

Background on Proposed School Consolidation Given by Officials of Districts

April 9 Set for Vote on Merger of Medford, West Side, Oak Grove

Residents of the Medford, Oak Grove and West Side school districts will go to the polls Monday, April 9, to determine whether the three districts will consolidate.

Polls will be open from 2 to 8 p.m. Medford residents will vote in the girls gymnasium on the south side of the Medford High school; the Oak Grove poll will be at the Oak Grove school; and West Side at the West Side school.

Voters must be registered in the precinct where they reside at the time of the election, be registered for at least 30 days prior to April 9, and must have resided in the school district at least six months immediately prior to the election.

Absentee ballots may not be used at a school election.

By Boundary Board

The Jackson County Boundary Board, composed of the county court and the county school superintendent, is responsible for the election.

Information pertaining to the consolidation of the districts has been prepared by school officials and is being distributed throughout the districts.

Here are facts concerning the proposal as set forth by the school districts:

1. What has brought about the consideration for consolidating the three school districts?

The educational and financial problems relating to operating standard schools as required by the State of Oregon are becoming more complex and difficult for all districts, especially small residential type districts. Many authorities believe that the best solution to the problem is for these districts with mutual economic and educational interest to consolidate. According to the records, Medford and adjoining districts comprise the only large area in the state which has not consolidated.

2. How may school districts join for educational purposes?

There are three ways in which school districts may join according to state law. The status of the district determines the method.

a. Suspended districts. This re-

fers to a school district which does not operate any type of school. Such districts normally contract with nearby schools to take their students on a tuition basis. Dewey and Kenwood are local examples of this type of district. Existing laws make it mandatory for suspended districts to begin operating an elementary school and/or high school, or join a district that does. All of Dewey district will be placed in Medford District 49, and about 80 per cent of Kenwood will be placed with District 49 on July 1, 1958. A small section of Kenwood will go to Central Point and another section has already been placed in the Lone Pine district.

b. Consolidation. School law permits two or more operating districts to join for the purpose of forming one district. This can only be done when the majority of voters of each district approves.

c. Annexation. School law permits one district to annex or be annexed by another district under certain conditions. There appear to be a number of restrictions relating to annexation that do not apply under the consolidation method.

3. Why was consolidation selected as the method for joining Oak Grove, West Side, and Medford School Districts?

After careful study by members of all three school boards, consolidation was selected as the better method because: (1) it was approved by the State Department of Education, (2) it has been successfully used by many other school districts about the state and in Jackson county, (3) it was approved by the legal authorities on school bonds and indebtedness, and (4) assurance was given through letter from the State Retirement Board that employee benefits would not be jeopardized.

4. Does consolidation mean that the new district will have to add an extensive pupil transportation program?

In all probability pupil transportation through either district-owned school buses or by contract with private operators will be added as a new service. None of the three districts at present provide transportation services for their pupils. High school students from Oak Grove and West Side receive a small allotment to assist them in paying for transportation to and from high school. Dewey and Kenwood, the two districts contracting the education of their students, do provide transportation. Medford does not provide transportation except for handicapped and crippled children.

