N	Structural
Illinois	HB 3001	2003	Created Small Schools Task Force to study effectiveness of schools with under 400 students	N	Structural

Illinois	HB 4281	2004	Dissolved districts with fewer than 5,000 students	N	Structural
Illinois	HB 363	2005	Dissolved districts with fewer than 5,000 students	N	Structural
Illinois	HJR 6	2011	Created the School District Realignment and Consolidation Task Force within the State BOE	N	Structural
Illinois	SB 3494	2012	Called for State BOE to conduct a consolidation feasibility study and generate a report	N	Structural
Kansas	HB 2387	1997	Established task force to examine impact of class size on education quality in kindergarten through grade three	N	Structural
Kansas	HCR 5007	1998	Directed State BOE to undertake a study of district organization to determine optimal district configuration	N	Structural
Kansas	HB 2951	2002	Allowed unified district boards of education with at least 1,600 students to close any of its schools to improve the unified district	N	Structural
Kansas	SB 551	2002	Incentivized consolidation through amendments to funding formula	N	Structural
Kansas	HB 2209	2003	Established guidelines pertaining to school district consolidation	N	Structural
Kansas	HB 2210	2003	Stated consolidated districts would also consolidate administrative services	N	Structural

Kansas	HB 2253	2003	Required State BOE to compile stipulated data on all districts with fewer than 400 students or measuring less than 200 square miles	N	Structural
Kansas	HB 2625	2006	Offered alternative methods for districts to enter into interlocal cooperation agreements when districts sought to create one or more shared schools	N	Structural
Kansas	HB 2627	2010	Permitted two or more districts to discuss issues related to consolidation into one consolidated unified district	N	Structural
Nebraska	LB 785	2003	Mandated all districts to have a minimum of 1,600 students and offer K-12 instruction	N	Structural
Nebraska	LB 556	1993	Required the merger of Class I and Class VI districts	N	Structural
Nebraska	LB 999	1996	Required the merger of Class I and Class VI districts	N	Structural
Nebraska	LB 684	1993	Changed provisions for Class IV district boundaries	N	Structural
Nebraska	LB 454	1993	Required the merger, affiliation, or dissolution of Class VI districts	N	Structural
Nebraska	LB 742	1997	Altered provisions for the merger of Class I and Class VI districts	N	Structural
Nebraska	LB 629	1998	Changed provisions related to overall classification of public school districts	N	Structural

Nebraska	LB 529	1995	Established the Commission for the Reconfiguration of the Omaha Public School District	N	Structural
Nebraska	LB 600	1995	Provided incentives for reorganized districts	N	Structural
Nebraska	LB 1234	1996	Stated the overall intent of the legislature to examine and pursue district reorganization where applicable throughout the state	N	Structural
Nebraska	LB 292	1997	Required the State BOE to develop a plan for widespread district reorganization	N	Structural
Nebraska	LB 1372	1996	Amended provisions related to annexation and Class III districts	N	Structural
Nebraska	LB 272	1999	Created the State Committee for the Reorganization of School Districts	N	Structural
Nebraska	LB 1252	2000	Authorized districts to enter into design-build contracts or construction management contracts for districts following specific expansion guidelines	N	Structural
Nebraska	LB 391	2001	Authorized districts to enter into design-build contracts or construction management contracts for districts following specific expansion guidelines	N	Structural

Nebraska	LB 1048	2004	Outlined parameters by which the State Committee for the Reorganization of School Districts could issue orders for district consolidation	N	Structural
Nebraska	LB 1106	2004	Addressed numerous aspects of public school district policies, enrollment guidelines, etc.	N	Structural
Nebraska	LB 1108	2004	Allowed State Committee for the Reorganization of School Districts to create new districts, dissolve districts, change district boundaries, etc.	N	Structural
Nebraska	LB 126 Section 6	2005	Articulated the legislature's goal of encouraging district consolidation	N	Structural
Nebraska	LB 1050	2006	Called for the Education Committee of the Legislature to appoint a study to examine costs and effects of requiring single countywide districts in Nebraska	N	Structural
Nebraska	LB 991	2012	Called for the Education Committee of the Legislature to appoint a study to examine costs and effects of requiring single countywide districts in Nebraska	N	Structural

Oklahoma	HB 1902	1994	Discussed consolidation of two or more districts in accordance with standards, rules, and procedures established by the State BOE	N	Structural
Oklahoma	SB 1431	1998	Authorized transfer of students from low-performing districts and high challenge districts	N	Structural
Oklahoma	HB 2919	2002	Authorized the Office of Accountability to research, develop, implement, and administer a performance review of school districts	N	Structural
Oklahoma	HB 1292	2005	Authorized the Office of Accountability to research, develop, implement, and administer a performance review of school districts	N	Structural
Oklahoma	HB 1578	2011	Required all elementary schools to consolidate with an independent school district by an established date	N	Structural
Oklahoma	SB 1193	1994	Created a mechanism for annexing all or part of the territory of one school district by another school district	N	Structural
Oklahoma	SB 614	1995	Clarified the language in SB 1193	N	Structural
Oklahoma	HB 2081	1996	Provided stipulations and exceptions to annexation	N	Structural

