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## High School Student Fees in North Dakota

Lester Tollefson

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HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT FEES IN NORTH DAKOTA

A Thesis

Submitted to the Graduate Faculty

of the

University of North Dakota

by

Lester Tollefson

//

In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements

for the

Degree of

Master of Science in Education

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This thesis, offered by Lester Tollefson in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Science in Education in the University of North Dakota, is hereby approved by the Committee of Instruction in charge of his work.

Erick Selke  
Chairman

Felix J. Von Brack.

John Page.

J. W. Bretnwieser  
Director of Graduate Division

115668

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## Introduction

### Origin of the Study

School costs have been studied in the United States with interest. Invariably these studies compare the per capita costs in the different character classifications of expenditures and total costs. These studies usually show the current per pupil expense cost in average daily attendance for public schools.

The report of expenditures for public education does not tell the whole story, as only money received from local taxes and state appropriations are considered in the reported costs. Most North Dakota schools have developed the practice of charging pupils fees in order to procure additional funds which are used to supplement the regular school budget. If this source of school revenue is taken into consideration it will be found that it adds several dollars to the per capita cost of education in the schools of North Dakota. Such a procedure may make it impossible (especially during depression years) for some pupils to attend school.

 The purpose of this study was to determine the common practices concerning the collection of fees in the schools of North Dakota, to study and compare the relative amounts charged for the several fees, and to make certain recommendations pertaining to the practice of charging fees in the light of the facts presented in this study.

The questionnaire method was used in gathering the data for the present study. This study is limited to the high schools of North Dakota



doing four years of high school work. The questions for the most part were so constructed that they could be answered with check responses, except those that required figures such as the amounts charged for the various fees.

A trial questionnaire was first mailed to the superintendents of Wyndmere, Lidgerwood, Forman, Cogswell, Havana, and West Fargo, to test the accuracy of interpreting the questions. After checking the returns a revision was made to clarify the questionnaire so as to get more accurate data. This questionnaire asked for different kinds of fees levied in the schools, the tuition for grade pupils in the various schools with the amount charged per month, as well as other information relative to fees charged by schools. A copy of this questionnaire will be found in Appendix B.

The questionnaire was mailed to 331 superintendents of all schools doing four years of high school work as listed in the North Dakota Educational Directory for 1945-46. The list of these schools, with the high school enrollment of each school, is given in Appendix A. Two hundred seventy-six questionnaires, which is 84% of the total, were returned. All of the returned questionnaires were found usable for the present study. Of the 276 returned, 150 were from fully accredited schools, 59 from minor accredited schools, and 67 from graded and consolidated schools. The two hundred seventy-six schools have a range of enrollment from 10 to 1331, and represent every section of North Dakota.

The total enrollment of all the schools is 23,590 pupils; the average enrollment per school is 85; and the median high school enrollment is 45. It is interesting to note that 138 four-year high schools of North Dakota, which represent one-half of 84 per cent of the four-year high schools, have less than 45 pupils enrolled. This situation will be changed in the state if the present redistricting program is adopted by the whole state of North Dakota.



## CHAPTER I

### Review of the Literature

The well-known authorities on public school finance do not consider school fees, for a review of these books reveals nothing more than a few references to internal school funds in connection with the treatment of accounting. Linn barely mentions school fees, yet like other authorities, he calls attention to the necessity of adequate accounting of internal school funds.

The books on secondary school administration do not give much information on high school fees. The subject is hardly mentioned in the older books. In his *Secondary School Administration*, written in 1932, Douglass<sup>1</sup> gives some space to a discussion of internal funds, but he confines it largely to the importance of accounting for these funds.

Referring to a recent survey of secondary schools concerning extra curricular activities, Koos and his associates make this comment:

Despite the recommendation, often repeated in recent years, that there should be a single fee which would provide the basis of support for all activities, only 22 institutions (of 72 reporting) or 31 per cent of the entire number, now use this means of raising funds.<sup>2</sup>

This single fee, which later is discussed in Chapter IV, is usually known as a general activity fee; however, it frequently includes more than

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<sup>1</sup> Harl R. Douglass, Organization and Administration of Secondary Schools, (New York: Ginn and Company, 1932)

<sup>2</sup> Leonard V. Koos, James M. Hughes, Percival W. Hutson, and William C. Reavis, Administering the Secondary School, (New York: American Book Company, 1940) p. 618

extra curricular activities, and sometimes furnishes much financial support for such departments as home economics and science.

Reeder<sup>1</sup> does not mention high school fees, but he discusses briefly the financing of extra curricular activities. He insists upon systematic handling of these funds and stresses the necessity of accounting, and recommends that a monthly report to the board of education be made concerning the condition of all accounts under the head of internal funds.

Edmonson<sup>2</sup> and his associates make no reference to school fees, but they discuss the financing of extra curricular activities. They recommend that these activities be subsidized by the board of education on the ground that if they are worth having, they are worthy of support. In the absence of support from public funds, however, these authorities suggest that extra curricular activities be financed by selling an activity ticket to the pupils at the beginning of the school year. This ticket gives a student admission to all school activities. The funds thus raised are allotted to the several activities.

With reference to the proposed activity ticket, it is interesting to observe that it has been used with success in many schools.

Settle<sup>3</sup> describes the plan which is used in the Calhoun School, Calhoun, Kentucky, a school with an enrollment of 310 pupils in grades seven through twelve. Under this plan an activity ticket, having a value

<sup>1</sup> Ward G. Reeder, The Fundamentals of Public School Administration (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1941) p. 727-8

<sup>2</sup> J.B. Edmonson, Joseph Roemer, and Francis L. Bacon, The Administration of the Modern Secondary School (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1941) p. 347-8

<sup>3</sup> Margery L. Settle, Calhoun's Activity Ticket, (School Executive, 60: 17, July, 1941)

of \$4.25, was sold to the pupils for cash or on the installment plan for 10 cents per week. Two hundred out of 310 pupils purchased the ticket the first year. The following is a list of the activities and services which the ticket provided:

School paper	16 issues
Basketball	14 games
National Program Service	5 assemblies
Dramatic Productions	5 school plays
Musical Entertainments	3 programs
Physical Education Exhibition	1 program
Exercises by Elementary Pupils	3 programs

Among the results of the plan, the author reports increased attendance at activities by both pupils and parents; increased revenue for support of the activities; simplification of financing activities; and better school morale.