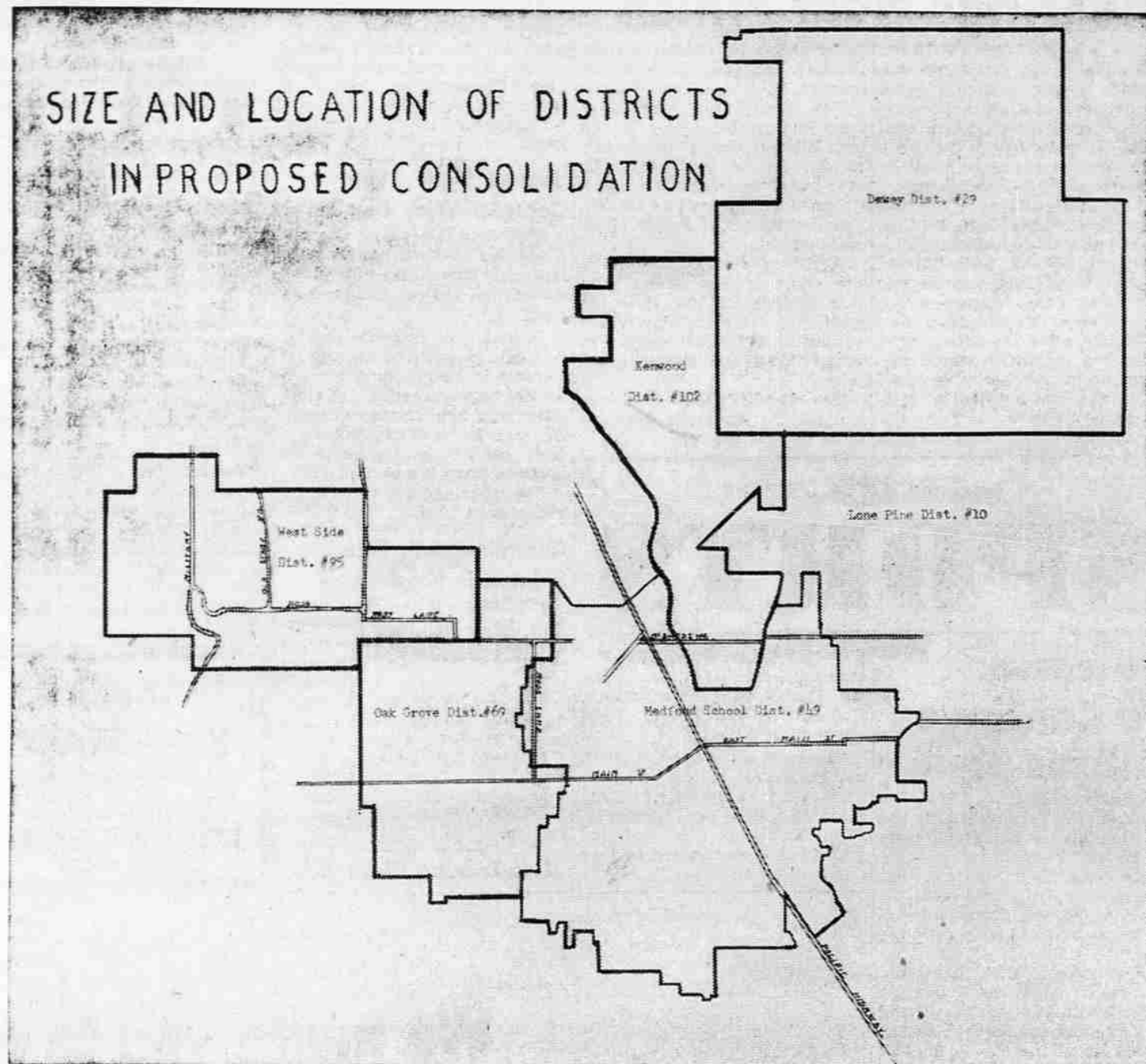
5. How are school board members elected in a consolidated district?

Board members are elected at large from any area in the new district just as they are in any first class district. There would be a five member board. The law provides that board members of the larger district shall continue to serve until their regular term expires.

6. Why the urgency of this election?

It is essential that school boards of Oak Grove, West Side, the Rural School Board, and the Medford board know at the earliest possible date in order that proper operating budgets may be completed and presented to the voters for the school year 1958-57.

7. What is the policy of the



CONSOLIDATION VOTE SCHEDULED—Voters in the Medford, Oak Grove and West Side school districts (shown above) will go to the polls from 2 to 8 p.m. April 9 to determine whether the three will consolidate. Voting will take place in the school building of each district. Medford residents voting in the girls gymnasium at the high school. Portions of

Medford School District regarding maintaining schools in such areas as Oak Grove and West Side?

School policies may be changed by each succeeding school board. Members of the present board believe that their traditional pattern of six elementary grades, three junior high grades, and three senior high grades is a sound and efficient organization.

They believe that the first six grades should be kept as close to home as an efficient and economical operation will permit. Elementary schools will probably be constructed at places where enrollment or potential enrollment warrants it.

At present the school district owns an elementary site on Cunningham Drive in the Southwestern area of the district and another one on Grand Avenue in the North central part of the district.

The present board favors continued operation of existing schools in Oak Grove and West Side. Placement of students and grades would depend upon what was considered best for the students plus the most educational and efficient operation plan.