Oklahoma	HB 1783	2005	Created the Administrative Reorganization and Consolidation Commission	N	Structural
Oklahoma	SB 423	2005	Created the Task Force on School District Administrative Reorganization or Consolidation	N	Structural
Oklahoma	HB 1815	2007	Established the School Administrative Restructuring Act	N	Structural
Oklahoma	HB 1098	2009	Established the School Administrative Restructuring Act	N	Structural
Oklahoma	HB 1281	2011	Established the School Administrative Restructuring Act	N	Structural
Oklahoma	HB 1705	2009	Created the School District Restructuring Act	N	Structural
Oklahoma	HCR 1003	2009	Established the Task Force on School Consolidation	N	Structural
Oklahoma	HB 1289	2011	Created the School District County Restructuring Act	N	Structural
Oregon	HB 3103	2003	Created the Task Force on School Consolidation to study and recommend consolidating districts throughout the state	N	Structural
Oregon	HB 3171	2003	Created the Task Force on School District and Education Service District Organization	N	Structural
Oregon	HB 3225	2003	Established a timeline for each Oregon county to have one school district	N	Structural

Oregon	SB 47	2007	Required the State DOE to establish a system to review business practices and efficiencies of school districts	N	Structural
South Carolina	Act 389	1996	Given certain stipulations, provided a mechanism for students to attend school in nonresident districts	Y	Structural
South Carolina	HB 4019	1997	Required districts to maintain minimum size based on enrollment numbers	N	Structural
South Carolina	HB 4335	2000	Established procedures and timelines allowing students to transfer schools	N	Structural
South Carolina	HB 4489	2006	Established a Public School Enrollment Choice Program	N	Structural
South Carolina	HB 4391	2008	Established the South Carolina Public School Choice Program	N	Structural
South Carolina	Act 526	1996	Mandated that Orangeburg County consolidate from eight districts to three districts	Y	Structural
South Carolina	SB 1089	2002	Sought to consolidate all districts in Marion County into one district	N	Structural
South Carolina	SB 273	2003	Sought to create one school district per county	N	Structural
South Carolina	HB 3501	2003	Sought to create one school district per county	N	Structural
South Carolina	HB 3340	2009	Sought to create one school district per county	N	Structural
South Carolina	HB 3238	2011	Sought to create one school district per county	N	Structural

South Carolina	HB 4327	2006	Called for Education Oversight Committee to review and recommend changes to school district boundaries	N	Structural
South Carolina	HB 4488	2006	Sought to enact the South Carolina School District Reorganization and Realignment Act of 2006	N	Structural
South Carolina	SJR 352	2009	Created a South Carolina Joint Committee on School Consolidation	N	Structural
South Carolina	HJR 3495	2011	Created a committee to study cost effectiveness and feasibility of consolidating districts within individual counties	N	Structural
South Carolina	SJR 432	2012	Created a committee to study cost effectiveness and feasibility of consolidating districts within individual counties	N	Structural
South Carolina	Act 304	2012	Formed all school districts in Marion County into one single district	Y	Structural

Appendix C: Legislative Actions by Enacted (Y/N)

State	Legislative Action Number	Year	Description	Enacted (Y/N)	Classification
Arkansas	Act 60	2003	Public Education Reorganization Act expanded scope of consolidation procedures	Y	Structural
Arkansas	Act 1386	2001	Directed State BOE to study the structure of public elementary and secondary education, analyzing efficiencies, etc.	Y	Structural
Arkansas	Act 1397	2005	Provided a mechanism for defining and closing an isolated school	Y	Procedural
Arkansas	Act 1424	2005	Created Academic Facilities Oversight Committee and Advisory Committee on Public School Academic Facilities	Y	Structural
South Carolina	Act 389	1996	Given certain stipulations, provided a mechanism for students to attend school in nonresident districts	Y	Structural
South Carolina	Act 526	1996	Mandated that Orangeburg County consolidate from eight districts to three districts	Y	Structural
South Carolina	Act 304	2012	Formed all school districts in Marion County into one single district	Y	Structural
Alaska	HB 174	1993	Separated types of districts into three classes and determined regional attendance boundaries	N	Structural

Alaska	HB 450	1998	Amended definitions of middle/junior high schools and secondary schools	N	Procedural
Alaska	SB 95	1999	Amended definitions of middle/junior high schools and secondary schools	N	Procedural
Alaska	HB 145	1999	Created parameters to determine the number of schools in a district	N	Procedural
Alaska	HB 452	2002	Stated the DOE should require consolidation of districts with less than 100 students in ADM for two consecutive years	N	Structural
Alaska	HB 480	2004	Established boundaries of regional attendance areas having 1,000 or more students in ADM	N	Procedural
Alaska	SB 131	2003	Amended existing legislation in the area of funding public school construction	N	Financial
Alaska	SB 202	2003	Amended student transportation funding formulae	N	Financial
Alaska	HB 142 Section 2	2007	Empowered State DOE to provide transportation via subcontracting and supplementary transportation systems	N	Financial
Alaska	HR 10	2005	Established task force to evaluate district efficiencies	N	Financial
Alaska	SCR 11	2007	Examined district cost factors, cost differentials, and efficiencies	N	Financial