J.C. Hogan,<sup>1</sup> Superintendent of Schools in Cherokee, Iowa, reports an activity ticket plan that works satisfactorily in his system. In the high school, the faculty and students took a whole year to discuss and formulate a plan. After studying the problem for a year, the faculty proposed a plan for consideration of the students. They voted to try it the following year. When the plan was put into operation, 98 per cent of the students bought the activity ticket for \$3.00, which was sold on the installment plan, the students paying 10 cents per week for thirty weeks. The revenue received

<sup>1</sup> J.C. Hogan, "An Activity Ticket Plan That Works," The Journal of the National Education Association, 30:59, February, 1941.



was spent on school activities and the students liked the plan because it resulted in better attendance at school activities. They also appreciated the fact that the new system meant a better extra curricular program and better school morale.

The legal status of school fees has received some consideration, and in some instances it has attracted the attention of the general public. The following paragraph is from one of the research bulletins of the American Council on Education:

Boards of Education are frequently permitted to charge pupils fees for certain purposes. The purpose for which a fee may be legally charged varies from state to state. In many states the courts have decided that certain types of laboratory, library, and similar fees are illegal; on the contrary the courts of other states have decided that fees for those same purposes are legal. In general it may be said that the tendency in elementary and secondary schools has been away from the charging of pupil fees for certain purposes.<sup>1</sup>

In California, the legal status of school fees has been passed upon by the Attorney General, who has rendered an opinion holding most types of school fees illegal in that state. The opinion which was given early in 1940 is summarized in the news columns of the School Review for June, 1940. It holds the following list of fees illegal:

- Registration Fee
- Catalogue or Course Fee
- Fee for Photograph for Guidance Program
- Fee to Evaluate Credentials from another Institution
- Fee for Examination in any Subject
- Fee for Late Registration or Change of Program
- Fee for Towels (if necessary to follow any required course taken in physical education)
- Fee for Laboratory Materials or Supplies (if part of any course taken)

<sup>1</sup> Research Problems in School Finance (Washington, D.C., The American Council on Education) pp. 62-3

Fee for Diploma or Certificate  
 Fee for Insignia (if required in any compulsory R.O.T.C.  
 Training)<sup>1</sup>

The opinion also held that deposits for locks or lockers and deposits for books, apparatus, musical instruments, uniforms, or other equipment cannot be required, if the use of the equipment or facilities is necessary to pursue any required course for which scholastic credits are given. It was held further that school authorities have no right to require a student to join or pay membership dues to any student organization as a condition of enrollment or participation in school activities.

The opinion held that certain fees and deposits were permissible. A fee for towels was legal if the towels were used for purely recreational or extra curricular activities. The deposits mentioned in the preceding paragraph were legal only if they were made for equipment to be used in purely recreational or extra curricular activities.

The basis of the opinion was an article in the California Constitution which provided for the establishment and financing of a free public school system; a decision of the State Supreme Court that the youth of the state were entitled under the constitution to be educated at public expense; and sections of the code providing for compulsory elementary and secondary school attendance.

It is interesting to study the point of view of the Attorney General in passing upon the validity of school fees for a distinction was drawn between the regular school work and the extra curricular activities. A

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<sup>1</sup> "Concerning Fees in California Schools", The School Review, 48: 409-10, June, 1940



fee charged in connection with any class or other activity of the regular program was apparently illegal, while a fee charged in order to promote an extra curricular activity was legal. There can be no compulsion about who pays the fee for an extra curricular activity. It was to be paid voluntarily in order to be permitted to participate in something extra, something outside or beyond the free public school program. This view of extra curricular activities is hardly shared by the average schoolman, but it is easily understood when one begins with the basis in the constitution and takes an over-all view of the public school system.

The editor of the Nations Schools expressed hearty approval of the California opinion on school fees. In an editorial in July, 1940, he condemned the charging of fees for athletics, dramatics, musical activities, school publications, class dues, and social events as a dubious practice, which was a menace to the concept of equality so fundamental to the successful operation of our public schools. He believed that charging fees resulted in a social discrimination because of the inability of the economically less favored pupils to pay fees. The editorial contended further that this condition was a major cause for pupils dropping out of school; and it concluded with the warning that school authorities should do something to solve the entire problem before parents sought redress in the courts.<sup>1</sup>

There are schoolmen, however, who defend the practice of charging

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<sup>1</sup> "Illegal Fees", Editorial in The Nations Schools, 26; 16-17, July, 1940

fees for certain activities. Kenneth E. Smith,<sup>1</sup> Superintendent of Schools in Walden, New York, contends that schools approach nearer a life situation when everything is not free. He defends the charging of fees for such activities as the school paper, athletics, dramatics, musical exercises, and class activities, on the ground that there is no such thing as a free school, since somebody must pay for it. He believes that it is wrong to teach that everything should be free, and he points out the fact that pupils take better care of equipment and facilities that they have provided for their schools than they do of equipment and facilities which are provided free. He believes that character training may be taught better where pupils pay for some things; however, he agrees that there should be no fees charged for such essentials as instructional materials, laboratory supplies, or equipment necessary to the regular program of instruction.

Those who have written about school fees seem to agree that there should be no fees for essential supplies and equipment for the regular school program. If no fees are charged for essentials, then it seems quite possible to bring all other fees within the law, since the opinion referred to in this chapter admits legality of fees charged for purely extra curricular activities, provided they are voluntary. The problem is to determine what is regular and what is extra in the school program; or what is a curricular activity and what is an extra curricular activity. It is difficult for either schoolmen or laymen to make this distinction.

