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THE XENIA PUBLIC SCHOOLS AND TORNADO DESTRUCTION:
A STUDY OF THE EFFECTS OF DISASTER
ON POLICY-MAKING

DISSERTATION

Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for
the Degree Doctor of Philosophy in the Graduate
School of The Ohio State University

By
Jack Douglas Taylor, B.S., M.A.

* * * * *

The Ohio State University
1975

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Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

Much of the writing about disasters borders on the macabre. Dynes categorized the literature into three types: (1) Popular, (2) Official, and (3) Professional.¹ In describing the popular accounts, he found great emphasis on the "unique, the personal, and the atypical" with the writer dwelling on "the comedic and tragic aspects of the event."² The result was descriptive writing that capitalized on sensationalism.

Official documents on disaster serve a useful purpose in accumulating data that can support organizational activities connected with the disaster, but they "seldom contribute significantly to understanding the actual operations of the organization in disaster."³

The relatively recent professional and scientific literature focuses on mass behavior, individual behavior and

¹Russell R. Dynes, Organized Behavior in Disaster: Analysis and Conceptualization (Columbus: Disaster Research Center, The Ohio State University, 1969), p. 6.
²Ibid., 6.
³Ibid., 7.
organizational behavior. Conglomerate official data is placed within a conceptual framework for analysis instead of leaving it in disparate data form. However, the lack of attention to organizational functioning during periods of great stress led Fritz to admonish researchers that:

> We must stop thinking of American society as if it were simply a collection of individuals or families . . . . American society consists of a myriad of interlocking groups and organizations whose interrelationships provide order, meaning, and continuity to our normal social life. The more frequently we can use these existing groups as the unit for . . . the attack on . . . recovery and reconstruction problems, the more likely we are to achieve the goal of maintaining or quickly reinstituting a viable, organized society in the post-impact period.4

The Disaster Research Center at The Ohio State University was founded in 1963 to study organizations under stress situations, especially during periods of disaster. The systematic study of organizations during disaster periods by the Disaster Research Center has done much to bridge this knowledge gap. But Baker and Chapman's concern in 1962 that "we do not know much about the long-term changes that may be wrought by disaster, because almost no research has undertaken to follow a stricken community over any great number of years"5 was reiterated in 1969 by Barton: "Recent

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American disaster studies have been dominated by concern with the psychology of warning, impact, and immediate post-impact behavior. The period of rehabilitation has not been systematically studied.  

The destruction suffered by the citizens of Xenia, Ohio on April 3, 1974 when a tornado of massive strength and scope swept the city, offered a chance to study this phenomenon. More specifically, because only three of the eleven public school buildings escaped damage from the tornado, a study of the coping and restructuring process of the school system in conjunction with the city as a whole, appeared to be a unique approach to the study of school/community/governmental relationships.

The April tornado in Xenia demolished in excess of twelve-hundred structures, including homes, businesses, commercial structures, and a variety of public and private structures. An additional fifteen-hundred structures were damaged. Entire blocks of the city, including the downtown area, were devastated by the tornado.

According to a study by the Miami Valley Regional Planning Commission, the tornado destruction caused the disruption of 52 per cent of the job market and reduced the city's revenue by 52.6 per cent.

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This presents the City and its people with quite a major task, that of rebuilding approximately one-fourth of Xenia. However, the rebuilding process can result in a positive reinforcement of the affected neighborhoods and an increase in the quality of life for all Xenians.7

The Xenia High School building which accommodated 1,455 students was completely destroyed. McKinley Elementary School (enrollment of 326 students) and Simon Kenton Elementary School (enrollment of 861 students) were also reduced to rubble. The Carl Benner Athletic Field House and Central Junior High School (enrollment of 791 students) were damaged so severely that restoration was improbable. Arrowood Elementary School (enrollment of 392) and the adjacent Warner Junior High School (enrollment of 1,295) received major damage but were repairable.

Schools reopened on April 22 by utilizing buildings in adjacent school districts. Only five of the system's eleven buildings could be used for classes and no facilities of sufficient size remained standing in the city that could accommodate the school population. While temporary facilities were operational within the city for the coming year, they could not be constructed rapidly enough to alleviate the facilities crisis in late April.

7Miami Valley Regional Planning Commission, Xenia Rebuilds, a report prepared at the request of the Xenia City Commission by the Regional Agencies, Miami Valley Regional Planning Commission and the Transportation Coordinating Committee (Dayton, Ohio: May 30, 1974), p. 10.
Background of the Problem

The immediate concern during and immediately following a disaster is understandably for human life. The concern for the injured and the dead and the welfare of family members takes precedence over secondary service functions and property protection. For this reason, organizations operating during an emergency to attend the primary needs of the population (hospitals, welfare agencies, police, relief agencies) have been studied in greater depth than have organizations who serve an important, but secondary role during an emergency, such as schools.8

Nonetheless, organizations serving secondary functions rapidly become vital to the operation of community life following a disaster. Equilibrium is sought by individuals to restore a sense of order and purpose to life. It is characteristic of people in disaster that they begin almost immediately to busy themselves with restoring order out of chaos and to rise from the rubble.

The community as a social system has properties which tend to restore it to equilibrium after it has been disturbed. Equilibrium has been a central concept in social, biological and physical systems, but the

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equilibrium mechanisms are not nearly so well identified for social systems as for the other types. 9

The dynamics of the local government's planning and the local school system's reconstruction efforts following the disaster presented an intriguing study of inter- and intra-organizational and governmental relationships. This was further expanded with the consideration of the state and federal government's influence and involvement.

The development and implications of the Federal Disaster Act of 1974, which was not finalized until May 22, 1974 (but retroactive to April 1, 1974), 10 the invocation of the heretofore unused State of Ohio disaster legislation for a local school system, and the Xenia City Commission's moratorium on building permits pending comprehensive study and planning efforts, and the local citizen involvement to coordinate the total city rebuilding process through the legally incorporated and federally subsidized Spirit of Seventy-Four Committee, were all examples of the forces affecting post-disaster school decisions that presented the researcher with a myriad and complex political milieu for investigation.

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A descriptive account of the involvement of school personnel and the system's coping process during and immediately following a community disaster has merit for human interest writing and perhaps as a basis for developing guidelines for disaster preparedness. However, the greater opportunity to focus on contrasting the policy decisions prior to and following an intervening disaster involving the intra- and inter-organizational politics of a school system as it resumed operation under adverse circumstances and as it engaged in long-term planning and commitments for the future, was the basis for this study.

Even without the complications of a major disaster, Campbell and Layton concluded that:

Policy-making is in a state of flux, and societal forces are altering local policy deliberations in significant ways . . . as educational problems become interwoven with other community problems, mayors, councilmen, and other governmental representatives enter and assume responsibilities.\(^\text{11}\)

Bauer and Gergen equated politics with policy-making as they explicated the meaning of policy:

Various labels are applied to decisions and actions we take, depending in general on the breadth of implications. If they are trivial and repetitive and demand little cogitation, they may be called routine actions. If they are somewhat more complex, have wider ramifications and the longest time perspective, and which

\(^{11}\)Roald F. Campbell and Donald H. Layton, *Policy Making for American Education* (Chicago: Midwest Administration Center, the University of Chicago, 1969), p. 19.
generally require the most information and contemplation, we tend to reserve the term policy.\textsuperscript{12}

Wirt and Kirst effectively dispelled the myth of schools being "above" politics:

The essence of the political act is the struggle of men and groups to secure the authoritative support of the government for their values. Under this rubric, then, much of what schoolmen regard as apolitical is highly political indeed.\textsuperscript{13}

In her study of the New York City School System, Gittell found that:

In the general community, there are other potential participants--local, state, and federal officials, civic groups, the press, business organizations, and individual entrepreneurs seeking the rewards of the school system. Interrelationships between these potential participants, the relative power of each, and their role in the particular decisions differs with the nature of the issues and the political environment of the school system.\textsuperscript{14}

Change is ordinarily a gradual process. It is typically the result of forces and counter-forces striving to uproot or maintain the status quo. The intervention of a disaster changes this symbiotic relationship. Change can


no longer be controlled by the forces and counter-forces negotiating the process. The introduction of disaster can have the effect of forcing change and new directions in an abrupt and decisive way.

Any suggestion that local schools should not be attune to the desires of the local community would generally be considered anathema. And yet, the natural interplay between the school system, the community and governmental agencies that negotiate the allocation of resources, continues to be denied as a political process.¹⁵

It was anticipated that the restructuring of the city of Xenia and the Xenia School System would demonstrate in a vivid way that each influenced the other; that a change in philosophy of the community would result in a change in the school system; that new demands by the community-at-large and the school system would affect governmental responses. The complexion of the city changed at a rate undreamed of before the intervention of the tornado. This change had an impact on the school system that deserved investigation.

¹⁵For instance, see: Philip Meranto, School Politics in the Metropolis (Columbus, Ohio: Charles E. Merrill Company, 1970), and Wirt and Kirst, op. cit.
Statement of the Problem

The purpose of this study was to utilize the Xenia Public School System as the locus for a descriptive study of organizational functioning and policy-making prior to and following a major disaster with the focus upon an investigation of the impact of disaster on the policy-making process and policy issues of the Xenia city schools.

Organizations, of course, constitute one of the most important elements in the social web of modern societies. . . one way of understanding these organizations is to study how they react to stress situations. Disasters often affect all aspects of a community in a cross-sectional fashion—governmental, legal, educational, religious, industrial and commercial, health, communications, welfare and other organizational aspects.16

Before the disaster, the Xenia Board of Education had a responsibility to provide an educational program for the young people of the school district. That responsibility did not change following the disaster. How that responsibility was being discharged following the disaster as contrasted with the pre-disaster period can be studied within a framework of policy decisions of the board of education and school personnel.

There was ample reason to suspect that post-disaster policy decisions would vary from the pre-disaster period in

16Dynes, Organized Behavior in Disaster: Analysis and Conceptualization, p. 5.
some dramatic ways. No new school facilities had been constructed in Xenia since 1967, and no request for new operating monies had been presented to the electorate since 1968. Individual school attendance boundaries had taken on illogical and inconvenient patterns to utilize existing school buildings. With the destruction of several school buildings and entire neighborhoods, new options were available. These options, however, were constrained by pre-disaster conditions as well as post-disaster realities.

With half the downtown business district destroyed by the April tornado, it was assumed that interest groups and individuals would be vying for their wishes in the city rebuilding process—ranging from proposals for exact restoration to totally new and planned approaches to city life and business—and that schools would be an integral part of the political struggle.

The disaster event accelerated the pace of change for the public schools as a part of the city-at-large. How and to what extent they changed, and what forces prevented policy from reaching the decision-making arena (non-decision-making) provided the impetus for this study of inter- and intra-organizational and governmental politics as they impacted upon the policy-making process and issues affecting the Xenia City Schools following a major disaster.
Research Questions

This study attempted to answer the following research questions:

1. What systemic differences were there between pre- and post-disaster policy decisions regarding school system goals?

2. What impact did these pre- and post-disaster policy decisions have upon educational goals?

3. What pre- and post-disaster factors were identified that influenced the implementation of school policy decisions?

4. Following the disaster, were there discernible patterns of change in the influence of individuals and groups upon policy decisions among those responsible for formulating school system policy as contrasted with pre-disaster patterns?

5. Following the disaster, were there discernible patterns of change in the influence of individuals and groups upon policy decisions among lay and community people as contrasted with pre-disaster patterns?

6. Following the disaster, were there discernible patterns of change in the influence of local, state and federal governments upon school system policy decisions as contrasted with pre-disaster patterns?
Definition of Terms

**Policy.** This study centered around an analysis of policy decisions before and after a disaster. Bauer and Gergen, while espousing the importance of the study of policy formation, issued the caveat that "precisely because the process is so complicated, it has been resistant to both adequate conceptualization and adequate research." 17

Part of the complication is in defining policy-making within parameters that are restrictive enough to give explicitness to the term without excluding some of the inclusive decisions that are generally considered policy matters. "It is true that one man's policy may be another man's tactics." 18

Combining Campbell and Layton's definition of policy 19 with that of Katz and Kahn, 20 the following definition was used to delimit policy decisions from the broader area of decision-making: Policies are decisions or groups of decisions characterized by high levels of

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generality, spatiality and temporality resulting in the formulation of goals and objectives or the formulation of procedures and devices to achieve goals and evaluate performance.

A high level of **generality** is characterized by abstract, non-operational, pervasive language. A high level of **spatiality** is characterized by extensive influence on the total organization. A high level of **temporality** is characterized by an extensive and indefinite length of time for which the decision will hold.

**Goals.** Goals (and values) in Eastonian terms refer to system inputs—social demands and resources—which create or maintain the system.¹¹

**Disaster.** An event or series of events which seriously disrupts normal activities.²²

The following terms were used in the conceptual framework for the study:

**Internal influences** refer to the board of education and employed personnel, including the superintendent, central office personnel, principals, teachers and classified personnel.

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Local influences include government officials, the community-at-large (organizations and individuals) and employee bargaining units.

State influence and Federal influence refer to governmental bodies and organizational units of government, such as the Ohio Department of Education and the U.S. Department of Health, Education and Welfare.

Related Literature

One of the most comprehensive compilations on disaster research was published in 1962 under the editorship of Baker and Chapman.\textsuperscript{23} \textit{Man and Society in Disaster} emphasized the need for disaster research, past and projected methodological approaches to disaster research, and documented findings on disasters.

One of the writers quoted in that work, Sorokin, observed that:

The new arrangements of the post-rehabilitation period are never quite like those predating the disaster—not just in the relationships among persons in the structure, but in the structure itself. . . . Unfortunately, detailed research, on either the community or the societal level, into a disaster's impact over several decades is notably lacking.\textsuperscript{24}

\textsuperscript{23}Ibid.

Form and Loomis, commenting on the striving for social equilibrium, found that:

Almost immediately after the impact of the destructive agent, a disaster system arises spontaneously to meet the human problems created and to restore a social equilibrium. Far from having a condition of social anomia, social systems continue to operate through all of the disaster stage, new systems emerge, and continuity is found between the old and the emergent social systems.25

The concept of reestablishing equilibrium in the community following a disaster was further explicated by Thompson and Hawkes, and they cited the documentation of Fritz and Williams as well as Fritz, Mathewson, and Wolfenstein in regard to "the proposition that, following disaster, time perspectives expand and intermediate and secondary values become salient."26

Demerath's conclusions that "previous inter-group differences are lessened, cooperation and social solidarity are heightened in the first post-impact period"27 were supported in the more recent research of Dynes on community


conflict following disaster. According to Dynes, community conflict is minimized because: (1) the cause is external, (2) emergency consensus is on activities benefiting the community as a whole, (3) the disaster problems are "immediate and imperative," (4) more attention is given to the present than the past and future, (5) social class differences are minimized during the emergency period, and (6) community identification is heightened. Coleman asserted that:

It may seem paradoxical that problems create community organization, but such is nevertheless the case. A community without common problems, as many modern bedroom suburbs tend to be today, has little cause for community organization; neither does a community that has been largely subject to the administration of persons outside the community.

Dynes and Quarantelli commented on the recurrence of prior community differences:

Several students have commented on the reemergence of conflict at some later time period. Moore, for example, has described a brick-bat phase during the recovery in which old factionalism was awakened and scapegoats were sought. Others have commented on the emergence of new conflicts which in some cases, were more severe in their consequences than pre-disaster conflict. Our own longitudinal studies indicate that some major community divisions can reemerge over time as a consequence of a disaster. However, in general the

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28Dynes, Organized Behavior in Disaster: Analysis and Conceptualization.


evidence points to increased solidarity with the community and this is most evident during the emergency phase.31

Fritz attributed the enhancement of group endeavors following a disaster to the fact that people could more easily view others as being like themselves:

That people respond in like manner to the fears, dangers, deprivations, and anxieties posed by the disaster, largely regardless of a previous station in life, is greatly reassuring—especially for those who have previously felt marginal, detached, isolated, or uncomfortably different from others. The "outside" become "inside;" the "marginal man" a "central man." People are able to perceive with a clarity never before possible, a set of underlying basic values to which all people subscribe. They come to see that collective action is necessary for their values to be maintained. Individual and group goals and means become merged inextricably. The merging of individual and societal needs provides a feeling of belongingness and a sense of unity rarely achieved under normal circumstances.32

The changes brought on by disaster create new perspectives on community functioning affecting all organizations serving the public. Contrasting pre-and post-disaster community dynamics, can take many forms. Thompson and Hawkes emphasized the political approach:

A community . . . can be viewed politically, as the place where collections of individuals concern


themselves, using the government as a vehicle for obtaining things that individuals alone cannot provide.\footnote{33} Easton viewed the political system as a subsystem of the social system concerned with the authoritative allocation of values for society.\footnote{34} Katz and Kahn's development of policy-making demonstrated the difficulty in defining the process in manageable terms for conceptualization:

Policy-making, however, is not only the product of deliberate consideration of long-run problems facing the organization. Policy is also created by day to day decisions, often made on an ad hoc basis and often made by administrators rather than by designated policy makers. The criterion again is whether systemic change in the organization has been produced by a cumulation of administrative decisions, even though their makers were not consciously trying to determine policy. . . . the practical criterion for identifying a policy decision is the novelty and readjustment which will result in many parts of the organization as a consequence of the decision.\footnote{35}

In relation to policy-making in school systems, Campbell and Layton concluded that:

Policy making for American education has become ever more complex. These complexities often make it seem that the policy-making process is not a rational one; it appears to be structureless and elusive.\footnote{36}

\begin{footnotes}
\footnotetext[33]{Thompson and Hawkes, "Disaster, Community Organization and Administrative Process," p. 269.}
\footnotetext[34]{Easton, \textit{A Systems Analysis of Political Life}, Chapters 1 and 2.}
\footnotetext[36]{Campbell and Layton, \textit{Policy Making for American Education}, p. 17.}
\end{footnotes}
The challenge to study the policy-making process of school systems as a part of the larger societal structure was vividly portrayed in Gittell's study of the New York City School System:

School systems are traditionally viewed as arousing more public interest than any other civic activity and, therefore, in principle, should entail a wider base of public participation than other areas of specialization... the school system is the city in microcosm. 37

Gittell's conception of school system policy-making involved all decisions that related to the operation of the system. 38 Cunningham alluded to the difficulties inherent in loosely defining the term. 39 Notwithstanding a definitive understanding of policy-making, Goldhammer reported that most authorities considered the major function of school boards to be the determination of policy. 40

White, in his study of local school boards, found that boards reported that school board policy was their greatest problem. 41 This involved "developing policy

38 Ibid., p. 21.
statements, preparing policy manuals, keeping policies up to date, and adhering to adopted policies.\textsuperscript{42}

The literature was clear on the following points:

1. Additional research is needed in the area of educational policy-making.

2. Ambiguity exists concerning the meaning and focus of policy-making.

3. School systems are increasingly being viewed as microcosms of the larger functioning society, with concomitant political systems worthy of increased research.