Alaska	SB 285	2008	Allowed State DOE to establish, maintain, govern, operate, discontinue, and combine regional, area, and special districts	N	Structural
Arkansas	SB 817	1993	Created metropolitan districts in any county with more than one district and a metropolitan area of one or more cities with populations of 75,000 or more	N	Structural
Arkansas	SB 71	2003	Authorized State DOE to consider adjusting district boundary lines	N	Structural
Arkansas	HB 1106	2003	Proposed State DOE publish annual consolidation list of districts meeting various criteria	N	Structural
Arkansas	HB 1301	1993	Established in-district school choice program	N	Procedural
Arkansas	HB 2003	1993	Created Public School Finance Study Committee	N	Financial
Arkansas	SB 432 Section 14	1997	Amended powers of State Board of Elementary and Secondary Education	N	Structural
California	AB 1114	1993	Required governing body of each district to establish open enrollment policy with aspects of parental choice	N	Procedural
California	AB 3295	1994	Stipulated how county committees should formulate plans and recommendations for district organization	N	Structural

California	AB 2628	1994	Reduced voter percentage required to hold hearings on school reorganization	N	Structural
California	SB 300	1997	Established Commission on School District Consolidation and Reorganization to study the feasibility of increased district reorganization and consolidation across the state	N	Structural
California	AB 3236	1994	Created school finance task force to study potential need to reform the school finance system	N	Financial
California	AB 235	2003	Define requirements of student transportation funding formula	N	Financial
Illinois	HB 3313	2000	Proposed a state grant for school construction following consolidation or annexation	N	Financial
Illinois	HB 2611	2003	Provided supplementary state aid to districts experiencing significant growth	N	Financial
Illinois	HB 4431	2004	Proposed the creation of grants for districts experiencing rapid growth	N	Financial
Illinois	HB 3108	2011	Proposed block grant funding to districts meeting certain requirements	N	Financial
Illinois	HB 1473	1999	Sought to create countywide districts	N	Structural

Illinois	HB 3910	2000	Proposed consolidation of Thornton Township High School District 205 and Dolton School District 148	N	Structural
Illinois	HB 325	2001	Established Department of School District Organization to study various district organizational problems	N	Structural
Illinois	HB 3001	2003	Created Small Schools Task Force to study effectiveness of schools with under 400 students	N	Structural
Illinois	HB 4281	2004	Dissolved districts with fewer than 5,000 students	N	Structural
Illinois	HB 363	2005	Dissolved districts with fewer than 5,000 students	N	Structural
Illinois	HJR 6	2011	Created the School District Realignment and Consolidation Task Force within the State BOE	N	Structural
Illinois	SB 3494	2012	Called for State BOE to conduct a consolidation feasibility study and generate a report	N	Structural
Kansas	HB 2669	2002	Proposed the State BOE combine state financial amount for consolidating districts in the school year prior to consolidation	N	Financial
Kansas	HB 2904	2002	Required each school district to collect identified statistics and financial data	N	Financial
Kansas	SB 41	2010	Provided guidelines for calculating state financial aid to consolidated districts	N	Financial

Kansas	HB 2100	2011	Applied guidelines from SB 41 to districts' general supplemental aid	N	Financial
Kansas	HB 2360	2011	Kansas Uniform Accounting and Reporting Act	N	Financial
Kansas	HB 2613	2006	Addressed logistics regarding transportation from sending to receiving districts	N	Procedural
Kansas	HB 2937	2006	Called for the creation of county superintendent positions	N	Procedural
Kansas	SB 514 Section 2	2006	Gave boards of education the authority to permit enrollment and attendance of nonresident pupils	N	Procedural
Kansas	HB 2092	2007	Provided guidelines for receiving districts to enter into contracts with sending districts	N	Procedural
Kansas	SB 70 Section 2	2007	Allowed local BOE to permit attendance of nonresident pupils	N	Procedural
Kansas	HB 2969	2008	Defined "virtual school" and set parameters as to how virtual schools could deliver appropriate instruction	N	Procedural
Kansas	HB 2387	1997	Established task force to examine impact of class size on education quality in kindergarten through grade three	N	Structural
Kansas	HCR 5007	1998	Directed State BOE to undertake a study of district organization to determine optimal district configuration	N	Structural