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<sup>1</sup> Kenneth E. Smith, "Something for Nothing", The Nations Schools, 26: 50, September, 1940

## CHAPTER II

### The Different Kinds of Fees

#### Grade Textbook Rental

Included in this study was the grade textbook situation in our North Dakota schools because there are many schools that do not furnish free textbooks in the grades. Of the 276 schools reporting on this topic, 199 (or 72 per cent of the schools) furnished free textbooks to grade children. Most schools furnishing free textbooks in the grades also included free workbooks which are used mostly in the lower three grades. Some schools that furnished free textbooks for the grades charged for workbooks which are sold to pupils at cost. Other schools, according to the returns received, charged the pupils above the second grade for the workbooks, while all workbooks in the first and second grades were furnished free. This policy is followed by most schools furnishing free textbooks for grade pupils because the books in the first two grades, except readers, are mostly of the workbook type.

Seventy-seven (or 27 per cent of the schools) do not furnish free textbooks to grade pupils. Thirty-seven of these schools charge the pupils a rental fee for grade books, while forty schools sell the books to pupils. Several superintendents were of the opinion that the schools should furnish free textbooks to grade pupils.



Table 1  
Grade Textbook Rental Fee

Amount of Annual Fee	Number of Schools Charging
\$5.00	1
3.00	1
2.75	1
2.25	1
2.20	1
2.00	6
1.75	2
1.60	1
1.50	2
1.35	1
1.25	1
1.10	1
1.00	11
.80	1
Total	31
Average	\$1.46

Table 1 shows that thirty-one schools charge a book rental ranging from 80 cents to five dollars. The average rental fee was \$1.46. In addition there are two schools that annually charge one-third of the cost of the books, and four schools that charge one-fourth of the cost of books. This gives a total of thirty-seven schools charging the pupils rental for books. Of the seventy-seven schools that do not furnish free textbooks, forty schools sell the books to the pupils. The schools that charge fees of \$5.00, \$3.00, and \$2.75, also include the workbooks used for the grades. The fact that 199 schools of the 276 reporting furnish free textbooks to grade pupils is encouraging.

All schools should furnish free textbooks for the first eight grades. The school laws of North Dakota require pupils to finish the eighth grade,

unless they first reach the age of seventeen. The law also provides for free schooling through the eighth grade. Textbooks and other teaching materials are as essential as school buildings and teachers, and therefore should be free to the pupils. It was rather surprising to learn that several of the larger schools do not furnish free textbooks to the grade pupils.

#### High School Textbook Rental

There is a wide variation in practice with reference to high school textbooks in North Dakota. Of the 276 schools returning questionnaires, 151 sold all high school books to pupils, 87 schools (or 31 per cent) owned the books and rented them to the pupils. Thirty-eight schools (or 14 per cent) furnished books free to high school pupils. Some of these schools are: Fullerton, Nekoma, Antler, Sutton, Perth, Jud, Glenfield, Manvel, Streeter, Kulm, Grace City, Nortonville, Munich, Sarles, Gardner, Oberon, Mapleton, Havana, White Earth, and Stanley. The study indicates that the smaller schools are more apt to furnish free high school textbooks than the larger schools.



Table 2

## High School Textbook Rental Fee

<u>Amount of Annual Fee</u>	<u>Number of Schools Charging</u>
\$8.00	1
5.00	2
4.50	2
4.00	2
3.50	4
3.00	12
2.50	11
2.40	2
2.00	26
1.80	1
1.75	2
1.60	2
1.50	3
1.40	1
1.25	1
1.00	5
<u>Total</u>	<u>77</u>
Average Fee	\$2.46

Table 2 shows that the annual average rental fee charged by the 77 schools is \$2.46. In addition, eight schools charge a rental which amounts to one-third of the cost of the books, while two schools charge a rental fee of one-fourth of the cost of the books. The school charging the eight dollar fee includes in the fee all activity fees and even the cost of the workbooks used in the various classes. The two schools charging \$5.00 fees, the two charging \$4.50 fees, and the two schools charging \$4.00 fees include workbooks.

Of the 151 schools requiring pupils to purchase their own books 140 schools sell the books to the pupils. It is assumed that all books sold under this system are sold at cost. Eleven schools reported that a local

agency sold the books to the pupils. This means a higher cost of books, as the local agency must have a profit in selling books while the school can sell them at cost. Of the 140 schools selling books to pupils, 88 handle the second-hand books for the pupils, while 42 schools do not handle second-hand books but sell new books only to the pupils. This means that the pupils will have to find their own purchasers, and find second-hand books for themselves. This is a very cumbersome system.

Schools can well afford to furnish high school books to their students as the cost to the school districts will not be great. It was found in the Milnor school that by raising the mill levy one-third of a mill all cost of high school books would be covered. This is also true in the Wyndmere school district. Several schools, including Cavalier and Milnor, will start the book rental system next school term.

#### Typing Fee

There is also a wide variation in practice with reference to the typing fee. The range in amounts charged is from \$1.00 to \$14.00 per year. Some schools charge for nothing more than ribbon cost, while others charge an amount sufficient to maintain, repair and replace typewriters. There are, however, a few schools that charge a general activity fee which includes cost of typing.

Table 3  
Typing Fee

<u>Fee per Year</u>	<u>Number Schools Charging</u>
\$14.00	1
13.50	2
10.00	6
9.00	16
8.00	1
7.50	1
7.00	7
6.75	8
6.00	23
5.00	40
4.50	26
4.00	12
3.50	4
3.00	11
2.50	11
2.00	10
1.50	1
<u>1.00</u>	<u>5</u>
Total	185
Average Fee	\$5.23

Of the 276 schools reporting on this question, 204 charge a typing fee, thirteen schools do not teach typing, fifty-four schools furnish typewriters free to the pupils, and in five schools pupils own the typewriters. Of the 204 schools charging a fee 19 schools did not give the amount. Table 3 shows that the average fee charged is \$5.23, and the median fee is \$5.00. It was found that the larger schools charge the larger fee while the small schools charge a smaller fee. Of the 54 schools that do not charge a typing fee, about half are schools with enrollments of less than twenty pupils.

### Home Economics Fee

The home economics fee is probably the oldest fee charged by the high schools. It originated about thirty years ago when home economics departments were established in a few high schools with the aid of federal funds. It was undoubtedly the leading fee in high schools until many of our school home economics departments came under the George Deen Act. The State Supervisor of the Department of Home Economics Education discourages the charging of fees for home economics. The aid received from the state and federal governments is supposed to take care of any fee that might be charged the pupil for food and other things used in the departments.