4. There are unique effects on the functioning of a total community following disaster.

5. These effects have been explored to some extent with organizations operating to attend primary needs during emergency periods, but little research has explored the reconstruction period following a community disaster.

\textbf{Design of the Study}

The case study approach to research was utilized in this study.

Case study research is frequently termed "descriptive research" because it describes and interprets all pertinent data from a particular case or a limited number of cases. ... descriptive research is a broad category which includes those efforts that describe and interpret certain sets of facts concerned with situations, communities, individuals, groups of

\textsuperscript{42}Ibid., p. 82.
individuals, relationships, attitudes, objects, events, classes of events, systems, trends, conditions, processes, or phenomena as they exist at a given time.\textsuperscript{43}

The research questions raised in this study fell under the general rubric of policy-making. Encapsulated, they asked how the policy formulation process of a school system changed following a major disaster, to explore the impact of the disaster on policy decisions. This presupposed a study of the problems, decision-making processes, communications, and of the actors who influenced the making and implementation of the policy decisions.

To accomplish this, a pre/post disaster design was employed to study the policy-making process. A general description of the school system before and after the tornado was necessary to determine how problems were resolved, and the interrelationships and influence of individuals and groups at the local, state and federal levels. The general design focused on four categories following a time-line perspective:

1. Background description of the community and the school system, including pre-disaster policy decisions.

2. Description of the tornado destruction, including the explication of immediate post-disaster problems and coping procedures.

3. Reconstruction plans, framed in terms of post-disaster policy issues and procedures.

4. Implications of the effect of disaster upon school system policy-making.

A conceptual framework based upon the systems model of Easton was utilized to study the input-output dimensions of policy-making, before and after the disaster.\textsuperscript{44} The purpose of the framework was to provide a frame of reference for studying policy-making in the Xenia schools before and after the tornado to describe problems and their resolution, and the factors affecting policy-making.

Conceptual Framework for Analysis of Policy Decisions
The utilization of policy issues were determined in terms of policy formulation as outlined by Katz and Kahn. The visual model was developed by the writer based upon the writing of Katz and Kahn:

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**Policy Model**

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Methodology

Data collection for the study utilized the face-to-face interview as well as documented material in newspapers, city and school system studies, state and federal communications, board of education minutes, administrative memoranda, publications, curriculum and policy guides and miscellaneous administrative communications.

One-hour interviews were conducted with sixty-three persons including the superintendent of schools, two board members and the board clerk, the three assistant superintendents (instruction, personnel and business), five additional central office personnel, thirteen principals and assistant principals, fourteen classroom teachers, fifteen parents and community persons, seven classified employees, the Deputy Superintendent from the Ohio Department of Education and the administrative assistant from the Ohio Department of Education.

Interviews had the advantage of obtaining information that was not otherwise available, and may have been more accurate than the questionnaire, since interaction allowed for clarification of the questions and responses.

The broad scope of this study necessitated a focused or depth interview format that could yield focused data. An interview schedule was used to guide the interviewing, but the interviews frequently deviated from the
schedule to probe into particular issues that yielded more data than would have happened otherwise. The interview questions were open-ended and were tape recorded to facilitate retention of all data. Transcriptions were prepared of the recorded interviews for data analysis. Analysis of the data synthesized the perceptions of the interviewees with documented data within the conceptual framework developed for the study.

Anonymity was assured all participants responding as informants, except where this was impossible to separate from the role function, such as the superintendent of schools.

**Significance of the Study**

A case study of a school system that experienced a massive disaster afforded an opportunity to analyze its policy-making structure prior to and following the event for the purpose of exploring the impact of disaster upon the policy process.

Politics (or policy making) demands the sort of concrete thinking that tells us that no value is absolute, that in the real world we have to trade off units of one value against units of another. Politics (or policy making) also demands a frank acceptance of the limitations on our ability to act and a willingness to face up to the full range of possible consequences of our actions, including those consequences that are against our values and intentions.\(^4^6\)

It was surmised that values would change and perhaps re-prioritize following the disaster. It was further felt that alternatives to pre-disaster problems within the school system would be expanded and would increase demands by groups and individuals for pursuing those alternatives. Predicated upon this, it was felt that the goals of the school system would be effected, causing a change in the policy issues and probably in the policy-making process.

Prince found that "catastrophe always means social change." By studying a school system in depth, it was hoped that a greater understanding of the policy-making process would result. The events and forces growing out of a disaster that precipitated alternatives for future organizational functioning offered the opportunity to explore the impact upon policy-making.

**Limitations of the Study**

Generalizations from a case study are limited and tenuous. This study was no exception. The findings regarding pre- and post-disaster policy-making should provide valuable data upon which to base future policy studies around disruptive events. However, the design and methodology of this study were not intended to yield conclusive generalizable material.

It was hoped that this exploratory study could result in the development of hypotheses for additional research and development. To go beyond this level of research interpretation would be a misuse of the research design and methodology.

The methodology of the politics of education is as yet unstable and untested. It is important to bear in mind that this is a fledgling area of research that has not yet developed a distinctive empirical base and methodological sophistication.\(^{48}\)

Collection of data and conducting of interviews was complicated by the disruption of communications systems in Xenia and the temporary relocation of many residents outside the city. Conducting the interviews during the summer also presented difficulties in reaching school personnel.

An attempt was made to contact all administrative personnel for interviews but teachers and other school system personnel were selected at random from the directory of personnel. The extreme difficulty in contacting specific persons who were without telephones and living out of the city or with friends and relatives made it necessary to continue to select names until a contact could be made and an interview arranged. The research attempted to obtain a cross-section of respondents, but the inherent difficulties

in making contact with persons in a disrupted city may have limited the scope of the field of respondents.
Chapter 2

BACKGROUND DESCRIPTION OF THE XENIA CITY SCHOOLS

The Setting--The City of Xenia

April 3, 1974 was a fateful day for the citizens of Xenia, Ohio. The serenity of small city life with deep roots in the past was destined to become irreversibly changed. Within five minutes, a massive tornado destroyed a fourth of the city and damaged much of the rest of it.

The schools of Xenia were particularly affected. Following the tornado, no usable facilities remained in the city for junior or senior high school students, and three elementary schools were destroyed or severely damaged. Other buildings in the system were damaged and needed repairs.

A newcomer to Xenia could only surmise what it looked like before the April tornado. Driving through the tree-lined streets of the neighboring cities and villages, a painful awareness of the starkness of denuded vegetation and leveled landscape in this once serene city was appalling. The flowering yards and gently settling old houses that must have been a part of Xenia were gone or were obscured by surrounding devastation.
Xenia, the county seat of the 415 square-mile Greene County, dates back to 1803. Indeed, Ohio itself was not admitted to the Union until the same year. "Xenia," a Greek word meaning hospitality, was chosen as the town name from among a variety of names proposed in that first town meeting. Although it was selected as the county seat at that time, the first log cabins were not erected until late the following year. The original brick court house was completed in 1809 and Xenia officially became a city in 1834.

Highway 42, stretching between Cincinnati, Lebanon and Xenia, basically followed the Little Miami Valley route taken by George Rogers Clark during the Revolutionary War. Cincinnati and Xenia were later connected by railroad in 1845 which caused an upsurge of growth of fledgling Xenia. Subsequent connecting lines during the next quarter of a century with Columbus, Springfield and Dayton placed Xenia in the crossroads of a growing region.

Wilberforce University, the oldest black college in America, was located northeast of Xenia. The location of the university probably accounted for the fact that Xenia had the largest percentage of blacks of any city in Ohio until the more recent migration of Southern blacks to the large Northern cities. By 1880, more than a quarter of the population of Xenia was black.
The 5.5 square-mile city has maintained the image of a proud small city despite its increasing attachment to the city of Dayton as a bedroom community. Nestled between what was sometimes referred to as the triangle of cities--Dayton, Columbus and Cincinnati--it was surrounded by gently rolling farm land and open fields.

In addition to highway 42, U.S. Routes 35 and 68 also connected Xenia with the surrounding cities. Access to interstate highways 70 and 71 were close by, and either Cincinnati or Columbus could be reached by automobile in little more than an hour.

Xenia had a more diverse population than might be expected in either a small town or a bedroom community. Residents, both black and white, whose parentage dated back to generations of Xenians', constituted one part of the population. More recent residents had been attracted by the comfortable low-cost housing in easy reach of the industrial job market in Dayton and the employment opportunities at Wright Patterson Air Force Base located nine miles from Xenia in Fairborn. Many students were drawn by Wilberforce and Central State Universities and some remained as permanent residents.

Local government was the Council-Manager form. The seven-member Commission (or council) was elected with the president, vice-president and mayor comprising part of this group. The present mayor was a high school teacher in Xenia.
Interestingly, Dayton pioneered the large-city Council-Manager form of government during the early 1900's following a flood disaster. Discontent with the coping ability of the Mayor-Council government caused them to appoint a city manager.

Xenia was a city of limited industry. Although the Chamber of Commerce listed thirty-three industries in 1971, many of these were located in adjacent communities to Xenia, and most were small industries.

Xenians had divided opinions about the advisability of attracting new industry to the city. The problem was compounded by the need to relocate or rebuild 159 businesses and industries formerly operating from 121 structures that were destroyed by the tornado.\(^1\)

According to the 1970 census, almost half the population lived in the same house they had lived in five years earlier.\(^2\) Of those who moved, a fourth of them moved to another house within Greene County. More than one-third of the male work force living in the city of Xenia was employed outside of the county. Seventeen percent were professional, technical, managerial or

\(^1\)Miami Valley Regional Planning Commission, *Xenia Rebuilds*, p. 47.

administrative workers. Eighty-three per cent were employed as salesmen, clerical workers, craftsmen, operatives, laborers, service workers and farmers. It is significant to note that less than one-half of one per cent of the workers were farmers. Characterizing Xenia as a small farm community would be in error.

The median income in 1969 (reported in the 1970 census) of white males was $8,247, while black males made $6,344. Black females exceeded the white female income levels by $331 ($4,113 for black females and $3,782 for white females). The total family median income was $10,197 which was $581 above the National median. The mean income of $10,825 was $130 below the National mean.

6.9 per cent of the families had incomes below the poverty level with a mean income deficit of $1,627. This compared to the National population poverty level of 9.3 per cent. Fifteen per cent of the families had incomes in excess of $15,000, but only two and one-half per cent had incomes above $25,000. The per capita income for Xenians was $683 below the per capita income of the country as a whole of $3,708.

99.1 per cent of Xenians were native Americans and three-fourths of them were born in the state of Ohio. In 1970, there were 25,373 residents including 3,086 blacks who now number only 12.2 per cent of the population. The proximity to Dayton with its increasing black population
may account for some of Xenia's decreasing black population.

Xenians were represented in the United States House of Representatives, Seventh Congressional District, by Republican Clarence J. Brown, Jr. Representatives at the state level included Republicans John M. Scott and Joseph F. Heistand. The state senator was also a Republican, Max H. Dennis. Although the word "conservative" is fraught with ambiguity and lacks clear definition, respondents generally described Xenia as a conservative community. In sweeping language, this seemed to indicate a more right than left wing outlook, a preference for the Republican party, a cautious approach to innovation and taxation, and a reverence for historic and established tradition.

A post-disaster feasibility study prepared by the Real Estate Research Corporation in a successful attempt to secure Urban Renewal funds from the Department of Housing and Urban Development, viewed pre-tornado business and industry as declining.³ The study supported the need for revitalized and expanded shopping facilities to attract local shoppers who were spending much of their money outside the city. Only the drug stores, grocery stores and hardware stores were receiving most of the local trade.

There was a strong push for a revitalized and expanded Xenia by individuals and by organized groups. The Spirit of Seventy-Four Committee, an incorporated citizens group, was spearheading much of the planning efforts following the tornado, attempting to bridge communications between the citizens and the City Commission.

There was also strong resistance to this movement. Many citizens abhorred the push for a modernized and thriving city. Like an old shoe, they were more interested in the comfort and satisfaction than in the looks. As one respondent put it, "I don't want a shopping mall in Xenia. If I wanted to live where there was a shopping mall, I'd move to Dayton."

**Administration**

The Xenia City Schools were under the direction of a five-member board of education, comprised of one woman and four men, one of whom was black. Board elections were usually highly contested, indicating a strong community interest in the running of the schools. Although the feeling was expressed that some candidates sought the office for selfish or personal reasons, the feeling was also expressed that these people never mustered enough support to get elected. While criticism was evident in the interviews about some actions of the board, generally the motives of the board members were not impugned.
Leadership of the Xenia schools has changed dramatically during the past few years in the office of the superintendent. Following the long tenure of more than a quarter of a century of one superintendent, rapid turnover of this position has been the rule for the past few years. The present superintendent, Carl Adkins, was the former business manager, and became the acting superintendent on December 22, 1972 following the illness of the former superintendent. Mr. Adkins was subsequently elected superintendent for a three year tenure beginning August 1, 1973.

Steadily increasing enrollments up to the peak year of 8,759 students in 1970-71 demanded increased personnel to administer the schools including a need for assistants to the superintendent. At the beginning of the 1973-74 school year, there were three assistant superintendents (business, personnel and curriculum) and a clerk-treasurer serving the board of education. Twenty-four other professionals manned the central office functions ranging from transportation, maintenance and cafeterias to health services, curriculum consultants and Federal Title programs. Thirteen non-certificated persons supported these central office positions and eleven other

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professionals were itinerant teachers headquartered in the local schools. Thirty-three regular and substitute bus drivers transported students in thirty buses to the various buildings every day.

The eight elementary school buildings were staffed with 131 regular classroom teachers, 10 kindergarten teachers, 6 individual assistance teachers and 6 Title I teachers. Each building had a supervising principal, and the two largest elementary schools, Cox and Simon Kenton, shared an administrative assistant. 62 aides were employed to assist with the instructional program, including the regular program and Titles I, III, and VII.

The two junior high schools had 73% regular classroom teachers and 22 other staff members for a total of 95% on the teaching staff. Each of the junior high buildings had a supervising principal and one assistant principal.

Xenia high school operated with 61 regular classroom teachers, 18 other staff members, a supervising principal and two assistant principals. Librarians and counselors were among the additional staff members provided at the junior and senior high levels.

Of the 1973-74 certificated staff of 374, three of them still had less than a Bachelor's degree, 269 had a Bachelor's degree but less than a Master's degree, and

5Information supplied by the Assistant Superintendent for Personnel, Xenia City Schools.
102 had a Master's degree. The salary schedule did not reward training beyond the Master's level. There was an index step for a Bachelor's plus 150 hours, and 87 of the 269 Bachelor level staff had reached this level. The only doctorate in the system was held by Dr. William Hill, the Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum.

**Students**

The highest student enrollment for the system was in 1970-71 with 8,759 pupils. However, the peak elementary enrollment (K-6) was reached much earlier in 1966-67 with 5,193 students. The top junior high school enrollment was 2,120 in 1970-71, and the highest 9-12 enrollment came in 1972-73 with 2,617. The enrollments have dropped an average of 121 for the past three years, with the total enrollment in 1973-74 reaching only 8,396. This included the Greene County Joint Vocational School for grades 11 and 12 which enrolled more than a third of the high school students in these grades.

Many more high school graduates terminated their education upon graduation than went on for college work. Thirty-eight per cent in 1972-73 and thirty-six per cent in 1973-74 expressed definite plans to attend college.  

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6 Source: Attendance Reports to the Ohio Department of Education in October of each year.

7 Source: Annual Report to the Ohio Department of Education, Xenia Public Schools.
A five-year follow-up study of the Xenia high school class of 1968 found that fifty per cent of the high school graduates entered college with forty-five per cent of those entering graduating. However, the report cautioned against its validity, since only about one-fourth of the graduates responded to the questionnaire and the weighted possibility that more students entering college would respond than those not entering.8

The drop-out rate for grades 9-12 was six per cent in 1973-74 and 5.9 per cent in 1972-73.9 Over a four-year span, this would indicate that the rate approached one-fourth of the students entering the ninth grade. Concern has been expressed by the administration and board of education over the number of drop-outs. A report to the board of education in July of 1974 indicated the slightly lower drop-out rates of 5.04 per cent and 4.72 per cent for the 1973-74 and 1972-73 school years with an overall rate of 18 per cent, but pointed out that students who had been expelled or who failed to graduate because of sufficient credits were not included in the statistical treatment.

A study of the schools in 1969, Blueprint for the Seventies,

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8A Five-Year Follow-Up Study of the Xenia High School Class of 1968, conducted by the High School Guidance Department, Xenia City Schools, 1974.

9Computed from the Annual Report to the Ohio Department of Education, Xenia City Schools.
listed the drop-out rate in 1968-69 at 17 per cent but did not specify how the percentage was computed. ¹⁰

**Curriculum and Instruction**

Perhaps the most innovative program to have a widespread impact on the Xenia schools was the opening of the Xenia Center for Educational Programming in 1968. This was a center designed to serve the city as a whole for grades 1-6 with emphasis on individualized instruction. Admission to the center was by application, and the enrollment was limited to 250.

The renovated building, formerly housing the black East-Lincoln high school, offered a new concept in elementary schools for the city. Carpeted rooms and halls, new lighting and general upgrading made the facility attractive for the new learning center.