8. What are the educational advantages and disadvantages for consolidating school districts?

Briefly the primary advantage may be summarized as follows: All of the boys and girls of the district attend schools which are planned, operated, and administered under the same program. They are taught by the same methods. Thus all the pupils have the same advantages as any other student in the district. Pupils are a part of a coordinated program grades one through twelve.

The primary disadvantage is that a small school district loses its identity as a district, and must conform to the same general policies established for all schools within the district.

9. Will consolidation result in lower operating costs?

Generally speaking, savings can be made in a number of areas of operating schools such as: (a) purchasing supplies and equipment, (b) more efficient use of existing facilities through flexible assignment of teachers, students, and equipment, (c) more elimination of duplication in areas of maintenance, transportation, and teaching fields, (d) better adjustment of teacher loads.

Experience has proven that such savings are usually offset by the necessity of extending to all children in the new district the same or best services and opportunities given the children in any other part of the district. Examples of these are: transportation, vocal and instrumental instruction, special and remedial education, school nurse and supervisory services.

Such services add additional cost equal to the extent they are provided.

10. How will the bonded indebtedness of each of the three districts be handled?

It is proposed that the three districts will share all assets and

all debts after consolidation. The same tax levy will apply throughout the entire new district. State law permits this.

11. If consolidation is approved, how will the districts be financed and administered?

All consolidating districts will, according to law, be administered by the School Board of the largest district.

The first year (until June 30, 1957) the consolidated district will be financed as follows: Medford, Dewey, and that portion of Kenwood annexed to Medford, will operate under the budget prepared by the budget committee and voters of the Medford School District 49. Oak Grove and West Side will have to be operated the first year (until July 1, 1957) under the rural school district budget, as prepared by the local district, rural school board and approved by the rural school district voters. This means that services, equipment, and improvements will have to be limited to those provided in each school district's budget for 1956-57.

Beginning with the budget for the 1957-58 school year, all districts would be assessed the same which would be based on the single budget for the entire district.

12. Will consolidation lower taxes?

Consolidation, based on a study of current operation costs for the three districts will have the following effect on taxes. As long as costs of equipment, supplies, and services continue to rise school taxes will go up. Even if operating costs remain stable, school taxes would have to rise because student population in and around Medford and in Oak Grove, West Side, Dewey, and Kenwood districts is increasing on an average of from 350 to 450 children a year. This is equivalent to 10 to 14 schoolrooms each school year. New school rooms must include the same number of teachers plus new equipment and additional supplies. This increase in school population obviously will continue whether consolidation takes place or not. School census indicates that such an increase will continue at least for five more years because a number of children in the age group from one to five are already here.

In general the consolidation of schools has no effect on the two primary factors which are causing increased school taxes: (1) increased costs of goods and services, (2) many more boys and girls to attend the schools.

13. How will consolidation af-

fect taxes in the three districts? Information on taxes can only be estimated. The following summary applies only to the current school year and assumes that the educational program and services would remain just as they are now in each district.

Consolidating all five districts for the purpose of budget making would have meant, for this current school year, a Medford raise in millage approximately 3/5 of a mill (.6 mill); Dewey—lower school taxes, approximately 10 mills; Kenwood—lower school taxes approximately 10 mills; Oak Grove—lower school taxes approximately 10 mills; West Side—lower school taxes, approximately 12.9 mills.

These estimates refer to the difference in millage rates between what they are now paying and what they would have paid had they been consolidated for the current school year and operating schools exactly as we are now. Proportionate differences may vary from year to year. Next year Oak Grove and West Side will pay taxes on the basis of the 1956-57 rural tax even though they consolidate with Medford.

No attempt is made to predict any exact amount that the millage will go up or down for any one district for the next few years after consolidation. It can be estimated with evidence to support it that percentage wise the millage for taxpayers in each district would be affected in about that proportion in the foreseeable future.

Medford's increase would be partially if not entirely offset by the increased valuation brought in by the added districts. Each district would be taxed to pay its full share of bonded indebtedness for secondary students grades 9 through 12. Under existing state laws this is not being done.

High School News Notes

By NELLIE RAWLINGS

The primary elections for next year's student body officers were held this week. Each candidate gave a short speech Tuesday morning in front of the student body.