The amount of federal aid received by the Milnor High School for the school year 1946-47 was \$572.00. This was based on the program giving 5/6 time to home economics, which includes two classes of one hour periods per day, one hour conference period per day, and two hours of related subjects per day. Other schools receive money in proportion to time given to this program.

Only 109 schools of the 276 have a home economics department. Of the 109 schools teaching home economics twenty-nine (or 17 per cent) charge a fee. The schools charging a home economics fee, however, are not George-Deen Vocational Schools.



Table 4

## Home Economics Fee

<u>Amount of Annual Fee</u>	<u>Number of Schools Charging</u>
\$4.50	1
3.00	1
2.00	4
1.50	3
1.00	15
<u>.50</u>	<u>5</u>
Total	29
Average Fee	\$1.29

Table 4 shows that twenty-nine schools not under the George-Deen Act charge a home economics fee ranging from 50 cents to \$4.50. The average fee is \$1.29. It is very evident that charging a fee for home economics in the North Dakota schools is declining. This represents progress, since the schools evidently have found some way to support their home economics departments without extra cost to the pupil. Federal grants of Smith-Hughes and George-Deen funds matched by state and local funds help this situation.

## Science Fee

The science fee, like the home economics fee, is a very old type of fee charged in North Dakota schools. However, this fee seems to be on a decline as less than 25 per cent of the schools collect such a fee. Only 58 schools (or 21 per cent) charge a science fee. In Table 5 it will be observed that the range of these fees is from 50 cents to \$5.00. The school charging \$5.00 also included book fee for all courses taken.



Table 5  
Science Fee

<u>Amount of Annual Fee</u>	<u>Number of Schools Charging</u>
\$5.00	1
2.50	1
2.00	4
1.50	3
1.00	22
.75	7
<u>.50</u>	<u>11</u>
Total	49
Average Fee	\$1.09

The schools included in Table 5 charge this fee for all sciences. Fees over \$1.00 are usually for chemistry and physics. A number of schools charge fees only for chemistry and physics, and make no charge for general science or biology. The table shows that the average fee is \$1.09. Nine schools not included in this table charged separate fees for all sciences. The average fees charged by these nine schools were as follows: general science, 53 cents; biology, \$1.21; chemistry, \$1.78; physics, \$1.46. One school had a registration fee which included fees for all sciences including home economics. This also included book rental and fees for all school activities. Laboratory manuals were not included in the fees charged by the schools. They are purchased as books and are not included as science fees. Some superintendents stated that the fees charged for science courses were used for the purchase of supplies and equipment. Some fees were used as a breakage fee to cover cost of materials broken by the pupil while taking the course. Some schools make a refund to the pupil at the

end of the school term which is about one half of the fee charged. It is evident that the greater number of high schools of North Dakota operate the science departments without charging a fee.

### Projection Machine

Many schools of North Dakota have in the past few years purchased projection machines for use in the class room for instructional purposes. This machine is also used for entertainment of the pupils. The purpose of this study was to find out how many schools had projection machines, and if used for instructional purposes how many of the schools charged a fee.

It was found that most of the small schools use the projection machine for entertainment of the pupils. This was true in towns where they have no regular moving picture theater. An entertainment fee is charged to cover the cost of the film. Of the 276 schools reporting, 155 (or 56 per cent) have projection machines. Several superintendents stated they had ordered machines but as yet had not received them. Others reported they were raising funds to purchase machines.

Only nineteen schools charge a fee for instructional purposes. Ten schools charge for each lesson. This per lesson charge is five cents in four schools, and ten cents in six schools.

Table 6

## Projection Machine Fee

<u>Amount of Annual Fee</u>	<u>Number of Schools Charging</u>
\$2.25	3
1.80	3
.50	3
<u>Total</u>	<u>9</u>
Average Fee	\$1.52

Table six shows that the average fee charged by nine schools is \$1.52, while the other ten schools charge per lesson. It was not expected to find as many schools having projection machines. This is a step in the right direction, as visual education can be of great help to the pupil and is being used more and more in the schools.

## Band Fee

It is difficult to determine what constitutes a band fee. Gradually demands are made upon the school board to appropriate public funds for support of the band. The band solicits the support of people who will donate liberally to purchase instruments, music and uniforms. Public funds are then increased according to public demand and according to available revenue. Sometimes the public votes a special levy to support the band, and the band director receives part of his salary from this source. After years of successful growth, the band is regarded as an integral part of the school program, and is supported entirely by public funds.



The bands of Milnor, Forman, Wyndmere and Lisbon are at present supported entirely by public funds. The superintendent of Forman stated that for the school year 1947-48 a fee would be charged the band pupils to help pay the instructor's salary.

Of the 267 schools reporting on this question, 136 (or 47 percent) have a band or offer band instruction. Only twenty-four schools charge a fee for the purchase of band music. No amounts were given by these schools, as each school charged the pupil the actual cost of the music.

#### Music Fee

The schools were asked whether they charged a fee for both large and small music groups. It was found that only five schools of the two hundred seventy-six charge a music fee. The fee is the actual cost of music. Two schools indicated that they charge the pupil for music in all solo work. It was expected that a large number of schools would charge the pupil for music used. Many of the schools that charge the pupils for textbooks do not charge for music. However, a large percentage of the schools pay for the music used by the glee clubs and small groups by charging admission to school entertainments.

#### Locker Fee

#### Hall Lockers

Of the 276 schools reporting, one hundred twenty-three (or 44 per cent)



have hall lockers. Of this number, only seventeen schools charge a locker fee.

Table 7  
Hall Locker Fee

<u>Amount of Annual Fee</u>	<u>Number of Schools Charging</u>
\$1.50	1
1.00	1
.50	3
.35	2
.25	9
.10	1
<u>Total</u>	<u>17</u>
Average Fee	\$ .41

In Table 7 it will be observed that the range of these fees is from 10 cents to \$1.50. The average fee is 41 cents.

Thirty-one schools failed to answer this question, while one hundred and twenty-two schools reported not having hall lockers.