Individually Guided Education (IGE) was introduced to the system and became operative to varying degrees in the elementary schools in the system. Federal monies were used to launch the programs and to maintain their impetus. With the drying up of federal funds, these programs were phased out, with only remnants remaining. The extent of the continuing influence on individualized instruction of the Center and of IGE are debatable, but their visibility

¹⁰*Blueprint for the Seventies, A Study of the Xenia Schools, 1969.*
extent of controversy created by their implementation, will continue to influence public attitudes and thinking about innovation in general and individualized instruction specifically. The issue of individualized instruction was still very much in the fore, with strong proponents and opponents continuing to press for curriculum resolution.

Textbooks and publishers of learning materials have a profound effect on curriculum in any school system. Books and materials must be replaced and new curriculum approaches to learning emerge. The junior and senior high school programs reflected the influence of these sources on their curriculum more than any other source. The courses were the standard courses with a preponderance of college preparatory subjects including four language courses besides the English sequence, the mathematics groups (including accelerated higher mathematics), and a science curriculum that extended beyond the levels of biology, chemistry and physics to include anatomy and physiology.

The vocational emphasis of the Greene County Joint Vocational School made the balance of curriculum offerings between Xenia High School and Greene County Joint Vocational School a delicate balance. Trade and industrial arts programs were considered the purview of the GJVS with industrial arts being provided at Xenia high school to further "skill dexterity as a background toward furtherance of individual post high school education, and as a means
toward adequate use of increased leisure time." The business department included an impressive array of courses including accounting I and accounting II. Their commitment was toward "an added intensive office education program and/or a cooperative education program." Vocational home economics, perhaps in cooperation with GJVS, soft-pedaled the vocational emphasis in favor of personal home economics skills.

The receptivity of students to the vocational business offerings can be seen in the numbers served by that department. The business courses had 1,270 students enrolled in forty-seven class sections during 1973-74. Industrial arts had half as many enrolled, and vocational home economics had almost one-third as many.

Organization and Facilities

The elementary schools were organized by grades K-6. They were basically self-contained classrooms, although some departmentalization was used in the skills areas. The introduction of Individually Guided Education


12Ibid., p. V-10.

13Ibid., Appendix C.
brought about some team organization, with a unit leader and four other teachers in the instructional unit. Aides were utilized to facilitate the individualized program. The junior high included grades 7-9 and operated on a departmentalized schedule. The senior high included grades 10-12 with departmentalized classes on uniform periods throughout the day. All schools had closed lunch periods, probably reflecting the fact that so many students were bused to school.

Elementary schools were in session for 5½ hours, including the lunch period. The kindergarten was an exception to this daily schedule with 2½-hour sessions. Secondary students were in session for 7 hours and five minutes, including the lunch period. The length of the school term was 18½ days, including four days of activities for the staff without students. Class sizes varied, but board of education policy stated that "every attempt shall be made to keep regular instructional classes at thirty (30) pupils or less." ¹⁴

¹⁴Xenia City Schools, Policy Manual, Section 4.10.

The frantic effort to keep pace with increasing enrollments during the 1950's and 1960's can be seen in the building of new buildings and additions to existing structures during this period. However, with a decreasing population growth and shifting residential concentrations,
buildings and populations of neighborhoods did not match very well. Cox and Simon Kenton Elementary Schools grew too large in proportion to other elementary schools. McKinley Elementary continued to be used although it was constructed just after the turn of the century. Xenia High School was constructed on an inadequate site, probably because of available land in a central location. Central Junior High School, the old high school building, continued to be utilized for grades 7-9 even though the facility was inadequate and no land was available for outside activities or even parking space.

By the mid-sixties, the growth of suburban housing in the western section of the city created the need for additional facilities at the junior high level for the system and additional elementary school housing for that area. The first large school site was purchased and a campus planned to accommodate both a new elementary school and a new junior high school building. Originally named West Junior High School and Arrowood Elementary, the junior high was renamed Warner Junior High School in honor of the long-time superintendent of schools.

These attractive and well-constructed buildings on adequate sites proved worth the careful planning and additional funding for construction. Despite damage, they survived the tornado and today, after the necessary repair work, the junior high houses both junior high schools and
the senior high school until new buildings can be constructed.

The ages and totally inadequate site sizes of McKinley Elementary School and Central Junior High School necessitated their replacement and relocation (unless additional land could be secured) as soon as possible. However, there were no immediate plans to replace these facilities before the tornado. Xenia High School was an attractive and adequate building. Additional land would have been desirable, but not necessary for its continuance as the high school location.

The remainder of the buildings had been reasonably maintained and could continue to serve as educational facilities for many years to come. In many cases, some modernization with particular attention to interior painting, carpeting and general upgrading would make them more desirable as learning centers for elementary school youngsters. In the interviews, parents frequently referred to the drabness of the buildings.

**Budget and Finance**

Xenia, as a bedroom community with little industry and business, has experienced financial difficulties and probably will continue to do so unless this trend changes. The 1972-73 per pupil expenditure in Xenia was $749.99 which was $137.88 below the state average and $190.28
below the average of cities in Ohio. This made them rank 134th among cities in Ohio.

It should be recognized that the ability to tax is tied to the tax valuation per pupil in the district, and that figure was nearly half the average in Ohio—$10,887.55 in Xenia with $19,328.61 as the average for Ohio. The reliance on local property taxes for support of schools meant that Xenians had to tax themselves heavily to maintain even minimally adequate educational facilities and programs in the city.

This was true despite the income level of residents which was near the National average. Xenians had been paying $27.50 in property tax levies to schools to produce the $749.99 per pupil as contrasted with St. Bernard whose per pupil tax valuation was $82,663.11 taxing themselves only $20.72 for schools to produce $1,312.01 per pupil.

At the 1973-74 income rate, if expenditures had continued at the same level as 1973-74 combined with a ten per cent inflation rate, the Xenia schools were projected to have a $1,047,476 deficit in 1975 based upon pre-tornado figures.

15 Costs Per Pupil, July 1, 1972 to June 30, 1973, Division of Computer Services Statistical Reports, Ohio Department of Education, Columbus, Ohio.

16 Xenia City School Budget Projection, March 21, 1974, prepared by the Assistant Superintendent for Business (Mimeoographed).
Total estimated general fund revenue from all sources for 1973-74 was $6,752,828.99—a decrease from the 1972 budget of $6,802,940. Bonded indebtedness in 1974 was $3,166,000.17

Overview—A Synthesis of Respondents' Perceptions

One of the major strengths of the Xenia schools prior to the tornado, as perceived by those interviewed, was the quality of personnel. Principals, in particular, were praised for their ability to accomplish a lot with limited funds. Communication effectiveness with students and parents was also seen as a strength. "If you have a problem, all you have to do is let him know."

Also viewed positively was the involvement of teachers in the formulation of ideas for curriculum and instruction. The leadership of principals in developing written guidelines concerning school regulations was cited as a particular strength in the Xenia schools. "Parents and students know what their rights are, what they can do."

Teachers were seen as being "truly dedicated, very professional and willing to go the extra mile in making things work." The team efforts of the teachers, particularly at the elementary school level in the unit organization, was seen as exemplary.

17 Report to the Greene County Auditor, July, 1974, prepared by the Clerk to the Xenia Board of Education.
A competitive beginning teacher salary, despite the lack of industry and moderate tax base, and the freedom from the problems of large cities was considered a plus in attracting good teachers. "The decision-making that teachers were participating in with the principals and the input they had on committees and the awareness that had been created on the use of instructional materials" was valued as a strength of the school system.

Other respondents thought of different facets of the school program when considering the strengths of the school system. IGE in the elementary schools and CPL math in the junior high school, individualization of instruction, the Federal Title programs, as well as the academic program in general were mentioned. The growth and development of the reading program in the elementary schools, especially the Wisconsin Reading Program, were recognized as assets.

The uniqueness of the community with its diversity of people was mentioned as a strength by a minority of participants, but others viewed the diversity less positively.

The greatest problem identified by participants of the study centered around the rapid turnover in the superintendency. After the long tenure of Superintendent Warner, a young, ambitious superintendent was elected to lead the schools during a period of rampant racial problems across
the country. Xenia was no exception. Changes were made to integrate the schools and busing was started to make this possible. Since that time, although the overt racial problems have subsided, the repercussions of those changes are still felt in Xenia. How much change was brought by the superintendent and how much was an inevitable consequence of the times is not clear, but the association with changes in superintendents and uncertainty of direction continues to be felt.

Dissatisfaction with any particular superintendent was not expressed so much as the dissatisfaction with the feeling that a clear direction for the development of a sound educational program remains elusive. Things get started, but implementation becomes fragmented.

A desire to end the state of flux and reach some stability to improve the educational program was an unmistakable theme. This was demonstrated in the last changeover in the superintendency when the business manager was elected superintendent with the support of the citizens, teachers and administration. He had experience in the superintendency and he had been in Xenia long enough to give continuity to the program. The choice was unanimous—no intensive search was felt necessary to fill the position.

Connected with this state of flux, was the confusion about a philosophy of education in the school system.
The terms "conservative" and "liberal" were used to describe the differences in philosophy, and the communications problems that were concomitant with them. The liberal movement toward individualization and IGE was cited by conservative forces as experimental and detrimental to basic education. However, upon close examination, less differences were evident in the philosophies than in their ability to communicate their commonalities. A recent report prepared by a group of principals in response to the concerns expressed by parents about IGE was seen by administrators as doing much to clarify the program and to gain support of parents after the issues were examined in terms of a basic educational philosophy.

Except for the problems already cited and the pervasive problem of limited budgets, the next most cited problem by respondents dealt with innovation. Part of the problem was connected with the lack of stability felt in the system, but there were other facets to the problem. Lack of funds to adequately implement a new program and to maintain it, lack of teacher in-service and teacher commitment to the idea, lack of expertise in the new program being proposed, lack of agreement among administrators, and lack of assessment procedures with accompanying communications procedures to disseminate the results, were all mentioned as problems connected with most of the innovative efforts of the past ten years.
This appeared to be more of a communications problem than a problem with program innovation. Federal funds were often available when local funds were not for this kind of endeavor. Those funds were more accessible at times than at others and sometimes disappeared altogether. Comprehensive programs like IGE were too mammoth and different to become instantly full-blown when initiated. Time was needed to develop them incrementally.

Those interested in new programs usually found they had to utilize funds when they were available and hope the innovation would present enough demand for future support—that ways would be found to sustain them. Failure to fully implement and sustain innovations disappointed school personnel and caused criticism from the community. Great controversy surrounded the closing of the Center for Educational Programming when the federal grant period ended and local funds were not available to continue the program.

Other problems articulated by participants in the study included the increasing cleavage between teachers and administrators—the labor-management syndrome characteristic of many teacher organizations and administrative structures—and the lack of teacher involvement in crucial decisions. Associated with this lack of communication between administrators and teachers were the misunderstandings surrounding the negotiations process. Negotiations
were used, but they were not developed extensively enough to make either the administrators or teachers feel very confident about the outcomes. The uncertainty of the outcomes led to a cautiousness that sometimes caused feelings of mistrust.

Some resentment was noted toward spending time on textbook committees, study groups and task force units when the ultimate outcome was perceived to be "what the administration wants anyway." This too, appeared to be a communications problem connected with heavy demands upon administrators for decision-making. The press for time was construed by study-group members to mean that the administration used the group in a perfunctory way rather than as a guide to action.

Another concern noted in the interviews was the lack of coordination of pupil personnel services. The burden upon central office administrators was perceived as too great to adequately handle this very important function along with every other responsibility already assigned to them.

It was also evident that there were parents who were unhappy with many facets of the school program and operation. Bad personal experiences with schools and the failure of their children to achieve as well as they would have liked, seemed to incite criticism that was directed particularly at new programs. These programs
provided a target at which to direct their frustrations. Innovation made a convenient scapegoat.

Citizen participation in the school system was measured by respondents in various ways, but the overriding criterion was the amount of financial support given to the schools. However, as has already been pointed out, the lack of industry has an effect on this kind of support, and one other factor was isolated as a significant variable in this regard. "We've been very conservative in what we've asked for." The voters in Xenia had not been asked for additional financial support since 1968. The state income tax and other state increases had given some relief, but the result was felt to be an increasing reliance on the state to support local schools. Some respondents expressed this as the unfortunate misconception that the "state will always come through--will bail us out."

In response to the obvious financial difficulties of the Xenia schools before the tornado, there seemed to be a clear understanding on the part of the interviewees that more local support would have to be forthcoming to alleviate the situation, but there was a strong feeling that this attitude was not shared by the general population. Refutation of this thesis was voiced by a majority of the citizens on November 5, 1974 when the additional 7.25 mill levy requested by the school system was approved.
With the increased state and federal involvement in Xenia since the tornado, it was reasonable to assume that any tendency to rely upon state and/or federal sources for support of local schools would be increased rather than decreased. But passage of the operating levy was a clear indication that the public rejected the state and federal support concept as an alternative to local funding. Even with increased expenditures as a result of the disaster and a spiraling inflation rate, Xenians assumed the responsibility for local schools in a renewed and more vigorous fashion.

One respondent predicted this, predicated upon discussions in the community with persons previously opposed to increased taxes for the schools but amenable to an increase after the tornado because of a deep feeling of loss—a feeling that "we didn't have any schools left—it was different than before."

But citizen participation was not measured by community financial support alone. Respondents identified other important areas of citizen involvement. Parent activities within the school was one of those important areas, and parents scored well as a whole. In response to grade card reports, scheduled conferences and special summons to discuss pupil progress or pupil problems, parents were described as very responsive. For activities directly involving their children, they were also described
as attentive and supportive.

Parent support was seen as dwindling or disappointingly lacking in parent group meetings, such as the PTO and informational or educational meetings designed to get at the real issues behind education. "Parents are interested and want the best for their children, but many times they don't know what that is."

Frustration was expressed at the alienation of some parents (an accurate perception as demonstrated in some of the parent interviews) when they did not have the facts to support criticisms and attempts to inform them were ignored. Some of the parent criticism of schools was seen as negative and motivated by extraneous factors--power plays, personal frustrations, climbing the status ladder, etc.

Parent groups in local schools were organized into autonomous groups called Parent-Teacher Organizations instead of the Nationally affiliated Parent-Teachers Association. Parent Advisory Councils were organized in local schools in response to the central administration level by the Central Advisory Committee of the Parent Advisory Council.

The Central Advisory groups were seen as being more active and responsive than the local councils, and served to strengthen communications between school administrators and the community. A curriculum council made up
of parents, teachers and administrators was begun on October 5, 1973 to investigate the goals for the school system. The effort was abandoned without completion.

A paternalistic tendency to let emotion rule over reason in filling positions and nepotism in business matters was also expressed as a difficult hurdle to overcome in maintaining community support. Efforts by the school system to choose the best candidates for positions or to negotiate business with firms offering the best fiscal advantage were sometimes viewed negatively by the citizenry if local people were bypassed for outsiders.

The motivation behind accusations that "board members, administrators and teachers don't want to communicate with parents" may have been rooted in emotional rejection concerning other issues, but writing them off as a vocal minority appeared to be a mistake in reaching adequate communications channels to gain citizen support. "The majority are happy and they say you're the professional, you do the job. Even when you give them the opportunity to criticize and open up discussions they are not critical of the school other than a minority."

Parents had been less active in local parent groups and in local parent advisory councils than would have been ideal. However, the Central Parent Advisory Council had been well attended and was valued by professionals and lay people as a viable means of communication. Parent
volunteers in schools to assist in the instructional program were limited, but the concept was beginning to emerge as a way to actively involve parents in the school program. Parents seldom visited in the junior or senior high classes, but did so with more frequency in the elementary schools.

Some administrators opposed the superintendent's efforts to involve parents in advisory groups, feeling that parents would attempt to run the schools or would deal only with petty matters. Consensus from this group was eventually supportive of parent involvement when it became evident that the Central Advisory Council was effective in improving communications with parents and any real interference with the running of the schools was negligible.
Chapter 3

DESCRIPTION OF THE TORNADO EVENT

Onset

The early morning weather forecast for Xenia on April 3, 1974, issued a warning of possible thunderstorms. To most residents, this was regarded as a business-as-usual day except for the inconvenience of inclement weather. Schools and businesses convened and afternoon golf games remained scheduled hoping for a break in the weather.

Before noon, a tornado warning was issued. But Xenians were busy with the normal Wednesday activities, and few heard or gave much thought to the warning. The cold air moving in across the warmer ground air was creating tornadic conditions in a wide area from Georgia to Canada, so Xenia was just one of hundreds of cities vaguely keeping an eye on the weather but mostly being concerned with the daily routines.

There was little reason to suspect that by nightfall they would have sustained massive damage and the loss of twenty-four lives from the onslaught of a tornadic system of unprecedented strength and size. Nine other persons would be dead within the week from injuries. From South
to North, one-hundred twenty-seven tornadoes destroyed millions of dollars in property and killed 325 persons.¹ Meteorology professor Theodore Fujita from the University of Chicago labeled it the "747 or Jumbo Outbreak," from the year 74 and the 3rd day of the 4th month. Fujita's theory of tornadoes-within-tornadoes described the tentacled-monster that swept Xenia with 318-mile winds as those who witnessed it described it.

By 4:20 that afternoon, WHIO, a Dayton television station, had picked up the tornado on radar and was issuing warnings to take cover. Shortly after this time, it was touching down in the Bellbrook area near Xenia. Detachment 15 of the 15th Weather Squadron at Wright Patterson Air Force Base picked up the "unlucky 6" on their radar and immediately telephoned the Dayton National Weather Service and activated the base Disaster Preparedness Center. The hooked echo on radar, resembling a "6" was a new sight to those in charge, but they knew its deadly meaning.

The thunderstorm spawning the spiraling mass was extending upward beyond the 50,000 feet measured by the radar screen. The National Weather Service at Vandalia described the funnel as 900 to 1100 yards wide and moving at 48 miles per hour. When it hit, it cut more than a

¹The Journal Herald, Dayton, Ohio, April 4, 1974 and The Columbus Dispatch, Columbus, Ohio, April 4, 1974.
half-mile swath for sixteen miles through the area.