The actual voting was Thursday, and was conducted according to democratic standards. Students were allowed to check out of school early Friday afternoon to attend special Good Friday services at the First Methodist church.

Orders and measurements for the seniors' caps and gowns are being taken during both noon hours.

The Girls' League senior competition assembly was held Thursday. This meeting concluded the series of competition assemblies between the girls of the three classes. The winner was the junior class. Each junior girl received "suckers" as a prize.

The new Girl-of-the-Month was announced. Former Girl-of-the-Month, Sandra Laing, presented Joyce Gregory with the

Penny Barnum Starts Paper Deliveries by Horseback

By MRS. H. H. CHAPMAN
Hornbrook—One of the surest signs that spring is here arrived Thursday night, when Penny Barnum, for the first time this season, delivered The Mail Tribune on horseback.

Penny, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Oscar Barnum, and a seventh grade student at Hornbrook grammar school, has practically grown up on a horse. Since she was a small girl she has been a familiar sight riding around the country-side on her horse. And now she is putting this enjoyable hobby to good use as a business asset, as she is sole agent in Hornbrook for three daily newspapers the Sacramento Bee, the Siskiyou Daily News, and the Medford Mail Tribune.

UN Theme Planned For Dinner Here

United Nations flags, colorful UN posters and table decorations have been flown here from Portland and San Francisco for the sixth annual Roosevelt Memorial dinner Monday, April 23. Reservations for the 7 p.m. dinner at Hedrick junior high school are still available, according to Mrs. W. G. Werner, foods chairman.

During the winter months, her father takes her on her rounds in the car, and helps with the deliveries, but as the days lengthen, she will be "on her own". It could be said of Penny and her father as with the mail carriers, nothing detained them from the completion of their rounds, for through all of last winter's bad weather and high water, they never failed to get the papers out.

"Your plans for the . . . dinner sound fine," Mrs. Roosevelt wrote. "I am looking forward to an enjoyable evening in Medford."

The U N decorations were geared to Mrs. Roosevelt's address, which will give special emphasis to the international organization. Local Democrats in charge of decorations are Mrs. Harlan Bosworth Jr., Mrs. George W. Rode, Attorney Bruce Manley, Mrs. Moore Hamilton and Mrs. Neva Clarke.

Tickets for the event may be obtained at Walt Young's Stationery store, Lampport's Sporting Goods, and from committee members.

Main portions of the dinner will be furnished by the committee, with supplementary dishes such as salads, or casseroles received as potluck contributions.

ther-Daughter tea.

School was dismissed at 1:45 p.m. on Monday to give all students an opportunity to attend the Parade of Progress at Hawthorne park. Buses were furnished to the park for students desiring their use.

The operetta cast and orchestra have been practicing furiously for the presentation of "Babes in Toyland," which will be presented early in April.

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| ROAST VEAL and Dressing | \$1.00 |
| Fried Spring CHICKEN | \$1.00 |

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LITHIA DRIVE-IN THEATRE

2 1/2 Miles North of ASHLAND

The View from Pompey's Head

starring Richard EGAN • Dorothy PATRICK

Cameron MITCHELL • Dana Wynter • Rosemarie Bowe

BLOWING WILD

Ruth ROMAN • Anthony QUINN

HOTEL MEDFORD

Easter MENU

Oregon Crabmeat Cocktail 25c Alaska Shrimp Cocktail 25c

● **SELECTIVE DINNERS** ●

SOUP

Consomme Celestine or Creme of Chicken Royal
Spiked Tomato Juice Cocktail

SALADS

Crisp Hearts Lettuce or Whipped Tropical Jello

ENTREE

Sliced Prime Ribs of Beef, Au Natural — \$2.25
Baked Honey Cured Ham,
Cumberland Glaze — \$1.50
Leg O' Lamb Roast, Its Natural Gravy — \$1.65
Salmon, Fresh Ocean King, Pan Broiled — \$1.50
Selected New York Cut or Tenderloin Steak,
\$2.75

Baked Potato Early June Peas
Sweet Potato Garden Green Beans Vienna
Beverage

Chocolate or Pineapple Sundae
Ice Cream — Sherbet

Breakfast 7:30 to 12 Dinner Noon 'til 9