#### Gym Lockers

Locker fees for physical education is another old fee charged by schools. Of the two hundred seventy-six schools, forty-seven did not answer this question. Twenty-three schools do not have gym lockers. Of the two hundred six schools having lockers for physical education use, thirty-two (or 16 per cent) charge a locker fee. Since physical education is a part of the high school curriculum it is doubtful if pupils should be charged a fee for the use of the school lockers.

Table 8

## Gym Lockers

Amount of Annual Fee	Number of Schools Charging
\$ .50	10
.35	3
.25	19
Total	32
Average Fee	34¢

Table 8 shows that the range of these fees is from 25¢ to 50¢. The average is 34¢. It was found that the large schools charge this gym locker fee. Four schools also charged a laundry fee. The largest fee charged for laundry was \$2.50, which included the fee for a locker. This charge was for laundry used in physical education classes and by athletic teams. One school of the four charging laundry fees charged \$1.50 per year, which included the locker fee. Two schools made an annual charge of 25¢ for laundry for physical education in addition to the locker fee.

## Commencement Fee

There are no schools charging a so-called commencement fee. Most graduation expenses are paid for by appropriations from public funds. There are, however, several graduation expenses that supplement the public appropriations. The schools paid for the diplomas given to students upon graduation. In most schools, caps and gowns used by the graduates were paid for by the pupils. Of the two hundred seventy-six schools, one hundred thirty-nine (or 50 per cent) use caps and gowns for graduation. This is a larger

number than was anticipated. Of the one hundred thirty-nine schools using caps and gowns, fourteen (or less than 10 per cent of the schools) furnished them free to the pupils.

Table 9

## Cap and Gown Fee

<u>Amount of Fee</u>	<u>Number of Schools Charging</u>
Free	14
\$3.50	1
3.00	3
2.75	1
2.50	6
2.25	1
2.00	16
1.95	1
1.90	1
1.85	3
1.80	2
1.75	10
1.65	37
1.60	4
1.50	32
1.35	4
1.25	2
.50	1
<u>Total</u>	<u>139</u>
Average Fee	\$1.75

Table 9 shows that the range of these fees is from 50¢ to \$3.50, while the average fee is \$1.75.

The schools were asked to list other graduation expenses paid for by pupils. Most of these expenses were announcements, flowers, and printing of programs. In most of the schools the speaker was paid for from public funds.

### Awards

Schools have for many years given awards to pupils for such activities as athletics, glee club, band, and others. There was no particular interest in the kind of awards given by the various schools, but it was hoped to find out whether the school paid for these awards or if they were paid for by the pupils.

Of the two hundred and seventy-six schools reporting, ten did not answer this question. Two schools do not give awards of any kind. Of the two hundred sixty-four remaining schools, thirty-five (or 13 per cent) charged the pupils the actual cost of awards given. Two hundred twenty-nine schools (or 87 per cent) issued the awards with no cost to the pupils. It was found that most of the schools charging for the awards were schools having a small enrollment.

### School Annuals

Of the two hundred seventy-six schools answering the questionnaire, seventy-two schools published annuals. All schools publishing annuals charge the pupils for the annual. The range of this cost is from 50¢ to \$3.25 depending on the type of annual published and the amount of money collected for the annual outside of the schools and from various groups within the school.

About 70 per cent of the schools collect funds from local business places for advertising in the annual. This cuts down the cost to the pupil. In a good many communities merchants protest the solicitation of advertising



for the school annual because it really is a donation. Many schools will not permit the students to solicit the merchants and professional men.

Table 10

## Fee for the School Annual

Amount of Annual Fee	Number of Schools Charging
\$3.25	1
3.00	3
2.00	9
1.75	3
1.50	20
1.35	1
1.25	12
1.00	22
.50	1
Total	72
Average Fee	\$1.26

Table 10 shows that the average annual fee was \$1.26.

## Publication Fee

The publication fee, like the band fee, is hard to identify. For instance, a school which publishes a newspaper and sells it for 5¢ a copy is not regarded as having a publication fee. On the other hand, a school which publishes a newspaper and distributes it after collecting an annual fee of 50 cents does, of course, have a publication fee. That fee is most frequently used to support a newspaper; a few schools make it include an annual also; still other schools apply part of the fee to the cost of an annual and thus reduce the price of that publication.

One hundred ninety-one (or 68 per cent of the schools) publish a school paper. Of this number, only thirty-two have a publication fee.

Table 11  
Publication Fee

<u>Amount of Annual Fee</u>	<u>Number of Schools Charging</u>
\$1.00	3
.75	8
.50	12
.35	7
.25	2
<u>No Fee</u>	<u>159</u>
Total	191
Average Fee	\$ .56

Table 11 indicates that the publication fee is not widely used. Some of the one hundred fifty-nine schools, which do not charge a fee, produce publications which are sold to the pupils or distributed on a subscription basis. A few schools, however, pay either a part or all the cost from funds collected by charging a general activity fee.

#### General Activity Fee

Eighty-two schools have a general activity fee of some kind. The activities supported by that fee, however, vary widely and are probably not the same in any two schools except the fee that covers admission to all athletic contests. Many activities were included under this fee, such as athletic games, outside entertainments, lockers, annual school paper, matinee of class plays, school plays, band, glee club, movies for entertain-

ment, softball equipment, class dues, music, P.T.A. programs, dramatics, school carnival, assembly music, and Christmas party.

Table 12

## General Activity Fee

<u>Amount of Annual Fee</u>	<u>Number of Schools Charging</u>
\$10.00	1
8.00	1
5.00	1
4.00	1
3.30	1
3.00	4
2.75	4
2.50	6
2.40	3
2.25	5
2.00	5
1.85	5
1.50	14
1.25	12
1.20	5
1.00	11
.75	1
.50	2
<u>Total</u>	<u>82</u>
Average Fee	\$1.96

Table 12 shows the wide range of these fees from 50 cents to \$10.00. The average fee is \$1.96, while the median fee is \$1.50.

The school with the \$10.00 fee included admission to all school activities, outside entertainments, book rental, locker fee, and science fees. Typing fees were charged separately. It seems that the general activity fee is growing in popularity.