At 4:40 the terror began in Xenia, with the southwest section of the city catching the initial furor. The level plat of homes in Arrowood offered little resistance to the storm's force, except the concrete slabs upon which they rested. Arrowood Elementary School and Warner Junior High were in the direct path. Miraculously, the twisted beams of the Warner gymnasium crushed only the tables prepared and waiting for 600 students and their parents to attend the annual athletic banquet at 6:00 P.M. Had the twister formed earlier in the day when schools were in session or later when the banquet was underway, the death toll could have been horrendous.

Moving on toward the city, Simon Kenton Elementary School and the downtown business district were next in the line of the tornado. While destroying Simon Kenton School, the edge of the funnel was touching the athletic field and the adjacent Cox Elementary School, but both escaped the main force of the crushing monster. The force of the wind caused the steel lighting towers on the football field to twist their concrete foundations partially from the ground, leaving the towers standing at bizarre angles.

The storm continued northeast, closely paralleling Route 42, and roared through the center of downtown Xenia. Buildings collapsed and debris littered the streets resembling a bombed-out city. Stretching north, the oldest and
most historic homes surrounded by generations of trees, surrendered their comforting solidarity to the storm's devastating strength. The bastions of generations of Xenians were gone, and the disorientation brought upon the young and the old was numbing as familiar landmarks vanished.

The oldest school facilities, McKinley Elementary and Central Junior High, could not withstand the tornado's crushing force to the downtown area. After serving generations of Xenians, their fortress-like facades collapsed. The flagpole at Central bent toward the entrance like an obscene dagger piercing the heart of the vanquished.

Continuing on its northeast path, the high school complex, including the Carl Benner Field House, found the storm's fury too great to withstand. The second floor of the high school became a rubble heap and several of the school buses parked beside the building were thrown through the lower floor like missiles to a target. Charging northward toward the Greene County Hospital, the funnel realigned its path toward the northeast just before striking that facility. More homes met their destruction in the northeastern part of the city before the circling suction reached Wilberforce where Central State University suffered extensive damage. Here another life was claimed before the swirling force moved toward open country and dissipated.
In little more than five minutes, Xenia was one-fourth destroyed and much of the rest of it damaged. Twelve-hundred structures were demolished and fifteen-hundred others damaged. Structures damaged beyond repair requiring demolition included 1,139 residential structures, 4 industrial structures, 12 church buildings, and 3 public school facilities. This represented 14 per cent of the homes and 47 per cent of the businesses in Xenia.²

T. Lawrence Jones, President of the American Insurance Association in New York, met with the news media to announce that his estimates of the tornado damage in Ohio amounted to $220 million, and placed Xenia’s losses at $70 to $90 million.³ The April 5 estimates by James Lewis, Assistant Administrator of the Federal Disaster Assistance Administration, estimated Xenia’s losses at $25 million with an additional $1 million in costs to clear away the debris.⁴ The great discrepancy between these estimates points out the difficulty in assessing the total amount of damage, even in gross terms.

The County Auditor listed the loss of $11,610,000 in taxable property resulting in a loss of $458,902 in

²Miami Valley Regional Planning Commission, Xenia Rebuilds, p. 9.
³The Xenia Daily Gazette, April 9, 1974, p. 1.
⁴The Xenia Daily Gazette, April 5, 1974, p. 1.
taxable income. The school system suffered the loss of $301,300 in property tax revenue.⁵

**Warning**

Most of the people interviewed were either totally unaware of the impending storm threat or were only vaguely aware. Only two principals had kept a radio tuned in to monitor the development of the weather during the school day. More people became aware of the weather conditions after arriving home in the late afternoon or while driving home listening to the radio. Participants in two different meetings at the board of education and many of the staff left the building between 4:30 and 4:40 without being cognizant of the serious weather conditions.

Some returned to the building after spotting the tornado and some were stranded in their automobiles. One employee saw the twister coming toward her car and pulled next to a brick building for protection. Her recollections centered around her repeated efforts to stop the movement of the car, which was picked up and moved down the street, by pushing the brake pedal. She walked from the demolished automobile without injury.

"I don't have access to a radio at the school so I didn't realize there was a warning out." "I didn't have

⁵Source: Office of the Assistant Superintendent for Business, Xenia City Schools.
any idea there was a storm." "Our custodian came in the office and told the secretary that there were tornado warnings out, but she didn't say anything to me about it. The only warning I had was when I walked out the door to go home and there it was."

The city of Xenia did not have a warning system to alert the city except for the television radar and weather station alerts. The other warnings came too late to do anything more than take immediate cover. Unless people had a television set or radio tuned in or had a telephone call from a friend, they were likely to have been caught unaware. "I was at the school at about 4:15 and my wife called and said there was a tornado warning and we should be watching for it." "I keep an FM radio going in the office all the time. We picked up the first general warning about twenty minutes to four and the take cover about twenty minutes after four."

Three principals were still in their buildings when the tornado struck. One seemed mesmerized by the swirling wind as it appeared to hover overhead without touching down or causing any damage to the building. Another was leaving the building as the funnel was approaching and quickly reentered the building just as the windows and roof were shattered. The principal, secretary and custodian escaped injury.
The third principal was attempting to hurry the last few students home from a late practice only to discover that the storm was upon them. His account of their seeking refuge in the basement and emerging unhurt vividly captures the feelings of many people immediately following the disaster:

I was waiting for the sirens and the emergency and the police and everybody to come and rescue us. I thought it had just hit a one block area . . . I wasn't concerned about my own family because I had no idea it had hit anything but where I was. After hailing down a friend I started to tell him what had happened and found out he was looking for his wife who was nine-months pregnant, his home was totally destroyed and his business was destroyed.

The evidence was clear that a warning system dependent upon radio or television was inadequate as a comprehensive warning system. The pace of schools and businesses demonstrated that rapt attention to news and weather reports was unusual, and at best, spasmodic. A general alert could have assured dependable warning and provided time for adequate cover.

**Disaster Relief Services and Supplies**

The harsh realities of the scope of the devastation became evident as people began to move around the city. All electric power was cut as the storm entered the city, causing extreme difficulties as the darkness set in, but mercifully avoiding the fire and danger that would have otherwise accompanied the mangled wiring throughout the
city. Most telephones were out, ironically still operating in some of the homes that suffered the greatest damage—the newer homes with underground telephone cables.

The communications systems were greatly impaired. The radio station was without power to broadcast and the only immediate means of communicating was by the Hospital Emergency Communications System (HECS) and the emergency vehicles equipped with mobile units.

Fortunately, Xenia's location facilitated emergency assistance. Even with the tremendous communications problems caused by the devastation, help was pouring in from surrounding areas almost spontaneously. The Red Cross headquarters had been informed immediately after their own Greene County offices had been hit, and quickly established disaster headquarters at the YMCA on Church Street. By early evening, the superintendent of schools was assisting in the location of available shelters and authorized the Red Cross to gain access to any school building by whatever means necessary to provide shelter.

Within three hours, radio station WGIC was on the air with emergency power and operated around the clock to communicate with the citizenry. Locating missing persons, directing clean-up efforts, calling for specific officials, asking for needed supplies and equipment and announcing the location of various services as they became established were all handled via radio.
Cox Elementary School and Spring Hill Elementary School were utilized as shelters along with the First Methodist Church, the Blue Moon Recreation Center and the Bergamo Center. More than 2,400 persons were temporarily sheltered in these facilities. Shawnee Elementary School housed a variety of disaster agencies to aid people with the myriad problems involved in reestablishing homes.

Spring Hill School became an emergency supply center during the difficult days following the tornado. Food staples, cooked food (prepared by the cooks in the school's kitchen), clothing, blankets, drinking water and other general needs were provided from that facility. They received, sorted and dispensed the many relief supplies from department and grocery stores, wholesale manufacturing companies and private contributors.

The cooks and custodial staffs of Spring Hill, Cox and Shawnee Schools, assisted by the staffs of other schools, worked from early morning to late evening to supply the needed food and to give their expertise in food preparation.

The deluge of problems facing a population suddenly faced with overwhelming devastation was paralyzing--families separated without any means of communication, streets impassable because of felled trees and debris and a derailed train across the main arteries, a contaminated water supply, no electric power and weather conditions threatening to
bring more of the same.

Power saws and heavy equipment seemed to appear from nowhere. The Red Horse Unit from Wright Patterson, a heavy duty equipment disaster unit, had been activated and was functioning almost immediately. Other private individuals and construction companies came to assist in the opening of thoroughfares and the location of wounded persons.

A clearing center for volunteers was set up at the Greene County Fairgrounds. The Mayor, William Wilson, assisted in this endeavor. Volunteers streamed into the city and how to funnel them into areas of need presented a mammoth challenge. The feeling was often expressed that "I want to help, but what can I do?" Many times it appeared to be an impossible task. Many were turned away because there was no organization asking for more volunteers. Some joined organized groups on their own, and others returned home or found some individual project.

The stream of volunteers, supplies, equipment and sightseers made it necessary to cordon off the city to unauthorized persons and the National Guard was brought in to assist local authorities in maintaining order. Two young guardsmen lost their lives in a fire which started in a damaged building they were guarding, officially making the tornado death toll 33 within the city of Xenia and one at Wilberforce.
Citizens generally expressed pleasure at having the National Guard on duty. To people who found it difficult to sleep well during the long nights following the tornado, the sound of the Guard trucks passing the dark streets was "a comforting and welcome sound."

The Xenia Daily Gazette managed to publish the newspaper despite damage to their building and lack of power by utilizing the printing facilities of a nearby newspaper, the Middletown Journal. The Dayton Power and Light Company and the Ohio Bell Telephone Company began immediate repair work on a priority basis, to open as much communication as possible. The administration building of the school system, for instance, was provided with a single telephone line the next day to establish emergency communications.

Even though immediate access to Greene County Hospital was not possible for many people, surrounding hospitals in the emergency network were able to care for the wounded. Miami Valley Hospital, St. Elizabeth, Kettering Memorial, Good Samaritan, Grandview and Children's Medical Center were all operating under the emergency system. Once again, Xenia's location proved to be an asset.

The most fortunate circumstance was that so few people were seriously hurt or killed. Luck played a part, but it should be noted that people did the logical thing
to protect themselves and their families instead of panicking when faced with disaster.

Hospital Administrator Herman N. Menapace reported that Greene County Hospital treated more than 1200 tornado victims who were released after treatment. An additional 126 were admitted for treatment. Other area hospitals assisted in providing the necessary emergency supplies. During the first few hours, they were delivered by motor vehicles, but as soon as the weather permitted, helicopters were used to rush in supplies. Many other patients were treated in emergency vehicles and at shelters.

The Army Corps of Engineers assumed the responsibility for the demolition of structures that were deemed dangerous to the health and safety of citizens. Private contractors did most of the actual demolition, but coordination was handled by the Corps. When possible, owners were notified and their permission solicited, but dangerous structures were removed even if the owner could not be located for permission.

Volunteers from a wide area responded to the crisis in Xenia. A quantitative measure of the most effective groups and individuals during the emergency was difficult to ascertain, but the responses of interviewees were interesting in this regard. An overwhelming majority of the

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6 The Xenia Daily Gazette, April 12, 1974, p. 1.
respondents were most impressed with the assistance of the Red Cross, various church groups (including the Menonites, Salvation Army, German Baptists and Seventh Day Adventists), and the Military assistance from the National Guard and Wright Patterson Air Force Base. All of these represented organized groups that were prepared for disaster assistance. Specifically, the efficient organizational abilities of the Menonites and the military units from Wright Patterson Air Force Base to deliver disaster relief services were cited most frequently.

The church groups were remembered most warmly, with their willingness to give to all who asked and to perform the most menial tasks to help alleviate the crisis. The Red Cross had an efficiency of operation that sometimes alienated local people. Nonetheless, the organization was generally characterized as accomplishing its objectives with admirable efficiency and was considered indispensible in coordinating diverse relief activities to reestablish equilibrium in the community.

Other groups that were mentioned less frequently, but with no less appreciation, included the YMCA, the health department, highway crews, volunteer firemen, the Greene County Rescue Squad, Civil Defense Workers, teachers and other school personnel, utilities crews, local citizens and young people from surrounding areas. Special praise was accorded the city manager as well as the fire chief and
the communications services of the local radio station, WHIO.

The community spirit and closeness expressed by the residents indicated a disregard for class, racial and social differences as well as age and sex differences during the immediate post-disaster period. "You could go to any house and be welcome at any time." The drawing together of a people experiencing adversity together was clearly evident when talking to the people or reading about post-impact events.

Miraculously, 8,600 families in Xenia emerged from the tornado, most of them without serious injury or death among them. But 1,200 households were suddenly without homes and few personal belongings. Although 500 of them were able to find temporary living space in Xenia, when schools re-opened on the 22nd of April, the enrollment had dropped from 8,307 to 7,205. Five students from Simon Kenton were dead, one from Warner Junior High and one from Xenia High School. By May 3, the enrollment had climbed to 7,728 only to drop back to 7,566 by the end of the school year.7

Of the system's fleet of 36 buses, including 30 route buses and six reserves, 13 were put out of operation by the tornado. Nine of them were demolished, two of them

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7Enrollment Reports, Office of the Superintendent, Xenia City Schools.
damaged but repairable, and two of them sustained body damage only.

By early in May, the Buckeye Union Insurance Company of Columbus had agreed to pay $231,750 to replace the Benner Field House; $800,000 to replace Central Junior High School; $41,750 to replace the bus maintenance building; $4,670,000 for Xenia High School; $1,280,000 for Simon Kenton Elementary School; and $1,250,000 for McKinley Elementary School. An additional $66,260 was agreed upon for vehicles destroyed or damaged by the tornado. The necessary repair work at Shawnee Elementary, Cox Elementary and the Central Administration building as well as the extensive repair work at Arrowood Elementary and Warner Junior High were covered by the insurance and exceeded $1 million in repairs.

On April 9, President Nixon flew to Xenia to view the devastation and commented that "it's the worst disaster I've ever seen." Governor John J. Gilligan and President Nixon were both reassuring in their support of the community and promised to "cut the red tape" to hasten the process of obtaining relief. The famous words of President Nixon to Housing Secretary James T. Lynn and Federal Disaster Administrator Thomas Dunne during that visit later caused considerable controversy—"expedite it. Cut the red tape

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8As quoted in the media and remembered by the respondents in the study.
to the bare bone . . . whatever money it takes we will spend."

**State and Federal Assistance**

Staff from the Ohio Department of Education was investigating the Xenia situation by telephone on the night of the tornado. The only information available through the emergency station handling incoming calls, was that the superintendent of schools and his family were safe.

Arrangements were made to have the Assistant Superintendent for Administration, Thomas J. Quick, and the Director of School District Organization, Warner R. Moore, visit Xenia the following day to contact Superintendent Adkins and get some idea of the extent of damage and immediate needs of the school system.

Following a meeting in Dayton with the superintendents in that area in which an appeal was made to assist the Xenia schools, State Deputy Superintendent, Franklin B. Walter arrived in Xenia late Thursday afternoon to discuss the situation with Superintendent Adkins.

State and federal disaster assistance would require a lot of coordination, and Superintendent Adkins expressed a need to augment his staff to facilitate the work ahead. Adkins was no neophyte in business matters, and he knew the necessity of presenting technical data in indisputable form to the government when making application for funds.
Neither he nor his staff had time to follow through well enough to avoid the possibilities of loss of funds or undue delays. Adkins asked the Ohio Department of Education for assistance, and this request was immediately taken to Columbus. After State Superintendent Martin Essex and his staff made an on-site and helicopter inspection of the schools in Xenia on Saturday, a decision was made to provide an administrative assistant to Superintendent Adkins.

A retired assistant superintendent from Hamilton County, Herschel West, was asked to assist Superintendent Adkins. His selection was based upon his "knowledge of the federal process and the political process" gained in his previous position concerned with vocational education. West began his part-time assignment in Xenia on April 29, and led in the efforts to plan and implement the construction of temporary modular facilities to house Xenia's school population within the city beginning with the 1974-75 school year.

Contacts from the state department were made with the Chicago Regional Office of the U.S. Department of Health, Education and Welfare regarding the plight of Xenia's schools. A field representative from that office was sent to Xenia "within 72 hours of the tornado and remained for four weeks."9 HEW estimates of damage to

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school facilities was $10,383,990 with an estimated insurance reimbursement of $9,882,371. The balance of $501,619 was pledged by the federal government.

Communications problems became critical as the local, state and federal governments all became involved. Xenia was receiving National and International attention in response to the disaster. Deciphering the motives of political figures as they made public appearances and made public statements becomes a muddle of opinion and conjecture, but motives were questioned and discontent expressed by the respondents as promises were later perceived as meaningless. "Basically I feel there was a lot of misinformation provided by the federal government at that time. Promises were made in order to calm people."

Public statements as early as April 5, outlining the direct grant aid, loan provisions and emergency relief provisions available from the federal government had been comforting at the time to a beleagured people. Disenchantment with receiving these services created some animosity in the community as evidenced from public accusations and debates between officials and the citizenry.

Part of the confusion stemmed from the Federal Disaster Relief Act of 1970 and the political activity in Congress toward passage of new legislation which eventually resulted in Public Law 93-288, a Federal Disaster Relief Act of 1974. This was passed by the Senate on April 10, by
the House (amended) on April 11, with subsequent agreements to conference reports by the Senate on May 9, and the House on May 15. Final approval came on May 22, 1974, with the provisions of the Act retroactive to April 1, 1974, except section 408 which became retroactive to April 20, 1973. The "provision of temporary facilities for schools and other essential community services" in the 1974 Act was not specifically spelled out in the 1970 Act which federal officials were using as guidelines at the time of the disaster.

It was interesting to note that Representative William H. Harsha of Ohio managed to get the 1974 legislation passed without going through the House Rules Committee, by obtaining the unanimous consent of the House of Representatives. How Harsha and Representative Clarence Brown, Jr. managed to get the legislation passed before the recess of Congress, is not clearly understood, but the prospects for Xenia were much brighter after the passage of the bill.