Kansas	HB 2951	2002	Allowed unified district boards of education with at least 1,600 students to close any of its schools to improve the unified district	N	Structural
Kansas	SB 551	2002	Incentivized consolidation through amendments to funding formula	N	Structural
Kansas	HB 2209	2003	Established guidelines pertaining to school district consolidation	N	Structural
Kansas	HB 2210	2003	Stated consolidated districts would also consolidate administrative services	N	Structural
Kansas	HB 2253	2003	Required State BOE to compile stipulated data on all districts with fewer than 400 students or measuring less than 200 square miles	N	Structural
Kansas	HB 2625	2006	Offered alternative methods for districts to enter into interlocal cooperation agreements when districts sought to create one or more shared schools	N	Structural
Kansas	HB 2627	2010	Permitted two or more districts to discuss issues related to consolidation into one consolidated unified district	N	Structural
Nebraska	LB 863	1997	Expressed the intent of the state to utilize uniform taxation concerning districts	N	Financial

Nebraska	LB 1251	2002	Created the Public Education Finance Study Commission	N	Financial
Nebraska	LB 717	2005	Created the Reorganization Building Aid Commission	N	Financial
Nebraska	LB 785	2003	Mandated all districts to have a minimum of 1,600 students and offer K-12 instruction	N	Structural
Nebraska	LB 556	1993	Required the merger of Class I and Class VI districts	N	Structural
Nebraska	LB 999	1996	Required the merger of Class I and Class VI districts	N	Structural
Nebraska	LB 684	1993	Changed provisions for Class IV district boundaries	N	Structural
Nebraska	LB 454	1993	Required the merger, affiliation, or dissolution of Class VI districts	N	Structural
Nebraska	LB 742	1997	Altered provisions for the merger of Class I and Class VI districts	N	Structural
Nebraska	LB 629	1998	Changed provisions related to overall classification of public school districts	N	Structural
Nebraska	LB 529	1995	Established the Commission for the Reconfiguration of the Omaha Public School District	N	Structural
Nebraska	LB 600	1995	Provided incentives for reorganized districts	N	Structural

Nebraska	LB 1234	1996	Stated the overall intent of the legislature to examine and pursue district reorganization where applicable throughout the state	N	Structural
Nebraska	LB 292	1997	Required the State BOE to develop a plan for widespread district reorganization	N	Structural
Nebraska	LB 1372	1996	Amended provisions related to annexation and Class III districts	N	Structural
Nebraska	LB 272	1999	Created the State Committee for the Reorganization of School Districts	N	Structural
Nebraska	LB 1252	2000	Authorized districts to enter into design-build contracts or construction management contracts for districts following specific expansion guidelines	N	Structural
Nebraska	LB 391	2001	Authorized districts to enter into design-build contracts or construction management contracts for districts following specific expansion guidelines	N	Structural
Nebraska	LB 1048	2004	Outlined parameters by which the State Committee for the Reorganization of School Districts could issue orders for district consolidation	N	Structural

Nebraska	LB 1106	2004	Addressed numerous aspects of public school district policies, enrollment guidelines, etc.	N	Structural
Nebraska	LB 1108	2004	Allowed State Committee for the Reorganization of School Districts to create new districts, dissolve districts, change district boundaries, etc.	N	Structural
Nebraska	LB 126 Section 6	2005	Articulated the legislature's goal of encouraging district consolidation	N	Structural
Nebraska	LB 1050	2006	Called for the Education Committee of the Legislature to appoint a study to examine costs and effects of requiring single countywide districts in Nebraska	N	Structural
Nebraska	LB 991	2012	Called for the Education Committee of the Legislature to appoint a study to examine costs and effects of requiring single countywide districts in Nebraska	N	Structural
Oklahoma	HB 1553	1993	Created the School Consolidation Assistance Fund	N	Financial
Oklahoma	SB 581	2007	Created the School Consolidation Assistance Fund with updated parameters	N	Financial

Oklahoma	HCR 1015	1993	Directed districts to consider the inclusion of wiring and other equipment necessary for distance learning	N	Procedural
Oklahoma	HB 1902	1994	Discussed consolidation of two or more districts in accordance with standards, rules, and procedures established by the State BOE	N	Structural
Oklahoma	SB 52	1995	Created the Parental School Choice Act	N	Procedural
Oklahoma	HB 1906	1995	Established the Education Choice Act	N	Procedural
Oklahoma	HB 2169	1996	Established the Education Choice Act	N	Procedural
Oklahoma	SB 1431	1998	Authorized transfer of students from low-performing districts and high challenge districts	N	Structural
Oklahoma	HR 1021	2001	Requested the State BOE adopt standards and guidelines on internet-based instruction	N	Procedural
Oklahoma	HB 2919	2002	Authorized the Office of Accountability to research, develop, implement, and administer a performance review of school districts	N	Structural
Oklahoma	HB 1292	2005	Authorized the Office of Accountability to research, develop, implement, and administer a performance review of school districts	N	Structural