### Grade Tuition

While grade tuition is not a fee collected from high school pupils, this topic was included in the study because there seemed to be no consistent policy in the amount charged grade pupils who come from outside districts.

In the past six years, many rural schools have closed because of the teacher shortage; others have closed because of the small number of pupils enrolled. These pupils have been taken to other districts for their education.

The law gives school districts power to admit pupils from other districts, and provides for the legality of collecting tuition from the districts; but it does not set a basis for the amount of tuition to be collected.

The following paragraphs are taken from the General School Laws of North Dakota Compiled Laws of 1935:

(PUPILS FROM OTHER DISTRICTS) It shall have the power to admit to the schools in the district, pupils from other districts, when it can be done without injuring or overcrowding such schools, and shall make regulations for their admission and the payment of their tuition. It shall have the power to arrange with the board of another district for sending to such district such pupils as can conveniently be taught therein, for paying their tuition, and for arranging and paying for their transportation to and from the school in such district; and when petitioned by a majority of the voters of a district it shall be the duty of the board of any district to arrange for sending to such district such pupils as can conveniently be taught therein, for paying their tuition and for arranging and paying for their transportation to and from the school in such district. It shall have the power to admit to the schools in the district, pupils residing in unorganized territory adjacent to the district, and to arrange with the parents or guardian of such pupils for paying their



tuition; but in no instance shall a board refuse privileges to or collect tuition from pupils residing in such adjacent unorganized territory, if the parents of such pupils are property holders in the district and pay taxes. It shall also have the power to make proper and needful rules for the assignment and distribution of pupils to and among the schools in the district, and their transfer from one school to another. (1179)

(NON-RESIDENT PUPILS) Such board of education shall have power to allow the children not resident in such district to attend the schools of such district under the control and care of such board, upon such terms as the board shall prescribe, fixing the tuition which shall be paid therefore. (1300)

To admit children of persons not living in such special district, and to fix and collect tuition therefore, if in its judgment the best interests of the school will permit.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> General School Laws of North Dakota Compiled Laws of 1935

Table 13

## The Amount of Grade Tuition Charged

<u>Amount Charged Per Month</u>	<u>Number of Schools Charging</u>
\$13.75	1
12.00	19
11.55	1
11.10	1
10.00	8
9.55	1
9.20	1
9.00	3
8.85	2
8.50	1
8.30	7
8.00	17
7.10	1
7.00	16
6.20	1
6.00	42
5.75	1
5.60	1
5.55	7
5.50	2
5.00	19
4.50	1
4.40	1
4.15	1
4.00	18
3.30	1
3.10	1
3.00	12
2.75	2
2.65	1
2.50	2
2.20	2
2.00	3
1.50	2
1.00	2
<u>No Charge</u>	<u>23</u>
Total	224
Average Tuition	\$6.46

Table 13 shows that the grade tuition fees range from \$1.00 per month to \$13.75 per month, while the average fee is \$6.46.

Twenty-three schools do not charge tuition for grade pupils. Most of these schools are small schools with very few grade tuition pupils. Some of these schools indicated they would charge grade tuition if the number of tuition pupils increased.

As a rule the larger fees are charged by the larger school systems, while the smaller fees are charged in schools near the median size. Some schools charge 25¢ per week for time attended.

About 25 per cent of the schools base their grade tuition on the pupil cost basis. In schools where this is done the grade tuition fee is above the median. This is the fair method of determining the tuition fee.

The tuition in most schools outside of those that determine the tuition on the pupil cost basis is decided by the school board. The boards, however, set this tuition on the basis of what they think is a fair charge.

Indications are that in the future there will be more and more grade pupils attending school outside of their own districts. This condition may eventually force the State Legislature to establish a tuition fee. In the event that this is done, the law should allow schools with high pupil cost to charge more tuition than schools with a lower pupil cost.

### CHAPTER III

#### Conclusion

It was found that some fees such as high school textbook rental, typing dues, science laboratory fees, gym locker fees, cap and gown fees, and fees for general activities are increasing in the high schools of North Dakota.

Rent charged for grade textbooks seem to be decreasing as more schools now furnish free textbooks to the pupils in the first eight grades. Other fees, such as home economics fees and fees for music groups are decreasing.

Several superintendents stated opposition to school fees, but also contended that they could not run the schools without money from some source.

Many years ago the public schools were called free schools. At the present time there is much talk of democracy in the public schools, but as long as pupils are charged to attend them, they are neither democratic nor free. If fees are abolished, it will be necessary to find ways and means of getting revenue with which to replace the funds now derived from fees. Certainly, no school administrator will recommend that the schools operate without the money which is now collected in fees. To do so would be to recommend curtailment and reduction of the efficiency of the schools. The logical source from which to get this money is from local taxation. In certain schools it was found that by raising the tax mill levy one third of a mill, enough money would be raised to take care of all fees charged. This was true in both the Milnor and Wyndmere schools.

This does not include fees for purely entertainment and admissions to



school functions. Such fees and admissions should be paid by the pupils as they are on a voluntary basis.

In dealing with the problem of fees, school authorities should consider the legal status. This is not the same in all states; however, the literature on this subject justifies the statement that fees for such essentials as laboratory supplies and home economics are probably illegal; that locker fees or typing fees have no legal support and that fees charged pupils for pursuing any regular course are without legal basis.

It has never been determined in North Dakota whether the charging of a textbook fee is illegal. The law does make provisions whereby a school board may furnish free textbooks. The law reads as follows:

When the school district board or board of education deems it advisable, said board may provide for the free use of textbooks by the pupils of their school or schools. All books purchased by school boards, as herein provided, shall be held as the property of the district and loaned to pupils of the district while pursuing a course of study therein, free of charge; but the board shall hold such pupils responsible for any damage to, or loss of, or failure to return such books at the time and to the person that may be designated by the board of such district.<sup>1</sup>

On the other hand, certain fees are probably legal. In California the Attorney General apparently ruled that fees for extra curricular activities were legal, provided they were paid voluntarily and were not compulsory. This opinion is based upon the premise that an extra curricular activity is something extra for which the pupil may be required to pay if

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<sup>1</sup> Compiled School Laws of North Dakota, 1935, Section 576

he receives some extra benefit from it.<sup>1</sup>

Two hundred seventy-six (or 84 per cent) of the principals and superintendents replied to the questionnaire mailed out for this study. The results show that two hundred and twenty-one have some kind of fee. There are nineteen different fees charged by the two hundred seventy-six schools.