Original statements by Aron Laipple, Program Manager for the U.S. Office of Education, nine days after the disaster, assured citizens that Washington would be asked to send three-fourths of the money that schools

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would probably be receiving, with final settlement coming later. Subsequent reports indicated that federal funds had been exhausted and additional appropriations would have to take place before any money could be given to the school district.

Additional upset between the local district and the federal government flared when an approximate $7 million payment for losses was invested and the federal officials announced they would deduct any interest accrued from their payment to the school system. The projected loss of $500,000 from this announcement was less than enthusiastically received by the superintendent of schools.

State emergency funds were provided under Ohio Code 3317.06 for "severe reduction in taxable valuation for school purposes," payable upon approval by the State Controlling Board after a declaration of an educational emergency has been declared by the Governor and application made by the local district. A request for $300,559 under the provisions of this law, was granted by the State Controlling Board on August 19. The request for $1,300,000 to finance the additional cost of adequately rebuilding the junior and senior high schools was not acted upon. State Representative John M. Scott was still imploring the Board to honor this request in October of 1974.

11The Xenia Daily Gazette, April 12, 1974.
The added costs of operation immediately following the disaster would have presented financial difficulties for the schools had it not been for the prompt payment of insurance money which could be used as the system deemed necessary. An initial payment of $750,000 was delivered less than a week after the disaster. Subsequent payments were made on April 25 and May 8, 1974.

On April 9, President Richard M. Nixon flew to Xenia, along with Governor John Gilligan and Congressional leaders to reassure Xenians that "red tape would be cut to the bare bone." Such an array of top officials had an impact on the citizens. Disaster victims felt they could rest easy because state and federal officials cared enough to express their personal concern and to promise prompt aid. The admonition of President Nixon to Housing Secretary James T. Lynn and Federal Disaster Administrator Thomas Dunne to expedite matters, created hope in Xenia that the government bureaucracy would move rapidly.

The politician's flare for the dramatic and for public visibility may have made the pomp and circumstance of the visits to Xenia nothing out of the ordinary for them, but Xenian's tended to ridicule the promises as grandiloquent rhetoric. The credibility of public officials came under attack more because of the sweeping statements than the failure of the state or federal governments to deliver needed services.
A concerned superintendent of schools was looking ahead to November 5, when an operating levy would be on the ballot and knew that misunderstandings about financial assistance from the state or federal levels could create a false sense of security on the part of local citizens. His efforts to clarify the issues resulted in heated statements being made about HEW and individuals at the state and federal levels.

An article, "Hot Air, Red Tape Follow in the Wake of Xenia's Tornado," by Philip Renzin in the Wall Street Journal on July 3, 1974 contained critical quotes by Superintendent Adkins that created considerable controversy:

"President Nixon shook my hand and said, 'Carl, you get your kids back in Xenia and we'll cut the red tape'. . . . 'I believed it for about three weeks, but now each day I'm afraid the red tape will start over again. I can't get any officials to make a decision.'" 12

A retort was issued by HEW from the Chicago Regional Office with HEW Regional Director, Richard E. Friedman, defending HEW's position. The controversy centered around the funds for purchasing temporary school facilities and the involvement of "red tape" when the original specifications and bids were rejected by HEW. Friedman charged that

"the bids were defective in that they did not specify what was really required and that potential bidders were not presented with a fair opportunity to respond."\textsuperscript{13}

**Immediate Coping Actions of the Schools**

Superintendent Adkins summoned the remaining central office staff to the basement moments before the tornado ripped the roofing from the building on Market Street. The building was not seriously damaged, but a glance outside made it obvious that most of the adjacent downtown area had not been so fortunate.

The school day had ended, so the immediate concern of those present was to get home and locate their families. "People attempting to leave the area were blocked by fallen trees and debris and houses all over the place. Lights out, phone service gone—we were at that point in time, befuddled as to what to do." Nonetheless, ways were found to leave the building and they began their homeward trek.

Superintendent Adkins followed in about an hour to check on his own family. Fortunately, he found his home and family safe and he returned to the city for the long night's ordeal of assisting in the emergency efforts of the city.

Traveling with the Director of the Red Cross to locate usable school facilities for emergency shelters was an arduous and disheartening task. Vehicles could not get through the city and punctured tires hampered mobility. The men walked and commandeered other transportation as they attempted to reach school buildings.

The devastation to the school buildings was appalling. The shock from the tornado itself was replaced with the realization that work toward rebuilding Xenia's schools and planning for the immediate future had to begin that night. The City Commission was in session mapping plans for coping with the emergency. At 2:00 A.M. the superintendent joined this group, without invitation, to include the schools in the planning efforts.

Communications problems started at this point. The city was not prepared to deal with such massive destruction, and no school system in Ohio's history had been faced with such devastation. The traditional separation of politics from schools--local government from school administration--made cooperative and cohesive planning an unpracticed and lumbering endeavor.

In crisis, the separate worlds became aware of their need for interrelatedness, but found their ability to communicate hampered by long tradition. The superintendent felt slighted by this august group and they probably felt that emergency planning for the health and safety of the
citizens had little to do with the school system. As leaders, nerves were taut with the awesome responsibilities placed upon them that night. At 6:00 A.M., the superintendent left the meeting resolved to exert his leadership to get schools operating again.

As might be expected, many people turned to the superintendent for direction. Thursday was haphazard, with random offers of help being matched with requests for assistance. The assistant city planner requested help from school administrators to supervise street crews in clean-up work and three principals performed this task for several days. "We were assigned that responsibility and we really didn't know a thing about how to do it." Other principals were assisting in the shelters and other community activities.

Thirty-two teachers, including one principal and the business manager, lost their homes in the tornado. No deaths or serious injuries were sustained by school personnel, although many were injured and some were hospitalized briefly. Employees were instructed to care for their families first and to assist in school system efforts when they could.

There was no overall staff planning. Each school system employee was free to attend to person, community, and/or school concerns as he chose. Those who volunteered to assist with school problems were instructed to do
whatever they felt needed to be done or were placed in charge of tasks that were currently identified as pressing needs.

School personnel assumed responsibility for a variety of community activities in the post-disaster period. Some housed relatives and friends and attended to family needs. Most of them were also actively involved in the broader community activities, such as assisting the elderly, giving first aid in the shelters or at the YMCA, sorting and dispensing clothing in churches or shelters, assisting with school system salvage and storage, working with recreation groups to care for children, helping other families with salvage work, debris clearance, retrieving school records, and assisting in the shelters and working in nurseries to care for children while parents attended to pressing matters affecting the reestablishment of their homes.

Teachers and principals were able to play a crucial role by offering solace and comfort to children who feared separation from their parents following the disaster. They represented stability to children and worked to restore the equilibrium. "Part of my job was to greet people as they came in because I knew these children and I wasn't a stranger, so that was one of the main functions—to find the children who needed to come away and play and have care while mother took care of all the other things, like
getting food."

One principal took charge of salvaging stored food and equipment in damaged buildings and used highway crews to transfer the food and equipment to an elementary school building for storage. The school psychologist transferred frozen foods from all buildings to the Ohio Soldiers' and Sailors' Orphans' Home for storage or gave it to the Red Cross for use during the emergency period. Principals supervised the shutting off of water and gas lines to prevent damage and danger in the buildings. Some instigated security measures and salvage activities almost immediately following the disaster.

Money was removed from the buildings and valuable equipment locked up in some buildings. Entire libraries were moved to other locations within buildings to protect them from weather damage. Unfortunately, this was not very successful against the pervasive water damage. Crucial scheduling records and student records were secured as soon as possible. School safes provided excellent protection of their contents. Although buildings were vulnerable to looting before the Guard came on duty, few losses were reported.

Friday, Saturday and Sunday continued to be a time of diverse activities for school system employees. The central office instigated a search for information concerning the safety and welfare of employees. Records were
compiled to pass on to inquirers about school personnel. This function served a humane and personal need in the community and school system to know about people during a period of tremendous stress. All school personnel remained on the payroll during the crisis period and checks were issued in several building locations before classes resumed on April 22.

By Monday, the superintendent had instructed building principals to supervise the salvage and clean-up work in their assigned buildings. Office records were secured, if they had not already been removed for safe storage in the central office. Many teachers volunteered assistance in local buildings, sometimes working under the direction of the principal and sometimes doing whatever they deemed necessary.

Daily meetings were scheduled in the administration building to keep communications open about problems and to "plan our strategy as a group." The meetings did not manage to keep communications open because of the diversity of actions of personnel and the fact that strategy was developed between individuals or small groups and the superintendent rather than large group strategy.

Auxiliary personnel from the Ohio Department of Education or employed by the school system worked in one area or under one administrator and most school personnel, including assistant superintendents, were unaware of the
additional personnel's specific contributions to the total recovery efforts unless they worked directly with them.

One administrator expressed his frustration in these words indicative of many administrators: "I felt left out and I was aware of other people feeling left out of decision-making." The disparate approach to problem solving led another administrator to lament the paucity of collegial planning as opposed to the amount of time administrators spent in manual labor. The pre-tornado thrust toward an administrative team concept was described as "ceasing to exist."

Another comment reinforced these observations: "If we had only taken a little time to plan as a group--efforts were duplicated and duplicated again as we each did what we thought was our job only to discover it had been done by somebody else."

Counter instructions regarding salvage operations frequently left equipment, materials, furniture and books exposed and vulnerable to increased damage from the elements. By the time clearance was given by building inspectors to enter damaged buildings, water damage was severe. Later salvage efforts resulted in storing much damaged or worthless equipment.

Nobody knew what could be claimed or how much proof was necessary to substantiate claims to the insurance company or to the federal government. The temporary
employment of a retired engineer from Wright Patterson Air
Force Base facilitated the inspection of heavy equipment
and the documentation of damage and losses sustained in
the tornado. Less technical equipment and materials were
assessed by administrators with insurance adjustors.

A salvage list was compiled by the business office,
with dangerous areas in buildings being listed as off-
limits. Permission had to be granted by the building or
central office administrators to enter the buildings which
were guarded by the National Guard. Teachers assisted in
the general salvage work and retrieved their classroom
records and personal possessions when it was possible to
get to them. Teachers also personally collected student
belongings when they could. High school students were
allowed in the building only on one occasion to obtain
personal items.

All high school grade records were on computer tape
and could be reproduced without great difficulty. Some
minor class records were lost, but no records of consequence
were destroyed.

Storage space became an immediate obstacle to
salvage operations. Assistant Superintendent Bill Wolfe
was charged with the responsibility of procuring storage
space for everything that had to be moved in the attempts
to save as much as possible. The elementary school
buildings not being used as shelters or for emergency
services were filled with equipment, food, and salvaged supplies.

The danger of the demolished high school building collapsing, necessitated that razing operations take place without long delay. The removal from the premises of heavy equipment, business machines, kitchen equipment, and large quantities of salvaged materials and supplies, made additional warehouse space imperative. Ultimately, this meant locating space outside the city.

Before operations and storage could be managed in the administration building, the damaged roof had to be repaired. Emergency repairs were also needed in other buildings to prevent further damage. To accomplish this, the board of education met in special session to declare a "state of urgent necessity" and to authorize school officials to obtain the services of firms for emergency repairs without bid procedures. Ohio law made this provision:

Whether or not a case of urgent necessity exists so that a board of education may be enabled to build, alter or repair a school house or make other improvements without complying with the provisions of this section, as to competitive bidding is dependent upon the determination and declaration of the board itself and can not be questioned for any reason other than fraud, collusion, absence of good faith or abuse of discretion.¹⁴

Under this provision of the law and upon approval by the board of education, immediate repairs were started. Initial estimates of damage to school buildings by a local architect acting as an inspector for the city, announced that Central Junior High School would have to be razed as well as Xenia High School, and McKinley and Simon Kenton Elementary Schools. Later appraisals declared Central as repairable, but the damage was so extensive that temporary repair work was not deemed feasible. The other damaged school buildings received emergency repairs, with insurance adjusters and a school system architect working together to determine the extent of damage and the most logical way to proceed.

Two major factors alleviated the financial concerns of the school system—the assurance by state and federal officials that losses beyond those covered by insurance would be taken care of by state and federal funds, and the knowledge that the insurance protection of the school buildings and contents was up-to-date and adequate.

The present superintendent of schools, while serving as the business manager under the former superintendent, had convinced the superintendent and board of education that the insurance coverage of the facilities and equipment of the school system should be brought together under one blanket policy. Parcelling out the insurance to local companies was difficult to keep updated
and coordinated to insure adequate coverage. After it was determined that greater coverage could be secured at lower rates than individual policies, the board adopted the plan. The comprehensive coverage included transportation vehicles as well as buildings and their contents.

The total amount of insurance available as of July 15, 1973, was $19,202,000. Each building was listed on a table of values, but was not separately insured. This meant that realistic appraisals of loss to a building and contents might exceed the value listed on the table of values and could be paid by the insurance company as long as the total losses did not exceed the $19-plus million total coverage.

This feature proved to be invaluable. As is probably the case in most school systems, the inventory of building contents was inadequate. Except for major equipment, most building inventories were based upon a cursory listing by classroom teachers or department chairmen. Information about materials and equipment was not very explicit if listed at all. The business office had records of purchases for the past ten years as required by law. But equipment and materials pre-dating this time were difficult to ascertain unless they were adequately inventoried at the local building level. The major responsibility for inventories rested at the building level, and only rarely did this receive a priority among the demands
placed upon teachers and principals.

Estimates of damage to buildings was much more easily determined. Trained professionals could survey and estimate structural damage quite accurately. Thus, the greatest problem was in determining loss of contents. The assistant superintendent for instruction had to assume much of the leadership in providing this information. This had to be done in cooperation with the business manager and the superintendent of schools with the assistance of a broad range of school personnel.

To facilitate this process, two assistants were employed. A retired engineer from Wright Patterson Air Force Base was employed to assist Dr. Hill with the instructional equipment inventories and salvage as well as reordering equipment. The husband of the Clerk-Treasurer was added to the staff to assist the business manager in handling non-instructional equipment and supplies.

Dr. Hill and Mr. Wolfe agreed to deal with instructional and non-instructional materials respectively. Confusion resulted when communications between the superintendent, assistant superintendents and newly appointed personnel left areas of responsibility unclear so that instructional and non-instructional hardware were being confused and efforts duplicated. Attempts to divide areas of responsibility presented problems with things that fell into more than one category. Because of good working
relationships, communications problems were resolved without serious difficulty.

Estimates of materials and equipment were channeled to the business manager who compiled the data for presentation to the insurance adjustor. The latitude provided by the insurance coverage, made the inadequate inventory less crucial. The coverage on contents of the buildings was $738,000, but the flexibility of the policy allowed the adjustment up to the estimated losses of $1,130,000. This was possible because the added content costs could be shifted to the building coverage. The lack of adequate inventory would have been costly only if the total insurance coverage had been exceeded.

Assessing inventory losses presented a formidable challenge, even with added assistance. But from the day after the tornado, it was determined that orders for textbooks, materials, equipment, and buses would have to be placed immediately if delivery was expected in time to make the operation of school possible. Simultaneous with these tasks, was the problem of salvage and repair work. And even these significant tasks had to be subsumed enough to provide time to plan for the re-opening of schools. Planning new buildings needed to be underway if a large percentage of children in the Xenia Schools were to ever experience an adequate facility and a normal school year. Building time would be from two to three years and every
day's delay would make it that much longer.

Another unprecedented problem was the rapid change in the costs of construction. Accustomed to "next year's prices will be higher," the fact was that literally next week's and next month's prices would be higher if the needed materials could be obtained at all.

After the assurances of financial assistance had been expressed, the superintendent instructed the assistant superintendents to get on with the business of ordering the necessary materials and supplies to re-open schools and not to worry about salvage. No lives would be endangered to retrieve things from the buildings. Much subsequent salvage work took place, but the immediate ordering of replacement textbooks was not hampered by waiting on salvage efforts. A $180,000 order was placed for textbooks within a few days. Adoption procedures that had been underway for some new texts was rushed to completion. Replacing outdated textbooks was both impossible and imprudent. Studies already underway to guide textbook selections were valuable in this respect.

Other texts were either not yet under study or were in the early stages so that the input of a few professionals—teachers, principals, central office personnel and an employed university consultant—made a rushed study of available texts and recommended replacements.
After assessing the classroom losses at about $1,000 in supplementary materials in each classroom from reports prepared by classroom teachers, the replacement process was a "horrendous task." Much of the reordering had to be delayed until the summer months provided some time to get teachers and principals together to identify what the specific needs were. "We had to identify what map was lost, what globe was lost, what game was lost, what flash cards, what concrete instructional materials--this was very difficult."

The demands placed upon the superintendent and assistant superintendents made adequate communications difficult to maintain. Their work needed to be constantly coordinated and reviewed. Unfortunately, the pace of decision-making seemed to preclude this desirable procedure. When demands were the greatest for information, crucial pieces of the puzzle were missing and had to be reconstructed. Few people could reconstruct those pieces, and they were already tremendously overburdened with immediate coping decisions and short-range contingency planning. Before any of this could be resolved, long-term planning was beginning to face the same individuals.
Chapter 4

RECONSTRUCTION ISSUES

Formulating Plans to Re-open Schools

Following the initial meeting with State Superintendent Essex, Superintendent Adkins knew that the minimum days for the school year as required by state law would have to be met or state foundation funds would be endangered. When and where school would resume sessions would be a local decision, but the requirement would have to be met. The week following the disaster event was a scheduled spring vacation, so a few days could be taken to study the circumstances affecting the re-opening of schools without delaying the school year into the summer months.

Immediate efforts following the disaster to locate school personnel had mercifully revealed that none were dead and very few were injured enough to prevent their returning to duty within a few days. There were many personal and family problems facing them with damaged and destroyed homes, but these were common problems with most Xenians.
The fact that minimum days for the school year had to be adhered to if the financial problems of a school system already on the brink of financial disaster were to be avoided, and the fact that school personnel remained intact enough to accomplish the task, meant that from one perspective school could and should resume for the remainder of the year.