Oklahoma	HB 1578	2011	Required all elementary schools to consolidate with an independent school district by an established date	N	Structural
Oklahoma	SB 1193	1994	Created a mechanism for annexing all or part of the territory of one school district by another school district	N	Structural
Oklahoma	SB 614	1995	Clarified the language in SB 1193	N	Structural
Oklahoma	HB 2081	1996	Provided stipulations and exceptions to annexation	N	Structural
Oklahoma	HB 1827	1995	Expressed intent of state legislature to reduce staff and administrative of the State DOE and bureaucracies of individual school districts	N	Procedural
Oklahoma	HB 1783	2005	Created the Administrative Reorganization and Consolidation Commission	N	Structural
Oklahoma	SB 423	2005	Created the Task Force on School District Administrative Reorganization or Consolidation	N	Structural
Oklahoma	HB 1815	2007	Established the School Administrative Restructuring Act	N	Structural
Oklahoma	HB 1098	2009	Established the School Administrative Restructuring Act	N	Structural
Oklahoma	HB 1281	2011	Established the School Administrative Restructuring Act	N	Structural

Oklahoma	HB 1705	2009	Created the School District Restructuring Act	N	Structural
Oklahoma	HCR 1003	2009	Established the Task Force on School Consolidation	N	Structural
Oklahoma	HB 1289	2011	Created the School District County Restructuring Act	N	Structural
Oregon	SB 89	2003	Defined "high growth district" and favorably adjusted funding formula for these districts	N	Financial
Oregon	SB 819 Section 6	2003	Monetarily incentivized merging of high schools	N	Financial
Oregon	SB 727	2003	Directed school districts to establish high technology classrooms and provide students and staff with computers	N	Procedural
Oregon	HB 3103	2003	Created the Task Force on School Consolidation to study and recommend consolidating districts throughout the state	N	Structural
Oregon	HB 3171	2003	Created the Task Force on School District and Education Service District Organization	N	Structural
Oregon	HB 3225	2003	Established a timeline for each Oregon county to have one school district	N	Structural
Oregon	SB 47	2007	Required the State DOE to establish a system to review business practices and efficiencies of school districts	N	Structural

South Carolina	HCR 3891	1995	Established a Joint Legislative Ad Hoc Committee to study and develop a plan for a voucher system for financing public education in South Carolina	N	Financial
South Carolina	SB 113	1995	South Carolina Public School Choice Act of 1995	N	Procedural
South Carolina	HB 4019	1997	Required districts to maintain minimum size based on enrollment numbers	N	Structural
South Carolina	HB 4335	2000	Established procedures and timelines allowing students to transfer schools	N	Structural
South Carolina	HB 4489	2006	Established a Public School Enrollment Choice Program	N	Structural
South Carolina	SB 471	2008	Proposed the State DOE establish the Office of School Choice and Innovation	N	Procedural
South Carolina	SB 1267	2012	Amended the parameters of the Office of School Choice and Innovation as conceived in SB 471	N	Procedural
South Carolina	HB 4391	2008	Established the South Carolina Public School Choice Program	N	Structural
South Carolina	HB 3102	2009	Required districts to maintain certain ADM to receive state funding	N	Financial
South Carolina	HB 3737	2009	Established a school choice program	N	Procedural
South Carolina	SB 1089	2002	Sought to consolidate all districts in Marion County into one	N	Structural

South Carolina	SB 273	2003	Sought to create one school district per county	N	Structural
South Carolina	HB 3501	2003	Sought to create one school district per county	N	Structural
South Carolina	HB 3340	2009	Sought to create one school district per county	N	Structural
South Carolina	HB 3238	2011	Sought to create one school district per county	N	Structural
South Carolina	HB 4327	2006	Called for Education Oversight Committee to review and recommend changes to school district boundaries	N	Structural
South Carolina	HB 4488	2006	Sought to enact the South Carolina School District Reorganization and Realignment Act of 2006	N	Structural
South Carolina	SJR 352	2009	Created a South Carolina Joint Committee on School Consolidation	N	Structural
South Carolina	HJR 3495	2011	Created a committee to study cost effectiveness and feasibility of consolidating districts within individual counties	N	Structural
South Carolina	SJR 432	2012	Created a committee to study cost effectiveness and feasibility of consolidating districts within individual counties	N	Structural

Appendix D: Legislative Actions by Year

State	Legislative Action Number	Year	Description	Enacted (Y/N)	Classification
Illinois	SB 3494	2012	Called for State BOE to conduct a consolidation feasibility study and generate a report	N	Structural
Nebraska	LB 991	2012	Called for the Education Committee of the Legislature to appoint a study to examine costs and effects of requiring single countywide districts in Nebraska	N	Structural
South Carolina	SB 1267	2012	Amended the parameters of the Office of School Choice and Innovation as conceived in SB 471	N	Procedural
South Carolina	SJR 432	2012	Created a committee to study cost effectiveness and feasibility of consolidating districts within individual counties	N	Structural
South Carolina	Act 304	2012	Formed all school districts in Marion County into one single district	Y	Structural
Illinois	HB 3108	2011	Proposed block grant funding to districts meeting certain requirements	N	Financial
Illinois	HJR 6	2011	Created the School District Realignment and Consolidation Task Force within the State BOE	N	Structural
Kansas	HB 2100	2011	Applied guidelines from SB 41 to districts' general supplemental aid	N	Financial