Fees such as typing fee, home economics fee, book rental, science fees and others are used to supplement local taxes for the maintenance of the school. But other fees are collected to pay the cost of extra curricular activities.

In California the problem of school fees was presented to the Attorney General, who rendered an opinion holding illegal any school fees charged for materials, supplies, or equipment necessary to pursue any course for which scholastic credit is given. The opinion also held that the fees charged for essential school activities are illegal. However, the opinion apparently held fees for extra curricular activities legal if such activities were engaged in voluntarily by the pupils. The opinion was based on an article of the Constitution of California which provides for the establishment and financing of a free public system, and on a decision of the Supreme Court that the youth of the state are entitled under the constitution to be educated at public expense.

The Constitution of North Dakota provides for the public schools

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<sup>1</sup> "Concerning Fees in California", The School Review, June, 1940

as follows:

The Legislative assembly shall make provisions for the establishment and maintenance of a system of public schools which shall be open to all children of the state of North Dakota and free from sectarian control.<sup>1</sup>

The Legislative Assembly has provided for a free educational system.

It is, therefore, recommended that schools abandon any fee charged for home economics, commercial courses, science, textbooks, physical education, and other essentials of the regular school program, except that a charge may be made for the actual supplies used personally, such as cloth, typing paper and towels.

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<sup>1</sup> Constitution of North Dakota, Article VIII



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## APPENDIX A

## The Enrollment of the Participating Schools

## Fully Accredited Schools

<u>Name and Location of Each School</u>	<u>Enrollment</u>
1. Alamo	42
2. Aneta	52
3. Ashley	143
4. Beach	108
5. Belcourt	66
6. Belfield	115
7. Berthold	67
8. Beulah	88
9. Bisbee	58
10. Bismarck	778
11. Bottineau	175
12. Bowbells	79
13. Bowdon	48
14. Bowman	144
15. Buffalo	53
16. Buxton	51
17. Cando	130
18. Carrington	203
19. Casselton	146
20. Cavalier	180
21. Cogswell	60
22. Columbus	79
23. Cooperstown	128
24. Crosby	151
25. Devils Lake	348
26. Dickinson	394
27. Donnybrook	42
28. Drake	84
29. Drayton	65
30. Dunseith	85
31. Edgeley	114
32. Edmore	72
33. Egeland	27
34. Elbowoods	62
35. Elgin	109
36. Ellendale	153
37. Enderlin	159

<u>Name and Location of Each School</u>	<u>Enrollment</u>
38. Fairmount	99
39. Fargo	1331
40. Fessenden	120
41. Fingal	45
42. Finley	81
43. Flasher	55
44. Forman	83
45. Fort Totten	26
46. Fort Yates	66
47. Gackle	75
48. Garrison	149
49. Glenburn	44
50. Glen Ullin	126
51. Goodrich	58
52. Grafton	257
53. Grand Forks	941
54. Granville	74
55. Grenora	81
56. Hankinson	110
57. Hannaford	45
58. Harvey	196
59. Hatton	136
60. Havana	47
61. Hazelton	67
62. Hazen	104
63. Hebron	165
64. Hettinger	180
65. Hillsboro	134
66. Hoople	60
67. Hope	49
68. Hunter	68
69. Jamestown	589
70. Kenmare	155
71. Kensal	43
72. Killdeer	97
73. Kindred	90
74. Kulm	113
75. Lakota	90
76. Lamoure	117
77. Langdon	168
78. Larimore	136
79. Leeds	114
80. Lidgerwood	140
81. Linton	163
82. Lisbon	220



<u>Name and Location of Each School</u>	<u>Enrollment</u>
83. Litchville	81
84. McClusky	118
85. Maddock	36
86. Makoti	42
87. Mandan	440
88. Marmarth	40
89. Mayville	167
90. Medina	68
91. Michigan	74
92. Milnor	104
93. Milton	55
94. Minnewaukan	54
95. Minot	835
96. Minto	70
97. Mohall	80
98. Mott	140
99. Napoleon	146
100. New England	101
101. New Leipzig	82
102. New Rockford	161
103. New Salem	160
104. Noonan	57
105. Northwood	107
106. Oakes	213
107. Osnabrock	46
108. Page	53
109. Pembina	81
110. Plaza	52
111. Portland	70
112. Powers Lake	71
113. Ray	85
114. Regent	38
115. Reynolds	44
116. Rolette	104
117. Rolla	106
118. Rugby	243
119. St. John	49
120. St. Thomas	69
121. Sanish	58
122. Sentinel Butte	36
123. Sharon	55
124. Sherwood	55
125. Sheyenne	66
126. Stanley	131
127. Starkweather	62
128. Strasburg	104



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<u>Name and Location of Each School</u>	<u>Enrollment</u>
129. Streeter	62
130. Taylor	50
131. Tioga	55
132. Tower City	36
133. Towner	82
134. Turtle Lake	87
135. Underwood	72
136. Valley City	291
137. Velva	140
138. Wahpeton	341
139. Walhalla	110
140. Walsh County Ag., Park River	238
141. Washburn	89
142. Watford City	140
143. West Fargo	87
144. Westhope	64
145. Wildrose	38
146. Williston	447
147. Willow City	38
148. Wilton	148
149. Wishek	127
150. Wyndmere	94

#### Minor Accredited Schools

<u>Name and Location of Each School</u>	<u>Enrollment</u>
1. Alexander	36
2. Ambrose	22
3. Bathgate	31
4. Calvin	29
5. Clifford	31
6. Courtenay	31
7. Dawson	28
8. Dazey	36
9. Des Lacs	31
10. Dodge	35
11. Douglas	37
12. Dunn Center	40
13. Edinburg	51
14. Flaxton	41
15. Forest River	18
16. Fullerton	32