On the other hand, the problems of inventories, reordering books and materials, planning for the 1974-75 school year and the planning for the replacement of devastated school facilities could all be more effectively accomplished with school personnel if they were not simultaneously conducting a regular school session. Transporting children to available facilities with late schedules and dark debris-filled streets and sidewalks would present obvious dangers. Bus drivers working long hours and maneuvering buses through demolition and construction work was a sobering consideration. But children would be living day after day with these dangers in their neighborhoods and having children in school could save lives and give reassurance to youngsters who needed a steadying hand.

Another factor influenced the superintendent to begin exploring ways to re-open schools. Psychologists and mental health professionals from various places began to contact the superintendent to apprise him of some of the possible after-effects of the disaster. The
possibilities were astounding—general depression, increased accident rates, mental breakdowns, and induced physical symptoms as well as increased anxiety reactions to another disaster.

To help cope with these terrorizing possibilities, psychological services could be obtained through the Greene County Mental Health and Retardation Board (648), the Ohio Department of Mental Health, surrounding school district pupil personnel services, and hospital extended services. Ann S. Kliman, Director of the Situational Crisis Service, Center for Preventative Psychiatry in White Plains, New York, was brought to Xenia by the 648 Board to confer with school administrators and later with teachers to give direction on how to recognize symptoms of impending psychological reactions, and how to cope with them.

If schools were not in session, these services could not be very effective in reaching children whose city was a shambles and whose homes were in ruins. Getting schools open again would help to bring about some feeling of normalcy and equilibrium to a shaken city, and psychological services could be funneled through the schools to support families through this traumatic period.

Despite the possibility of emotional tension creating problems with interpersonal relationships between children, parents and school personnel, the evidence was clear to Superintendent Adkins that there were more reasons
to get schools underway again than to dismiss them for the remainder of the year. According to Superintendent Adkins, this would not have been possible if "my staff had been severely injured or incapacitated." The task would have been too overwhelming.

While Mr. Wolfe was attending to problems with buildings and transportation, Mr. Page, the Assistant Superintendent for Personnel, with locating personnel, and Dr. Hill with procurement of teaching materials and supplies, Superintendent Adkins was contacting other superintendents and local, state and federal officials to find out how to rent or use school facilities in other districts. Nobody really knew. Federal assistance guidelines were not clear in this regard, and new legislation for disaster assistance was pending with no way to predict the outcome.

The elementary schools could re-open on double sessions in the existing buildings. Pairing them would be a logical process of distance and size, and the building principals and teachers could then work out the mutual arrangements to their satisfaction. Cox was the only facility capable of accommodating the Simon Kenton population of 861. McKinley was close to Shawnee and could easily fit into the building. Spring Hill was the nearest building to Arrowood to house that displaced school. Spring Valley and Tecumseh could operate without double sessions.
Kindergarten classes had been on double sessions before the tornado, with one teacher teaching a morning and an afternoon class. Instead of this, it was decided to have kindergarten children attend school on alternate days.

Permission was secured from the state department to shorten the school day for double sessions. The school day for elementary students was reduced to four hours. Schools whose buildings were intact operated on an 8:00-12:00 schedule, and displaced schools utilized the host schools from 12:30-4:30. Although Spring Valley and Tecumseh could have resumed their pre-tornado schedules, busing complications made it less confusing to have them reduce their hours to the 8:00-12:00 schedule in line with other elementary schools.

This was quickly accepted as a logical solution by the superintendent and the administrative council composed of principals and central office personnel. The bigger problem was what to do with the junior and senior high populations. The state department arranged with the Dayton system to make some of their facilities available and the offer was made. However, by this time, the local superintendent had also been offered facilities in Beavercreek and in Fairborn. How the decision was made to accept the offers made by Beavercreek and Fairborn is not easily pinpointed, but it was generally expressed as "when you are in need, you turn to those closest to you." Perhaps
the affinity of small school systems for each other made this a more palatable alternative than the more distant and larger Dayton offer.

Agreements were reached with the Beavercreek and Fairborn districts to use their buildings for the junior and senior high schools with those boards of education presenting the federal government with a bill for the use and maintenance of their facilities. The eventual settlement of $93,270 to Beavercreek and Fairborn by the federal government was for operating expenses beyond that which the Xenia Board of Education would have normally incurred in its operation.

The Beavercreek High School facility and the adjacent Ferguson Junior High School were selected to house Xenia students and the Park Hills Junior High in Fairborn was chosen to house the other junior high school from Xenia. Some confusion resulted when the larger junior high school was scheduled to attend Ferguson in Beavercreek which was designed to accommodate about 1,000 students while Central was matched with the larger junior high facility in Fairborn. After initial plans had been made and announced, a switch in the two facilities had to be made because the 1,300 students from Warner could not fit into the Beavercreek building. The high school facility matched well with the size of the Xenia student body.
The host schools had to accept the inconveniences of other students and teachers using their facilities and storage areas had to be shared in the rooms. Otherwise, Xenians had to absorb the inconveniences. The school day was not shortened in the host schools, nor were athletic and locker facilities given to the displaced students. Spring sports were cancelled for Xenia students.

The Xenia junior and senior high students scheduled their school day to utilize the host buildings at 3:00 P.M. and ending at 8:00 P.M. Tote bags or other containers were used to transport books and materials since additional locker space was not available. Teachers generally found ways to consolidate cabinet and file space to provide the Xenia teachers some storage in the classrooms.

To get schools in operation again, not only did buses have to be found to replace the damaged and destroyed ones, but the size of the fleet had to double to transport students to the various facilities. Anticipating a mammoth traffic problem if high school students used their automobiles for transportation, it was decided that all Xenia students would ride buses instead of using private transportation.

The many elementary students who had formerly walked to school had to be transported to an elementary school that was intact if their facility had been destroyed or severely damaged.
To obtain the needed buses and plan routing would have been a gargantuan feat, even with the expertness of the business manager who had worked as a transportation supervisor in the state department before coming to Xenia the year before. The Field Service Section of the School Finance Division in the Ohio Department of Education, assigned four men to assist in the total redesign of the transportation and attendance areas at no cost to the school system. Their part-time services, averaging about two full-time positions, were provided for several months to complete the data collection that eventually led to a redesign of the attendance areas following the tornado.

The Chief of Pupil Transportation from the Division of School Finance, Hanford Combs, also took over the responsibility of contacting school districts to obtain surplus buses to loan the Xenia City Schools and to make direct contacts with manufacturers of bus bodies to expedite delivery of new school buses. Orders normally took several months, and the only way to speed this up was to have the state level intervene to preempt less pressing orders from other systems. The local system neither had the personnel nor the time to accomplish these tasks.

The needed buses were located, with additional ones available on a stand-by basis. School systems in other districts sent their surplus buses used as back-up
buses for their fleets. The expectation that these would be older buses in poor condition, requiring a great amount of maintenance proved not to be the case. To the contrary, either as a result of the coordination at the state level or because local school districts chose to be as benevolent as possible, most of the buses loaned to the district were quite adequate and required only routine maintenance.

The garage facilities had been destroyed for vehicle maintenance, which meant that new facilities had to be found to service and store the buses. The availability of gasoline and petroleum products was at its nadir during this crisis period, and intervention by the State Department of Education, the State Fire Marshall's Office, the State Highway Department and the state and federal politicians was necessary to find the required fuel and to grant permission to erect temporary fueling facilities at the edge of the city on state property.

Businessmen were credited with "pulling an 8,000 gallon tank off the production line right out of the factory" and assisting in the installation. The State Highway Garage became the dispatching point for the buses and the temporary fueling system was installed despite the concomitant dangers with above-the-ground storage tanks. A tanker truck was elevated in readiness for gravity-feeding fuel if electric power were not available for running the pumps.
Not knowing where students were living following the tornado and the short time available to plan bus routing, dictated that the old routing system be used. The sites of the demolished schools were used as the pick-up points to transport students to other facilities. This meant that students walked through debris and encountered heavy equipment as they walked or waited for buses. It also meant dark streets and safety hazards as they returned at night.

All of this eventually came to be only the beginning of the transportation problems. Buses were running from before 7:00 A.M. until past 9:00 P.M. The long hours, lack of experienced drivers and low compensation, created a nagging personnel problem that never subsided. A school was conducted for inexperienced drivers, but only three or four drivers were recruited this way. All substitutes were placed on a full schedule and some former drivers returned to assist. But more were needed. A plea was made to neighboring school districts to send their substitute drivers and regular drivers when they were not on scheduled runs. The response was sufficient to man the buses for the remainder of the year.

Differences in salaries presented a problem. This was settled by buying the services of a school district, with the district paying their drivers and billing the Xenia Board of Education. This way, differences in salary schedules were maintained.
Drivers for the Xenia System belonged to the Ohio Association of Public School Employees. Some problems came out of the negotiated agreements on length of the working day and the pay schedule. However, the business manager was able to informally negotiate a salary adjustment for the extra time spent on the road beyond that which had been originally negotiated.

Parent concerns were expressed to administrators and board members about the unloading of buses at the Simon Kenton, McKinley, Arrowood, Warner, Central and Xenia High School sites with no street lights or police protection and dangerous traffic problems. Parents expressed the feeling that the National Guard was removed too soon from the city since the police department continued to be too overburdened to assist in these safety measures.

Administrators were even more concerned about the long hours bus drivers were experiencing and the dangers of human error under stress exacerbated by a city inundated with demolition and construction activity. The combination of over-worked or inexperienced drivers with students who were reacting to a period of trauma and change caused problems with transporting students that threatened more disaster daily.

Accidents did occur, including one accident on highway 42 that sent several students to Greene County Hospital for emergency treatment, but fortunately nothing
more serious occurred. Some isolated discussions of parent supervision on the buses or using university volunteers from Central State never came to fruition.

The assistance of John E. Brown from the Elementary and Secondary Education Division of the Ohio Department of Education was effective in assisting Dr. Hill in obtaining textbook replacements for the re-opening of schools. Paper work was expedited, textbook suppliers contacted and shipping facilitated by this division. Schools re-opened without being hampered by the loss of basic textbooks except some slight delays in dispersing them at the local building sites.

The rapid and efficient ordering and delivery of many books, materials and equipment actually placed a strain on the receiving schools to deal with the influx of educational supplies. Delivery in the morning for a school that convened in the afternoon or vice-versa, meant that confusion sometimes resulted in what had been received, who signed for it or where it was stored. This caused less of a problem for the remainder of the 1973-74 school session than it did later in transferring and locating it for the 1974-75 school year, however.

The psychological services of the Xenia School System under the direction of Jim Defeo and Barbara Gill, assumed the responsibility for researching the psychological effects of disaster and in coordinating the available
psychological services for children and teachers. Workshops were conducted for teachers to inform them of the expected behavior patterns of youngsters, and to outline the available services. A brochure was prepared for parents on the effects of disaster upon children, to be disseminated through the schools. Permission was granted by the Worcester Youth Guidance Center in Worcester, Massachusetts to use their brochure on *Children and Disaster* as a framework for the Xenia brochure.

These workshops and prepared materials attempted to say to school personnel and to parents that children needed time to make adjustments in their lives, and patience and understanding would be paramount to this adjustment. Attempts to make school-as-usual or family-as-usual would not be in the best interest of the child. Groups like the ones from Good Samaritan Hospital in Dayton came in and conducted small group sessions in the schools to help children adjust. Other groups assisted in this way, and many others volunteered but were not accepted because the burden on teachers and principals was too great to respond to every volunteer who might appear in the building. The planned programs for groups and individuals by trained psychological workers were well received by teachers and principals, but "principals weren't interested in having volunteers come in and go through this process of defining what a person could do that needed to be done. It was just
an extra load for them to carry."

Consternation was expressed by teachers, parents and principals over the decision to administer the standardized achievement tests soon after school re-opened. This was viewed as counterproductive to the emphasis on dealing with the emotional stress of children. Little resistance seems to have been offered at the time of the pronouncement, but the feeling was strong that the test results meant very little. Their validity was questioned under the testing conditions and any disagreement over the outcomes is likely to be attributed to this factor.

The Chief of the School Food Service Program from the Ohio Department of Education, Wade D. Bash, procured enough funds to provide all Xenia school students with a sandwich and milk for the remainder of the school year. No regular lunches were prepared because of the split-sessions, but mid-morning or mid-afternoon sandwich and milk snacks were prepared by cafeteria personnel to serve the students.

Once the buildings had been identified for the re-opening of schools, building principals and teachers were charged with the responsibility to plan the usage of the facilities. Agencies had to vacate buildings and additional movement of temporarily stored items had to take place. Government warehouse storage was made available at the Defense Electronics Supply Center when
no additional storage space could be found in Xenia.

Reports indicated that the Red Cross did a phenomenal job of clearing the school buildings that had been used as shelters and left them polished and shined. Buildings that had housed displaced persons and served as the dispensing center for community needs during the emergency period, sustained no abuse or loss of equipment as a result of the occupation.

Schools re-opened on Monday, April 22, with a loss of only seven instructional days. After all of the informal convening of faculties during the post-disaster period, and the administrative planning of central office and building administrators, room assignments and schedules were quickly established in formal group meetings on Friday, April 19. Rooms in the high school were re-numbered to match the numbering system on their schedules from the former school, and maps were prepared to facilitate the location of the rooms.

Principals tried to match personalities of teachers who would be sharing the same room to lessen conflict between faculties. The problem of having two elementary school faculties in the same building at the same time for a portion of each day was solved by utilizing a large area in each building (multipurpose room or gymnasium) as a faculty room. Faculties who taught from 8:00-12:00 used the faculty room for planning from 12:00-2:30 when they
left for the day. Teachers on the 12:30-4:30 schedule used the faculty room from mid-morning until their students arrived at 12:30.

The junior and senior high school teachers did not have the problem of having two faculties in the buildings simultaneously, except for a brief period each day since the host schools were not on reduced schedules.

The obliging attitude of the faculties of the host schools toward the guests, and the gratitude of the guests at finding temporary quarters, made the co-existences smooth and pleasant. No reports of any consequence indicated anything but a pleasant sharing experience.

The sharing may have resulted in expanded professional awareness of programs and materials as teachers interacted in informal groups. Comparisons of facilities were made and ideas projected for inclusion in the new Xenia facilities.

Teachers and students adjusted well to the new settings with student-student, teacher-student, and teacher-teacher conflicts reported as minimal. Isolated instances of student or teacher erratic behavior were so small compared to the expected number of trauma-induced cases that most respondents considered them non-existent. Observations consistently indicated that pre-tornado behavior tended to be observable in most persons in exaggerated form following the tornado. Persons
characterized as stable prior to the tornado, generally appeared to be super-stable following the tornado. Persons thought of as edgy, nervous, impatients or generally lacking in stability, appeared to be even more so following the tornado.

Few students developed school phobia, sustained lack of ability to concentrate, or had general signs of adjustment difficulties. The few who did were described as children who had been the victims of pre-tornado stress situations or who had suffered excruciating emotional trauma during the tornado.

Temporary set-backs for children were common, but these made rapid adjustment to the situation. "I had one little boy who was really good at math, but it was really hard for him to control his pencil to write the first week." "Sometimes the children would cry because they weren't sure another tornado wasn't going to come." "I had one boy who I never had any trouble with, then he began to say he wasn't going to do things and he daydreamed and he didn't think it was very important to do his work."

Perhaps the early intervention by school personnel in dealing with emotional stress in children helped prevent more pervasive and frequent emotional problems. It is also possible that a natural consequence of the disaster upon school personnel was a renewed emphasis upon the mental health of students and colleagues. In some cases, this
could have been a re-prioritized emphasis.

It seems significant and appropriate to note that as a group, the respondents in this study exuded stability and demonstrated exemplary empathetic attitudes. Responses came through as candid and rational. But the impact of the April events were movingly evident in the tear-swelled eyes and occasional broken voice as respondents described events. Recounting events was usually painful for participants.

Dramatic overt signs of the emotional impact on individuals may have been infrequent in the classrooms, but no victims of the tornado escaped untouched. It seems reasonable to assume that teachers having experienced the same trauma as the students, made it possible for them to read the signs of emotional stress and perhaps respond to those needs in appropriate ways that prevented serious emotional consequences in children.

In response to questions about children and teachers crying and becoming upset during storms following the tornado, one respondent related this touching and enlightened attitude toward a teacher who wept with students during a storm:

I would say that she was just showing her emotions and that people are different, that is all. I would understand that she might have had a lot of emotional problems. I wouldn't be angry with her. I would tell my children that storms upset her, that's all. Everybody doesn't have to have a calm outlook. How could I put someone down for doing what is normal?
In retrospect, there is little question that the superintendent and board of education made the correct decision in getting schools in session again. Some minor resistance was expressed by some high school seniors who felt they should be allowed to assist in community efforts instead of returning to classes, and initially some school personnel resistance was noted, but this was abated after schools resumed and the positive effects were evident.

The feedback from parents in the interviews and to teachers and administrators after schools re-opened, indicated strong support for the re-opening of schools. They also viewed it as a positive action on the part of school personnel and a plus for the school system. "The first time I saw the buses lined up, I cried for a long time, but it put my children into a normal community, and I liked that. I think that helped." "I think they needed something to hold on to, and school is a good part of their lives." "I was surprised that the first night after the tornado I received a phone call from a parent who said their home had been destroyed and they were living in Dayton and they wanted their child back in my classroom as soon as possible with his own peer group."

The arrangements worked out by the central office and building administrators for the operation of schools for the remainder of the school term were well received by the respondents. The hours were difficult and the
instructional arrangements far from ideal, but most agreed with this respondent: "It was not business as usual, but I think it was business as best we could manage it under the circumstances to achieve the ultimate goal."

Schools re-opened on April 22 with great uncertainty. Teachers and administrators had many personal burdens with which to cope. They did not know how well they could fulfill their roles as educators. Parents did not know how well their children could cope with school. Many children were frightened of many things, including the new experience of riding a school bus for some of them.