Kansas	HB 2360	2011	Kansas Uniform Accounting and Reporting Act	N	Financial
Oklahoma	HB 1578	2011	Required all elementary schools to consolidate with an independent school district by an established date	N	Structural
Oklahoma	HB 1281	2011	Established the School Administrative Restructuring Act	N	Structural
Oklahoma	HB 1289	2011	Created the School District County Restructuring Act	N	Structural
South Carolina	HB 3238	2011	Sought to create one school district per county	N	Structural
South Carolina	HJR 3495	2011	Created a committee to study cost effectiveness and feasibility of consolidating districts within individual counties	N	Structural
Kansas	SB 41	2010	Provided guidelines for calculating state financial aid to consolidated districts	N	Financial
Kansas	HB 2627	2010	Permitted two or more districts to discuss issues related to consolidation into one consolidated unified district	N	Structural
Oklahoma	HB 1098	2009	Established the School Administrative Restructuring Act	N	Structural
Oklahoma	HB 1705	2009	Created the School District Restructuring Act	N	Structural
Oklahoma	HCR 1003	2009	Established the Task Force on School Consolidation	N	Structural

South Carolina	HB 3102	2009	Required districts to maintain certain ADM to receive state funding	N	Financial
South Carolina	HB 3737	2009	Established a school choice program	N	Procedural
South Carolina	HB 3340	2009	Sought to create one school district per county	N	Structural
South Carolina	SJR 352	2009	Created a South Carolina Joint Committee on School Consolidation	N	Structural
Alaska	SB 285	2008	Allowed State DOE to establish, maintain, govern, operate, discontinue, and combine regional, area, and special districts	N	Structural
Kansas	HB 2969	2008	Defined "virtual school" and set parameters as to how virtual schools could deliver appropriate instruction	N	Procedural
South Carolina	SB 471	2008	Proposed the State DOE establish the Office of School Choice and Innovation	N	Procedural
South Carolina	HB 4391	2008	Established the South Carolina Public School Choice Program	N	Structural
Alaska	HB 142 Section 2	2007	Empowered State DOE to provide transportation via subcontracting and supplementary transportation systems	N	Financial
Alaska	SCR 11	2007	Examined district cost factors, cost differentials, and efficiencies	N	Financial
Kansas	HB 2092	2007	Provided guidelines for receiving districts to enter into contracts with sending districts	N	Procedural

Kansas	SB 70 Section 2	2007	Allowed local BOE to permit attendance of nonresident pupils	N	Procedural
Oklahoma	SB 581	2007	Created the School Consolidation Assistance Fund with updated parameters	N	Financial
Oklahoma	HB 1815	2007	Established the School Administrative Restructuring Act	N	Structural
Oregon	SB 47	2007	Required the State DOE to establish a system to review business practices and efficiencies of school districts	N	Structural
Kansas	HB 2613	2006	Addressed logistics regarding transportation from sending to receiving districts	N	Procedural
Kansas	HB 2937	2006	Called for the creation of county superintendent positions	N	Procedural
Kansas	SB 514 Section 2	2006	Gave boards of education the authority to permit enrollment and attendance of nonresident pupils	N	Procedural
Kansas	HB 2625	2006	Offered alternative methods for districts to enter into interlocal cooperation agreements when districts sought to create one or more shared schools	N	Structural
Nebraska	LB 1050	2006	Called for the Education Committee of the Legislature to appoint a study to examine costs and effects of requiring single countywide districts in Nebraska	N	Structural

South Carolina	HB 4489	2006	Established a Public School Enrollment Choice Program	N	Structural
South Carolina	HB 4327	2006	Called for Education Oversight Committee to review and recommend changes to school district boundaries	N	Structural
South Carolina	HB 4488	2006	Sought to enact the South Carolina School District Reorganization and Realignment Act of 2006	N	Structural
Alaska	HR 10	2005	Established task force to evaluate district efficiencies	N	Financial
Arkansas	Act 1397	2005	Provided a mechanism for defining and closing an isolated school	Y	Procedural
Arkansas	Act 1424	2005	Created Academic Facilities Oversight Committee and Advisory Committee on Public School Academic Facilities	Y	Structural
Illinois	HB 363	2005	Dissolved districts with fewer than 5,000 students	N	Structural
Nebraska	LB 717	2005	Created the Reorganization Building Aid Commission	N	Financial
Nebraska	LB 126 Section 6	2005	Articulated the legislature's goal of encouraging district consolidation	N	Structural
Oklahoma	HB 1292	2005	Authorized the Office of Accountability to research, develop, implement, and administer a performance review of school districts	N	Structural