<u>Name and Location of Mech School</u>	<u>Enrollment</u>
17. Gardner	27
18. Grandin	27
19. Hamilton	36
20. Hampden	27
21. Hannah	42
22. Kloten	22
23. Lansford	31
24. Lignite	33
25. Mapleton	30
26. Maxbass	43
27. Monango	36
28. Munich	33
29. Nekoma	30
30. Niagara	26
31. Nome	37
32. Oberon	25
33. Palermo	26
34. Pekin	34
35. Pettibone	34
36. Portal	39
37. Reeder	41
38. Robinson	40
39. Rock Lake	30
40. Sanborn	40
41. Sarles	25
42. Scranton	42
43. Souris	42
44. Surrey	34
45. Sutton	29
46. Sykeston	32
47. Tappen	34
48. Thompson	35
49. Tolley	45
50. Tolna	35
51. Tuttle	51
52. Upham	33
53. Walcott	22
54. Webster	28
55. White Earth	25
56. Wimbledon	34
57. Wing	33
58. Wolford	30
59. Zap	40

## Graded and Consolidated Schools

<u>Name and Location of Each School</u>	<u>Enrollment</u>
1. Abercrombie	38
2. Adams	41
3. Almont	43
4. Amenia	26
5. Antler	30
6. Ayr	21
7. Balta	32
8. Binford	28
9. Bohnsack, Hillsboro	9
10. Bowesmont	19
11. Bocket	43
12. Buchanan	21
13. Butte	31
14. Cathay	26
15. Center	37
16. Chaffee	36
17. Coleharbor	20
18. Colfax	25
19. Clyde	14
20. Coteau	28
21. Deering	15
22. Dickey	28
23. Doyon	19
24. Driscoll	48
25. Elliott	19
26. Emerado	22
27. Erie	29
28. Fairdale	36
29. Forbes	37
30. Fordville	30
31. Fort Ransom	36
32. Gardena	27
33. Geneseo	16
34. Glenfield	25
35. Golden Valley	50
36. Grace City	10
37. Guelph	24
38. Hardsfield	32
39. Inkster	40
40. Jud	40
41. Karlsruhe	57
42. Kathryn	23
43. Kramer	40
44. Lefor	35
45. Manvel	27
46. Martin	31



<u>Name and Location of Each School</u>	<u>Enrollment</u>
47. Mountain	29
48. Nortonville	24
49. Omemee	26
50. Overly	23
51. Perth	13
52. Pisek	17
53. Regan	24
54. Ross	14
55. Rutland	24
56. Russell	10
57. Sawyer	39
58. Selfridge	38
59. South Heart	23
60. Stanton	24
61. Stirum	16
62. Trenton	9
63. Wales	26
64. Werner	13
65. Wheatland	33
66. Wheelock	18
67. Woodworth	18



## APPENDIX B

Dear Superintendent:

I would appreciate obtaining the following information from your school. Use the back of this questionnaire for any additional comments you wish to make. A summary of the results will be mailed to you if you so desire.

Very truly yours,  
Lester Tollefson  
Supt. Milnor, North Dakota

I. Fees: Does your school charge for:

1. Science laboratory? Yes\_\_\_ No\_\_\_ Amount\_\_\_\_\_  
a. Check sciences included: Gen. Science\_\_\_ Biology\_\_\_ Chemistry\_\_\_  
Physics\_\_\_ Others\_\_\_\_\_
2. Home Economics? Yes\_\_\_ No\_\_\_ Amount\_\_\_\_\_  
Comments:
3. Activities? Yes\_\_\_ No\_\_\_ Amount\_\_\_\_\_  
a. Check activities included: Football\_\_\_ Basketball\_\_\_ Track\_\_\_  
School Parties\_\_\_ School Programs\_\_\_ Outside Entertainments\_\_\_  
List others\_\_\_\_\_
4. Gym Lockers? Yes\_\_\_ No\_\_\_ Amount\_\_\_\_\_. Hall Lockers? Yes\_\_\_  
No\_\_\_ Amount\_\_\_\_\_. Laundry? Yes\_\_\_ No\_\_\_ Amount\_\_\_\_\_  
Comments:

II. Rentals:

1. Do you furnish free textbooks in grades? Yes\_\_\_ No\_\_\_ Annual Rent\_\_\_\_\_
2. Do you furnish free textbooks in high school? Yes\_\_\_ No\_\_\_  
Annual rent\_\_\_\_\_
3. Does school sell books? Yes\_\_\_ No\_\_\_ Sell second-hand books? Yes\_\_\_  
No\_\_\_
4. Does local agency sell books? Yes\_\_\_ No\_\_\_ Sell second-hand  
books? Yes\_\_\_ No\_\_\_  
Comments:
5. Are typewriters furnished free? Yes\_\_\_ No\_\_\_ Rent per year\_\_\_\_\_  
Comments:

III. Does your school furnish free music for the following:

1. Glee Club? Yes\_\_\_ No\_\_\_ Band? Yes\_\_\_ No\_\_\_ Small Groups? Yes\_\_\_  
No\_\_\_  
Comments:

IV. Does your school publish the following:

1. High School Annual? Yes\_\_\_ No\_\_\_ Cost to pupil\_\_\_\_\_ Published  
Annually? Yes\_\_\_ No\_\_\_

2. School Paper? Yes\_\_\_ No\_\_\_ Cost to pupil\_\_\_\_\_

Comments:

V. Does your school have a projection machine? Yes\_\_\_ No\_\_\_

1. When used for classroom instruction is there a cost to pupil?

Yes\_\_\_ No\_\_\_ Amount\_\_\_\_\_

Comments:

VI. Does your school furnish free the following:

1. Caps and gowns? Yes\_\_\_ No\_\_\_ If rented give amount\_\_\_\_\_

2. Diplomas? Yes\_\_\_ No\_\_\_

3. List other graduation expenses paid by pupils\_\_\_\_\_

4. All awards? Yes\_\_\_ No\_\_\_

Comments:

VII. Grade tuition charged per year for outside pupils\_\_\_\_\_

Comments:

Reported by\_\_\_\_\_ City\_\_\_\_\_

I want a summary of the results: Yes\_\_\_ No\_\_\_