Nonetheless, the day went smoothly. Enrollments were down, but most of the teachers were back and classes were once again together. Teachers and students found the routine of classes therapeutic. The comfort of familiarity and the joy of seeing minds transcending adversity was reassuring. They soon knew that teachers and students could cope.

Temporary living arrangements for so many families caused unstable enrollments and attendance in schools. By May 3, at the end of the fifth six-week period, the enrollment had climbed to 7,728 which was only seven per cent below the March 8 figures.¹ By the last reporting period on June 7, the enrollment had again dropped to 7,566 which

¹Source: Office of the Superintendent, Xenia City Schools, computed by the writer.
was nearly ten per cent below the beginning September enrollment.

The last seven weeks of school passed rapidly. The school hours were short and there was much to be done. Teachers were able to fulfill their teaching duties, and used fewer substitute teachers than under normal circumstances. Schools had proved that some semblance of normalcy could be regained and the goodwill of children and adults had sustained them. Great interpersonal conflicts had not arisen and the year ended with professional and personal associations strengthened.

Planning for the 1974-75 School Year

In little more than three weeks, the newly appointed administrative assistant and the superintendent of schools moved from the zero point to firm recommendations for the board of education concerning the temporary classrooms for the beginning of the 1974-75 school year. Six recommendations were presented to the board in special session on May 22, and approval granted, contingent upon ratification by the U.S. Office of Education representative and the Ohio Industrial Commission.

Mr. West, immediately upon coming to Xenia, began a search for companies that could provide temporary

\[\text{Source: Office of the Clerk, Xenia Board of Education.}\]
facilities that would meet the requirements of the Ohio Building Code. Verbal agreements were reached between HEW and the school administration that bids would not be advertised since few companies could provide the needed facilities and time was extremely important. The board of education had already legally made the omission of bids possible.

The proposed contract to Lakewood Incorporated of Washington C.H., Ohio, was for twenty-four classrooms plus nine special areas for each of two elementary sites, at a cost of $572,139 for each site, and 20 classrooms and five special areas for the Warner Junior High School site for $463,500. Also included was a proposal to award Modern Sales and Construction Company of Wilmington, Ohio, the contract for constructing temporary physical education facilities at Warner for $92,000.\(^3\)

Nine bids were submitted and the lowest bidders selected who could meet the specifications and guarantee completed construction by September 1, 1974. The Simon Kenton site would be used, but in conjunction with an early decision by the superintendent, the size would be reduced to 600, and the student load shared with McKinley which would increase to an enrollment of 600. McKinley would be moved to the edge of the city where the board of education

\(^3\)Source: Office of the Assistant Superintendent for Business, Xenia City Schools.
owned land to build an elementary school in the highly populated Windsor Park area. The second group of modules would be constructed there instead of the former McKinley site. The size of Warner Junior High School would be enlarged by using temporary facilities to accommodate both junior highs simultaneously in the afternoons and the senior high school in the mornings.

Superintendent Adkins's public attacks on HEW can be understood in the context of the events following that May 22 board meeting. The contract was not acceptable to the federal officials because one of the bids had been lower than the accepted bid. On May 31, one day before the June 1, deadline quoted by the contractors for firm price bids and completion dates, the low bid was accepted by HEW instead of the approved bid by the Xenia Board of Education.

Great debate ensued. The now famous "trailers" debacle started--the attempts by federal officials to get the Xenia Board of Education to accept the separate portable units of the low bidder, facetiously called trailers, to house students while local officials were attempting to explain that state specifications could be met only by placing them thirty feet apart presenting an impossible situation on the size of the sites and creating untenable educational conditions.
Local officials were accused of not drawing adequate specifications and friction between local officials and federal officials increased. Every political lever at the disposal of the local administration was employed, including a much-publicized flight to Chicago by Superintendent Adkins to express his consternation to officials at HEW and every state and federal official having any connection with Xenia was apprised of the situation.

Congressman Clarence J. Brown became entwined in the controversy. The "cut the red tape" declaration was haunting federal officials and infuriating local officials. Attacks on HEW and upon the federal bureaucracy by Superintendent Adkins resulted in a nine-page letter to the superintendent from Congressman Brown in defense of federal support and actions based upon available information.

Brown also pointed out inconsistencies in the differences in bid prices prepared by the school system as he had previously understood them as contrasted to later figures. State consultant West defended the verbal agreements on the basis of attempting to work out details with bidders to provide emergency facilities on short notice without any precedent or guidelines to guide their development.

"I'd be on the telephone with bidders maybe four or five times in one day with questions like, 'what do you think about this, or we have checked with the building
department in Columbus and this is the case." Taking
time to put all of the communications in writing and
waiting for mail delivery was considered too slow and an
impediment to communications. Immediate confirmation of
steps in the process was also made with Mr. Laipple from
HEW, but communications became garbled by the time the
bids were in.

Once the debate was resolved in a June 11, session
with officials from the school system, HEW, the Ohio
Department of Education, the State Division of Factories
and Buildings, the State Industrial Relations Department,
the Ohio Disaster Services Agency, the newly formed Spirit
of Seventy-Four Committee from Xenia and Federal Congress-
ional and Senatorial Representatives, it was clear that
the re-opening of bids would be prefaced by written
specifications independent of verbal agreements or
communications.

The federal government capitulated. After studying
the bids submitted to the Xenia schools prior to June 20,
the U.S. Department of HEW announced the approval of bids
on June 21. The two elementary facilities were lower
than the original bids at $551,350 each, but the junior
high modules increased to $526,835 and the gymnasium
facility to $154,800.

Whether the extensive verbal communications instead
of written confirmations between the federal government and
the local school administration caused the confusion, or the lack of specifications or the inability of the federal bureaucracy to proceed with efficiency, great damage was done.

A slight increase in the size of the physical education building specifications and a rocketing rise in the price of steel, added $84,557 to the cost of the total project and the same firms were given the contracts. Irretrievable diatribes strained relations between the local, state and federal officials, and the losers were the children of Xenia. The delay prevented the completion of the modular units in time to open school in September. A delay in the opening date for the junior and senior high schools and beginning double sessions again in the elementary schools resulted from the melee.

Initial efforts by the superintendent to secure funds for planning replacement facilities and program study were unsuccessful. But by early in May, the Ohio Department of Education awarded an ESEA Title III grant to the Xenia schools in the amount of $21,430 to run from May 16, 1974 to December 31, 1974. The grant provided for the employment of a part-time program and facilities consultant to assist in the planning of curriculum alternatives and building needs for the future of the Xenia schools. The culmination of this component was the development of specifications for two
new elementary schools and a junior and senior high school. Dr. Ralph Purdy, educational consultant and retired Miami University Professor, was selected for the task.

A case study of events from April 1, 1974 to November 1, 1974 was included in this Title III grant as well as a component designed to develop a set of guidelines to assist school systems in preparing for coping with possible disasters. Of major interest to the Xenia schools was the planning grant to enable them to adequately plan new facilities and to determine possible future curriculum directions.

Dr. Ralph Purdy worked with the assistant superintendent for instruction to accomplish a crash facilities planning program. With the aid of the Ohio Department of Education and the Educational Facilities Laboratory of the Ford Foundation, exemplary facilities were identified for Xenia school personnel to visit to form some clear ideas about modern facilities and preferred architectural features. A wide variety of elementary and secondary school facilities were recommended within easy driving distance of Xenia.

Visits were scheduled for central office personnel, principals of buildings that were destroyed, and selected teachers from those buildings. Parents were encouraged to accompany the groups as they visited other schools, with bus transportation provided. Discussions were held to
determine what features appealed to the groups and why.

The magnitude of the task became apparent early in the summer. Involving administrators, teachers and parents in the decision-making process was time-consuming and required extensive coordination. Dr. Hill decided the brief contracted time of Dr. Purdy was not sufficient to accomplish the entire job and decided to spearhead the elementary school facilities study personally, and to have Dr. Purdy direct his efforts to the secondary school recommendations.

By the end of May, McKinley and Simon Kenton groups had visited the Centerville and Westerville schools and made preliminary decisions about their instructional program and facility plans. By June 11, the board of education was ready to endorse the building of two identical open-space elementary schools, and the school architect instructed to begin the preliminary drawings.

Dr. Purdy rushed his study to completion in three months instead of the usual two years, submitting the final senior high school specifications on September 18, 1974. Thirteen schools were visited and involved 115 teachers, administrators and parents. Nineteen consultants from the Ohio Department of Education contributed their expertise in various subject areas.¹

¹Ralph D. Purdy, Planning for a New Xenia Senior High School.
Dr. Purdy's initial questionnaire of junior and senior high school staff members indicated a "great diversity in the professional beliefs and values held by Central Junior High School and Senior High School faculty members in the Xenia City School System." On twenty-two of the fifty-five questions, the range was 100 decile points. "Some teachers marked the items as 'not needed, not applicable, does not exist or should not exist,' and others marked them as 'optimum, high developed, excellent.'" The difficulty in reaching consensus among staff members regarding program and appropriate facilities was evident. Fortunately, Dr. Purdy's skill with organizational planning coupled with his expertise at interpersonal relationships, accomplished the task for the facilities planning.

The Aftermath—Planning for the Future

From the first early morning meeting of the City Commission following the tornado to the recent successful campaign to add a 7.25 mill levy for the operation of schools, it was evident that the school administration had to coordinate planning efforts with the total community. The Spirit of Seventy-Four Committee held its organizational meeting on April 24. The intensive thrust of that organization to utilize professional expertise and advice to

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5 Ralph D. Purdy, Decile Scale Range on Belief/Value Questionnaire, unpublished paper, Xenia City Schools, June, 1974.
accomplish the wishes of the citizenry in rebuilding Xenia gained momentum in influencing political decisions.

Zoning and building permits were quickly held in abeyance until a study by the Miami Valley Regional Planning Commission could be completed to give some global view of rebuilding alternatives. A chance to rectify the uncoordinated city building efforts of the past century was not taken lightly by this group. Influential citizens, led by Jack D. Jordan, Editor of the Xenia Daily Gazette, made this group organized enough and strong enough to withstand the pressures to begin rebuilding the city immediately and to put it back the way it was. HUD assistance was solicited and resulted in Urban Renewal funds being made available to achieve the goals of the group. The revitalization of Xenia and the rejection of the status quo came through as the predominant theme of this organization.

The school system became intertwined with the movement of the Spirit of Seventy-Four group. Obviously, the rezoning of business and residential areas affected school redistricting and the anticipated growth areas of the city had an impact on the future of the schools.

Attendance of school administration members at the Spirit of Seventy-Four meetings and frequent contacts with the City Commission enhanced positive communications and resulted in valuable joint support. However, cautiousness of autonomous domains being usurped by others created
problems with open communications between the school system and the local citizens and government officials. Attempts to gain the support of the school officials for a joint public/school transportation system subsidized by the federal government was rejected by the school administration as unfeasible. The greater demand of the schools for transportation and the overlapping of peak usage of buses as well as the lack of control by the school system was cited as the major barriers to a joint venture. Fortunately for the continued relationship between the school system and the city government, the emergency bus service provided by the federal government was continued with federal assistance to form the new X-Line bus service for the city.

In a joint meeting of the Xenia Board of Education and the Spirit of Seventy-Four Committee on July 9, a resolve was made between the Board and the Committee to involve citizens in the planning of the future of the school system, and the Committee pledged its support to help the schools rebuild. Two issues raised by individual committee members—whether abandoning the old McKinley site with the area zoned residential was wise, and whether two high schools should be considered instead of one—did not gain the support of the joint group but probably helped to clarify issues that could have been counterproductive had they not been openly discussed.
Cooperative agreements between the City Commission and the school board on September 12, paved the way for other mutually beneficial endeavors. To meet part of the $1 million needed by the city to qualify for $3.5 million in Urban Renewal funds, one-fourth of the cost of rebuilding two elementary schools could count as non-cash grant-in-aid contributions. The support of schools was solicited and pacts proposed to cooperate in planning, site selection and acquisition, procurement of federal and state monies, the promotion of a school levy for the operation of schools and the fostering of open communications concerning the progress of disaster recovery.6

At a previous meeting with the superintendent on September 3, the needs of the schools had been outlined to the committee, and businessmen expressed their belief in the relationship between the quality of schools and the community's ability to attract business and industry. The superintendent was implored by members of that committee to keep channels of communication open and to keep the public apprised of what the schools were doing.

The subject was approached again in a Spirit of Seventy-Four meeting on September 17, when several board members attending that meeting conceded that communications

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6Spirit of Seventy-Four Committee, Minutes of Meetings, Meeting of September 12, 1974 (Typewritten).
had been less than they would have liked and joined the Spirit group in planning a public forum after the subject of lack of communication was once again pointed out by the Spirit President, Jack Jordan.

The forum was held the following Tuesday, September 21, at the USSO Home. Only one-hundred citizens were present as Dr. Ralph Purdy discussed his planning recommendations for the Xenia schools and a panel of board members, school administrators and committee members made themselves available to answer questions submitted in writing from those in attendance.

The communications problems referred to by the Spirit of Seventy-Four Committee were greatly sparked by the action of about sixty persons from the Spring Valley, Tecumseh and Shawnee areas who hired a Fairborn Attorney to protest the redistricting announced by the administration. Superintendent Adkins and the Assistant Superintendent for Business, William B. Wolfe, met with the irate parents in the board room the next day and the attorney for the parents charged a "lack of communication between the school administration and the people."

Assistant Superintendent Wolfe added fuel to the fire when he attempted to explain the redistricting as "established in a non-personal, objective manner, purely on statistics." His remarks were interpreted by many parents to mean that people were only statistics—a distortion of his logical
approach to redistricting.

The protesting parents then appeared at the board of education meeting on September 9. The allegations of lack of communication were again made and the board and administration admitted difficulties in this area. The careful study of where each child was located in the system and drawing school district lines to minimize busing except to divide the concentration of blacks into three non-contiguous districts for racial balance, was not completed until the end of August. Nothing was made public about the redistricting process until it was completed.

Planning New Facilities

The final plans for the two new elementary schools were approved by the board of education on September 10, a space of only five months from the time of the disaster. The rushed planning was done because the assistant superintendent for instruction felt there was rapid consensus on the open-space concept, and his feeling that the building must be adaptable to future educational methods. During the discussion phases of the planning, the board decided to have the open-space buildings designed with walls that could be mounted or dismantled to make possible a more self-contained program as well as the open-space concept.
The high school planning specifications prepared under the direction of Dr. Purdy were submitted to the board one week later, but discussions continued to ensue before the architect could be instructed to prepare the preliminary plans. The study pointed out the consensus of the participants to build for flexibility with moveable walls, a library-media center and specific space listings of needs by departments to be included in the new facility. Open-space was not endorsed by the participants nor was the school-within-a-school concept accepted.

In a public meeting in the administration building on September 20, Dr. Purdy reminded the citizens and school personnel that they had to decide what they wanted. "Custom tailor your new school to what Xenia believes." From his earlier research, it was obvious that consensus on a philosophy of education and instruction would involve some concerted effort to reach--it did not exist in the early planning stages.

The lack of funds coupled with the enrollment figures and projections led Dr. Purdy to recommend the construction of one well-constructed facility to house grades 9-12 instead of the former 10-12, and reduce the junior high to grades seven and eight. On the basis of the September enrollments, this would mean a 7-8 enrollment of 1,168 and a 9-12 enrollment of 1,919. The present Warner building would accommodate the two-grade junior high
school and the larger high school facility would be constructed to house 2,000 students.

Deciding on a change of organization and the possible consolidation of three former facilities into two, presented hard decision-making for the school system and for the community. The extensive visitations, discussions, reporting, and presentations of alternatives with the strengths and weaknesses of each will doubtless make the eventual decision more palatable to the community. The projected enrollments as computed by Dr. Purdy through the 1983-84 school year, indicated a decline in 7-12 enrollments, but the suggested building plans could adapt to an increasing enrollment by adding another junior high school should this ever be necessary, and the high school could revert to a 10-12 organization if additional space should be needed.

There was much support for the retention of two junior high schools in addition to the high school, and this probably will happen if funds can be secured to build two separate facilities. Although some persons expressed the wish to have Central Junior High School rebuilt, these were few in number compared to those who opposed putting between $800,000 and $1 million into that aging facility. There is little chance that it will be rebuilt as a school. Perhaps the present movement to convert the facility into a community building will answer the sentimental need to
have the building restored without relegating it to use as an educational facility.

Respondents supported the development of modern facilities as opposed to restoration of the old. "Our town was old-fashioned as were a lot of our schools . . . I don't think they should put them back as they were." "This is a perfect time to do some things as far as building schools. The fact that the community isn't growing as fast as it has been in the past, perhaps they should consider building smaller buildings." "I think making Simon Kenton a smaller school is the best thing I've heard, because it was too large." "I think it is an opportunity to change some things. My children have all gone to Central and I don't miss the building at all." "Our high school was put together in a three-addition sort of thing and it was really almost a puzzle as far as our building layout. Of course this is going to change and I am glad to see that."

The residential rebuilding phenomenon of residents who were almost invariably making architectural changes, adding space and in general rebuilding homes that reflected modern living was identified by participants in the study as significant. Respondents indicated a feeling that this increased understanding of the problems of rebuilding by residents would increase the support of citizens toward the rebuilding of more functional schools with more adequate architectural and site features and that residents
would better understand and accept the accompanying costs.

Respondents also emphasized the importance of constructing the new facilities with tornado-resistant features. The inresidence shelters developed and described by Ernst W. Kiesling and David Goolsby from Texas Tech University in Lubbock, Texas described this possibility with precision. Interior walls of reinforced construction provided adequate protection from tornadic winds without adding unrealistic costs to construction. To build an entire facility in this manner would usually be prohibitive, especially for public schools, but the evidence indicates that inside walls in specific areas of the facility can provide the necessary protection.

The approved architectural plans for the two new elementary schools included some of these features, and also had buffered areas in the halls for increased protection.

A Disaster Warning System

Respondents were unequivocally clear in their statements that adequate warning of an impending disaster did not exist in Xenia. Depending upon the public media was not considered adequate for those whose work did not

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7 Ernst W. Kiesling and David Goolsby, Inresidence Shelters from Extreme Winds, unpublished paper, Texas Tech University, Lubbock, Texas, May, 1974.
lend itself to constant attention to newscasts. Schools fell into this category.