Oklahoma	HB 1783	2005	Created the Administrative Reorganization and Consolidation Commission	N	Structural
Oklahoma	SB 423	2005	Created the Task Force on School District Administrative Reorganization or Consolidation	N	Structural
Alaska	HB 480	2004	Established boundaries of regional attendance areas having 1,000 or more students in ADM	N	Procedural
Illinois	HB 4431	2004	Proposed the creation of grants for districts experiencing rapid growth	N	Financial
Illinois	HB 4281	2004	Dissolved districts with fewer than 5,000 students	N	Structural
Nebraska	LB 1048	2004	Outlined parameters by which the State Committee for the Reorganization of School Districts could issue orders for district consolidation	N	Structural
Nebraska	LB 1106	2004	Addressed numerous aspects of public school district policies, enrollment guidelines, etc.	N	Structural
Nebraska	LB 1108	2004	Allowed State Committee for the Reorganization of School Districts to create new districts, dissolve districts, change district boundaries, etc.	N	Structural

Alaska	SB 131	2003	Amended existing legislation in the area of funding public school construction	N	Financial
Alaska	SB 202	2003	Amended student transportation funding formulae	N	Financial
Arkansas	SB 71	2003	Authorized State DOE to consider adjusting district boundary lines	N	Structural
Arkansas	HB 1106	2003	Proposed State DOE publish annual consolidation list of districts meeting various criteria	N	Structural
Arkansas	Act 60	2003	Public Education Reorganization Act expanded scope of consolidation procedures	Y	Structural
California	AB 235	2003	Define requirements of student transportation funding formula	N	Financial
Illinois	HB 2611	2003	Provided supplementary state aid to districts experiencing significant growth	N	Financial
Illinois	HB 3001	2003	Created Small Schools Task Force to study effectiveness of schools with under 400 students	N	Structural
Kansas	HB 2209	2003	Established guidelines pertaining to school district consolidation	N	Structural
Kansas	HB 2210	2003	Stated consolidated districts would also consolidate administrative services	N	Structural

Kansas	HB 2253	2003	Required State BOE to compile stipulated data on all districts with fewer than 400 students or measuring less than 200 square miles	N	Structural
Nebraska	LB 785	2003	Mandated all districts to have a minimum of 1,600 students and offer K-12 instruction	N	Structural
Oregon	SB 89	2003	Defined "high growth district" and favorably adjusted funding formula for these districts	N	Financial
Oregon	SB 819 Section 6	2003	Monetarily incentivized merging of high schools	N	Financial
Oregon	SB 727	2003	Directed school districts to establish high technology classrooms and provide students and staff with computers	N	Procedural
Oregon	HB 3103	2003	Created the Task Force on School Consolidation to study and recommend consolidating districts throughout the state	N	Structural
Oregon	HB 3171	2003	Created the Task Force on School District and Education Service District Organization	N	Structural
Oregon	HB 3225	2003	Established a timeline for each Oregon county to have one school district	N	Structural
South Carolina	SB 273	2003	Sought to create one school district per county	N	Structural
South Carolina	HB 3501	2003	Sought to create one school district per county	N	Structural

Alaska	HB 452	2002	Stated the DOE should require consolidation of districts with less than 100 students in ADM for two consecutive years	N	Structural
Kansas	HB 2669	2002	Proposed the State BOE combine state financial amount for consolidating districts in the school year prior to consolidation	N	Financial
Kansas	HB 2904	2002	Required each school district to collect identified statistics and financial data	N	Financial
Kansas	HB 2951	2002	Allowed unified district boards of education with at least 1,600 students to close any of its schools to improve the unified district	N	Structural
Kansas	SB 551	2002	Incentivized consolidation through amendments to funding formula	N	Structural
Nebraska	LB 1251	2002	Created the Public Education Finance Study Commission	N	Financial
Oklahoma	HB 2919	2002	Authorized the Office of Accountability to research, develop, implement, and administer a performance review of school districts	N	Structural
South Carolina	SB 1089	2002	Sought to consolidate all districts in Marion County into one district	N	Structural

Arkansas	Act 1386	2001	Directed State BOE to study the structure of public elementary and secondary education, analyzing efficiencies, etc.	Y	Structural
Illinois	HB 325	2001	Established Department of School District Organization to study various district organizational problems	N	Structural
Nebraska	LB 391	2001	Authorized districts to enter into design-build contracts or construction management contracts for districts following specific expansion guidelines	N	Structural
Oklahoma	HR 1021	2001	Requested the State BOE adopt standards and guidelines on internet-based instruction	N	Procedural
Illinois	HB 3313	2000	Proposed a state grant for school construction following consolidation or annexation	N	Financial
Illinois	HB 3910	2000	Proposed consolidation of Thornton Township High School District 205 and Dolton School District 148	N	Structural
Nebraska	LB 1252	2000	Authorized districts to enter into design-build contracts or construction management contracts for districts following specific expansion guidelines	N	Structural

South Carolina	HB 4335	2000	Established procedures and timelines allowing students to transfer schools	N	Structural
Alaska	SB 95	1999	Amended definitions of middle/junior high schools and secondary schools	N	Procedural
Alaska	HB 145	1999	Created parameters to determine the number of schools in a district	N	Procedural
Illinois	HB 1473	1999	Sought to create countywide districts	N	Structural
Nebraska	LB 272	1999	Created the State Committee for the Reorganization of School Districts	N	Structural
Alaska	HB 450	1998	Amended definitions of middle/junior high schools and secondary schools	N	Procedural
Kansas	HCR 5007	1998	Directed State BOE to undertake a study of district organization to determine optimal district configuration	N	Structural
Nebraska	LB 629	1998	Changed provisions related to overall classification of public school districts	N	Structural
Oklahoma	SB 1431	1998	Authorized transfer of students from low-performing districts and high challenge districts	N	Structural
Arkansas	SB 432 Section 14	1997	Amended powers of State Board of Elementary and Secondary Education	N	Structural

California	SB 300	1997	Established Commission on School District Consolidation and Reorganization to study the feasibility of increased district reorganization and consolidation across the state	N	Structural
Kansas	HB 2387	1997	Established task force to examine impact of class size on education quality in kindergarten through grade three	N	Structural
Nebraska	LB 863	1997	Expressed the intent of the state to utilize uniform taxation concerning districts	N	Financial
Nebraska	LB 742	1997	Altered provisions for the merger of Class I and Class VI districts	N	Structural
Nebraska	LB 292	1997	Required the State BOE to develop a plan for widespread district reorganization	N	Structural
South Carolina	HB 4019	1997	Required districts to maintain minimum size based on enrollment numbers	N	Structural
Nebraska	LB 999	1996	Required the merger of Class I and Class VI districts	N	Structural
Nebraska	LB 1234	1996	Stated the overall intent of the legislature to examine and pursue district reorganization where applicable throughout the state	N	Structural
Nebraska	LB 1372	1996	Amended provisions related to annexation and Class III districts	N	Structural

Oklahoma	HB 2169	1996	Established the Education Choice Act	N	Procedural
Oklahoma	HB 2081	1996	Provided stipulations and exceptions to annexation	N	Structural
South Carolina	Act 389	1996	Given certain stipulations, provided a mechanism for students to attend school in nonresident districts	Y	Structural
South Carolina	Act 526	1996	Mandated that Orangeburg County consolidate from eight districts to three districts	Y	Structural
Nebraska	LB 529	1995	Established the Commission for the Reconfiguration of the Omaha Public School District	N	Structural
Nebraska	LB 600	1995	Provided incentives for reorganized districts	N	Structural
Oklahoma	SB 52	1995	Created the Parental School Choice Act	N	Procedural
Oklahoma	HB 1906	1995	Established the Education Choice Act	N	Procedural
Oklahoma	SB 614	1995	Clarified the language in SB 1193	N	Structural
Oklahoma	HB 1827	1995	Expressed intent of state legislature to reduce staff and administrative of the State DOE and bureaucracies of individual school districts	N	Procedural

South Carolina	HCR 3891	1995	Established a Joint Legislative Ad Hoc Committee to study and develop a plan for a voucher system for financing public education in South Carolina	N	Financial
South Carolina	SB 113	1995	South Carolina Public School Choice Act of 1995	N	Procedural
California	AB 3295	1994	Stipulated how county committees should formulate plans and recommendations for district organization	N	Structural
California	AB 2628	1994	Reduced voter percentage required to hold hearings on school reorganization	N	Structural
California	AB 3236	1994	Created school finance task force to study potential need to reform the school finance system	N	Financial
Oklahoma	HB 1902	1994	Discussed consolidation of two or more districts in accordance with standards, rules, and procedures established by the State BOE	N	Structural
Oklahoma	SB 1193	1994	Created a mechanism for annexing all or part of the territory of one school district by another school district	N	Structural
Alaska	HB 174	1993	Separated types of districts into three classes and determined regional attendance boundaries	N	Structural

Arkansas	SB 817	1993	Created metropolitan districts in any county with more than one district and a metropolitan area of one or more cities with populations of 75,000 or more	N	Structural
Arkansas	HB 1301	1993	Established in-district school choice program	N	Procedural
Arkansas	HB 2003	1993	Created Public School Finance Study Committee	N	Financial
California	AB 1114	1993	Required governing body of each district to establish open enrollment policy with aspects of parental choice	N	Procedural
Nebraska	LB 556	1993	Required the merger of Class I and Class VI districts	N	Structural
Nebraska	LB 684	1993	Changed provisions for Class IV district boundaries	N	Structural
Nebraska	LB 454	1993	Required the merger, affiliation, or dissolution of Class VI districts	N	Structural
Oklahoma	HB 1553	1993	Created the School Consolidation Assistance Fund	N	Financial
Oklahoma	HCR 1015	1993	Directed districts to consider the inclusion of wiring and other equipment necessary for distance learning	N	Procedural