The warning issued by the weather specialist from WHIO Television in Dayton at 4:20 P.M. gave many Xenians 20 minutes to find shelter, but a network of warning with the weather service and a warning system to activate would have alerted many more individuals. Some people objected to the civil defense warning system, but it is the quickest way to alert large numbers of people available to date. Fears of panic at the sound of the alert is not substantiated by practice alerts and actual tornado alerts in other communities. The warning system provides more people with the opportunity to tune in public broadcasting for additional information and consequently also provides additional time before the disaster strikes.

The purchase of battery-powered bull-horns to sound in-school alerts should electric power be unavailable was an early precaution in the Xenia schools following the tornado. Other recommendations included the provision of radios with dependable long-lasting battery power in every school building. Maintenance checks should be scheduled to insure their readiness just as fire-extinguishers and fire-alarm systems are checked. A telephone warning procedure was also suggested as a precaution to be taken by the central office to insure that every school was alerted in case of another disaster.
Trustees of the Xenia Township discussed the need for a warning system in their July 1, session and agreed to have a federal feasibility survey done. Ways to finance the system of which the federal government would pay half, were also discussed but no system was decided upon. Networks with surrounding townships for emergency radio communications have been arranged to maintain the capability to dispatch emergency units if local radio communications fail.

**Post-Disaster Problems**

**Personnel Concerns**

Immediately following the tornado, negotiations with the Xenia Teachers' Association were abruptly halted by common consent of the Board of Education and the Association. Some minor items were disposed of, but monetary items were left in abeyance. Teachers agreed to leave the salary schedule at the 1973-74 level without a cost of living increase. The trust of members that this inequity would be rectified in the future seemed implicit in the agreement. It was recognized that the board of education was in an untenable position as far as contracting any additional expenditures with no assurance of income.

Loss of student enrollment caused the board to terminate the employment of 90 persons by the end of the
Thirty non-tenure teachers' contracts were not renewed, one bus driver, 29 classroom aides, 15 cafeteria personnel, four maintenance and custodial employees and one school secretary were terminated. Ten cafeteria workers on continuing contracts were also terminated.

Unemployment funds became available as a part of the Federal Disaster Act for certificated and non-certificated personnel. The Ohio Education Association also assisted teachers with relief funds, donated by members for alleviating financial property losses suffered in the tornado.

The Operating Levy

Many problems faced school personnel as they opened the 1974-75 school year. But no issue loomed as large as the approaching 7.25 mill operating levy vote. They had good reason to be pessimistic. Rising inflation, increased costs of rebuilding homes, and industrial slowdowns created an economic uneasiness that threatened to neutralize any increased post-tornado support for schools.

A survey commissioned by the board of education and made public on September 28, increased the apprehension of school personnel. With little more than a month to go before the vote, the survey indicated that only about

8Source: Office of the Assistant Superintendent for Personnel, Xenia City Schools.
40 per cent of the voters were committed to an affirmative vote.9 Four mills of the proposed 7.25 increase was designated for wage increases and the post-disaster freeze on wages made this a critical issue.

Post-disaster donations to the school system were used to engage the firm of Adams, Gaffney and Associates to promote the tax levy. The Xenia Teachers' Association also donated funds to erect promotional signs advertising the levy. The slogan, "Xenia Schools Must Live, Too," was used to headline a series of promotional events. A Saturday morning parade and a citizens' rally in support of schools were special events following the public endorsements of the school levy by the Spirit of Seventy-Four Committee and the Editor of the Xenia Daily Gazette. Newspaper advertisements featuring questions and answers about the levy increase were used generously.

How successful the commercial promotion of the levy was, cannot be determined except by the firm that did the promotion. The levy may have passed without the promotion, but the administration and board of education apparently felt the risk was too great. At any rate, the levy passed and few people had felt it was a sure thing.

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Synthesis of Respondents' Perceptions

Within two weeks after the disaster, the Xenia Board of Education announced that Arrowood Elementary and Warner Junior High Schools would be repaired and ready for occupancy by the beginning of the 1974-75 school year. The gymnasium would not be ready until October, but the basic buildings would be operational. A firm commitment was made to erect the necessary temporary modules and have all Xenia students attending school within the city by September.

The subsequent controversy and delay of the modules, the memory of the spring busing problems and the apparent hopelessness of repairing Warner Junior High School by September, prompted respondents to voice skepticism over the school system's ability to cope with the logistical problems facing them by September. The majority of respondents considered the most pressing problem facing the system to be coping with the problems of obtaining facilities to open school, and the logistical problems of having the necessary equipment and supplies to teach and the organization to deal with the transportation problems.

Maintaining a healthy educational environment for students, drew polar reactions. Equal numbers expressed concern over the ability to maintain a viable educational program with shortened hours and shared or temporary
facilities and those who viewed the shortened day as resulting in less discipline problems and streamlined efficiency in teaching.

The third obvious thread of concern was expressed as the problem of maintaining open communications within the school system and with the community. The rapidity of decision-making was seen as presenting barriers to open communication while being fatalistically accepted as an unavoidable consequence of the plethora of problems demanding resolution.

Mentioned, but less frequently, were the problems of maintaining patience and a sense of humor, providing extracurricular activities for students, the coping with faculty and student changes from former schools to new environments, and financial problems. Finances were viewed as a much larger concern on a long-term basis than on a short-term basis.

Added to the events already causing delay in completion of the modules, was the constant threat of construction hold-ups over disagreements with unions, but fortunately a confrontation never materialized. Just as the hopes of the community were raised when the modular units at Warner were appearing like mushrooms, a state building inspector announced on August 9, that the concrete block piers supporting the units were not satisfactory and the units would have to be elevated and new supports constructed.
How this was resolved was not announced, but construction proceeded without any major reconstruction of the foundations.

But the task was too great—on August 29, the superintendent announced that McKinley-Windsor Park would not be ready and classes would begin on double sessions with Spring Hill School. Simon Kenton modules would not be ready, and they would attend school on a double session with Cox Elementary School. The struggle to open the junior and senior high schools in the Warner facility on schedule was announced as futile on September 4, the opening day of school. Grades K-6 started classes, but classes for the junior and senior high students were delayed until the following Monday.

Additional buses had to be requested through the Ohio Department of Education to supplement the fleet for the double session schools until the modules could be readied. These were secured, but the last-minute resignation of two bus drivers left the transportation supervisor once again scurrying to meet a deadline. The last-minute changes created routing difficulties, but the first day ended with nothing more serious than some confusion and a few irate parents. Considering the difficulties, most people described it as a good first day.

Busing difficulties were alleviated during the following days, and preparations made to begin the 7-12
classes the following Monday. Last minute work continued through the weekend to make the opening possible.

Junior and senior high classes began on September 10. The careful transportation planning of the state department with the local transportation supervisor and the detailed planning by the faculties and administrators at Warner, made the new arrangements work well. The construction problems experienced at Warner and by McKinley-Windsor Park and Simon Kenton made coping difficult, but not unprecedented. The construction problems were reminiscent of the earlier years when burgeoning populations made the completion of facilities often trailing occupancy deadlines.

Whether Xenia students will suffer any educational deprivation as a result of the confusion surrounding the completion of facilities, is not known. But the drain on the energies of school personnel following so closely the emotional trauma of a disaster, is unfortunate and probably detrimental to their effectiveness.

September 9, enrollments for the district were 900 below the previous September and 70 below the June, 1974 enrollment of 7,566.\textsuperscript{10} Some of the drop in enrollment can be explained by a decreasing birth-rate, but most of the drop must be attributed to other factors. The most obvious

\textsuperscript{10}Enrollments as reported to the Office of the Superintendent, Xenia City Schools.
of these includes the families who moved from Xenia, families not yet re-located in Xenia and those families enrolling their children in other schools, perhaps fearing a lessening of educational effectiveness. No conclusive data is available, but the number of homes yet to be rebuilt in Xenia and the probability of attraction of new residents in the future, will probably place enrollment demands back near the pre-tornado level.

By October 10, administrators described their schools as operating very smoothly and they were enjoying the lessened difficulties associated with the out-of-district operations of the previous spring. Simon Kenton had been in their temporary facilities only four days, but except for losing some students and teachers in the redistricting process, had a stable faculty and student body which facilitated their coping ability.

McKinley-Windsor Park changed its location from downtown to the suburbs, changed the student population from city to suburban children, and increased the size of the faculty to accommodate 606 students instead of 336 the previous September.

McKinley was also without telephone service until October 7, because of installation problems. The totally new environment for McKinley and the difficulties in getting it operating were off-set by the support of the parents in the community for the new school. This was a
very vocal group in opposition to the school system because they perceived themselves as step-children in the system. Frequent redistricting made their identity with a school difficult, and although thirteen acres had been purchased in their neighborhood to construct a school, there had been no hope in the foreseeable future for a building on the site prior to the tornado. The sudden shift of an instant school in the neighborhood with plans already underway to construct a new building was well-received.

Some opposition from the old McKinley neighborhood was voiced at not relocating McKinley on the old site, but the virtual obliteration of the former McKinley attendance neighborhood and the inadequacy of the site made the change one of the early decisions of the superintendent and the board of education.

Expressions of pleasure with the new modules were unanimous. Their exterior bland appearance, resembling metal warehouse construction, was never mentioned in contrast to the comfort, attractiveness and utility of the inside. All three units, built in the shape of an "H" had two long parallel corridors with rooms on each side of the corridors, joined by a short connecting corridor. The modules were constructed with rest rooms, physical education areas, cafeterias, libraries, conference rooms and office space. They were equipped with public address systems, fire alarm systems, air-conditioning, carpeting
and paneled walls.

They were furnished with new furniture which had been ordered in readiness for the new permanent facilities, and made the temporary facilities even more attractive and inviting. Most of the equipment and many of the materials and books ordered in the spring were being used for the first time.

The temporary facilities were being landscaped and concrete outside walks installed to give the modules a sense of permanency. The newness of the total learning environment in contrast to the old was striking. The impact on students, teachers and the community cannot be predicted, but there was obvious pride in once again having their schools, and in having facilities, equipment and materials that exceeded the quality that had been possible prior to the tornado.

Besides the faculty shifts to staff the redistricted schools, administrative changes had also taken place. One junior high school principal was made principal of the combined junior high schools, and an elementary principal was shifted to an assistant junior high principal position. The other junior high principal was moved to the central office to assist with pupil personnel concerns. The former assistant principal to the two large elementary schools became the principal of Arrowood after the enrollments of Cox and Simon Kenton were reduced and the assistant
position eliminated.

The transportation supervisor for the school system resigned during the summer, and a replacement from out of the city was employed to fill this position.
Chapter 5

ANALYSIS OF PRE- AND POST-DISASTER POLICY ISSUES

Prologue

It is significant to note that all the evidence in this study, while recognizing the uniqueness of the Xenia City Schools, indicated that the Xenia Schools were similar to other school systems in a variety of ways. The functioning system prior to the disaster event included dichotomous aspects that could be labeled good, bad, exciting, dull, progressive, regressive—a typical school system aberrant only with the advent of the disaster.

In effect, the Xenia schools were randomly selected for this study because of a tornado that caused massive damage which focused the attention of the world upon the city of Xenia and the school system. This could have happened to virtually any school system in America. The intent of this study was to utilize the school system as a locus for a study of the policy-making process and not to evaluate the functioning of the system per se. It was not possible to study the policy process without exposing some nerve-ends of the school system. However, it should be
remembered that an analytical study of any school system would probably yield similar problems.

The enticement of Title I funds for post-disaster facilities and curriculum planning apparently overcame any reticence school officials felt in being subjected to an intensive post-disaster study. The Title I funding included a case study as one of the four parts of the grant from the Ohio Department of Education and the Department of Health, Education and Welfare.

Obtaining the necessary information for the study was difficult, but the cooperation of school personnel was commendable considering the heavy demands placed upon them during the post-disaster period. School officials were extremely busy and obtaining enough time with them to adequately collect data was never possible. State and federal officials were even more difficult to reach. The State Superintendent refused to be interviewed although he instigated the grant. An interview with his assistant was granted, resulting in what the researcher perceived to be guarded responses in the interview. The field representative from the Department of Health, Education and Welfare did not make a return visit to Xenia during the period of data collection which was in excess of two months.

Teachers, principals and parents were most cooperative and seldom refused an interview. Teachers and parents were frequently difficult to reach because of new addresses
and many of them had no telephone service in their temporary residences. Interviewees were solicited from various contacts in the community and at the board of education. The building principals were more accessible than expected since all of this group was contacted although one or two of the assistants were not available.

The data collection for the study which relied upon interviews is vulnerable to argumentation concerning whether the respondents were representative of the population. However, the researcher entered the study anticipating these complications. The design of the study was to explore, dissect, search, probe and question with the intent of gaining some insight into the organizational functioning of a school system as it experienced dramatic change following disaster. The necessary adaptation to post-disaster conditions was not considered detrimental to the exploratory nature of the research as it would have been in a quantitative study.

An attempt was made to identify decisions that had enough impact on the operation of the school system to be considered policy decisions. Katz and Kahn's criteria of generality, spatiality and temporality guided the selection and analysis. This did not solve the dilemma of how general a decision was, how much it altered the organization or how pervasive the time affected by a decision was. The policy issues probably varied in one if not all of these considerations.
Nonetheless, the model provided some guidelines for selecting the policy issues that were utilized within the framework provided for the study. The post-disaster policy framework included the internal influences of the school system as well as the external influences of local, state and federal persons and governments.

By developing a pre-disaster picture of the school system as it was operating and the factors that influenced that operation and then contrasting that with post-disaster related issues, it was possible to construct some sense of the effect of a significant disruptive event upon the operation of at least one school system. This augured the development of hypotheses rather than the development of generalizable material, but the intent was to stimulate future study and comparisons of school systems affected by natural and man-made disruptive events to examine the effects upon policy-making.

Does traumatic change really make much difference in the long-haul? Steady, uneventful change is difficult to see while the dramatic impact of disaster and the process can be seen more vividly, albeit difficult to assess its implications and conclusions.

Despite the study's lack of generalizability, if it succeeded in pointing out some of the routine daily actions and decisions of a school system that could lead to concerted action for a more vigorous educational program if a
total community (including the school community) could capture the cohesive characteristics of people who have experienced a common disaster, it will have been worthwhile. It must be conceded that if the study has done nothing more than pedantically recount the actions of school personnel following a disaster, it has failed in its purpose.

**Five Areas of Policy Formulation**

A pre/post disaster analysis of school system policy issues becomes more manageable and comprehensive when a basis for directionality is established. The pre/post disaster design did this in a general way but discrete issues needed some categorization to recognize specific changes from the pre-disaster period to the post-disaster period.

Five areas of policy formulation were selected for this purpose. School system policy issues relating to finances, buildings, curriculum, disaster preparedness and decision-making formed the categories for analysis within the conceptual framework established for the study. The internal/external influences on policy decisions were juxtaposed in the analysis with the policy issues themselves.

According to the policy model adopted for the analysis, policy formulation included the formulation of school system goals and objectives and/or the formulation of
procedures and devices to achieve goals and evaluate performance.

Finances

Pre-Disaster Overview

The Xenia schools were projected to have in excess of a $1 million deficit for the 1974-75 school year unless additional revenue was forthcoming. The $137.88 below the state average per pupil expenditure indicated a necessarily tight budget to maintain the status quo without expanding programs and launching and supporting innovative efforts. The lack of tax revenue offered little chance of appreciable change—the tax valuation per pupil in the district was approximately half that of the state average so that tax effort was relatively high in the community. There was neither business and industrial real estate nor wealthy residential housing in sufficient abundance to realize high income from property tax for the schools.

The bedroom connection with Dayton provided inexpensive housing for industrial workers as opposed to wealthy residential housing typical of many bedroom communities that pay high taxes for schools but also realize high revenue. Data on the occupations of Xenians showed that eighty-three per cent of the labor force consisted of salesmen, clerical workers, craftsmen, operatives, laborers, service workers and farmers. Only seventeen
per cent of the labor force was in the higher income occupations characteristic of professional, technical, managerial and administrative positions. The per capita income was $683 below national figures.

The respondents referred to Xenia as a large city in microcosm because of its diversity of population and characteristics comparable to metropolitan centers. However, Xenia's attachment to Dayton seemed to negate any analogy with an urban center. To discuss Xenia's business, industry, housing or sources of revenue without considering Xenia's location and the ties to Dayton would ignore significant influences in these areas.

More than one-third of the work force was employed outside Greene County. This is the opposite of a metropolitan center and much more characteristic of a bedroom community. However, bedroom communities usually have a much more homogenous population than found in Xenia. The results of the study by the Real Estate Research Corporation of Chicago indicated that Xenia had gradually lost its identity as a city with a pre-tornado declining business community and decreasing business income for the city of Xenia. Xenia had a uniqueness that defied simple categorization, but describing it as a bedroom community appeared to be more accurate than describing it as a city in microcosm.
The diversity of population was evident in contrasting the "old families" with the Dayton industrial workers, the college and Air Force influences with the more provincial influences, the large numbers and significant historical roots of the black population as contrasted with most small northern cities, and the physical structure of the city itself which had changed little during the past century. The narrow streets and declining business district indicated that the progressives and the more cosmopolitan interests had directed most of their interests toward Dayton, leaving the functioning of Xenia to the conservative locals who generally preferred a less innovative life-style.

Xenian's incomes were comparable to the nation as a whole. The mean family income was only $130 below the national mean. This was particularly meaningful when the small numbers of high income families and the relatively small number of poverty families were contrasted with the major portion of the population. The middle and low-middle income families dominated the population.

The repeated descriptions of Xenia as a conservative community almost always reflected a belief that the locals controlled the politics of the city and that the locals were unequivocally conservative. The school system was described in the same vein. "Our schools were old-fashioned," and the superintendent was variously extolled
or condemned for his conservative leadership.

Whether or not the attitudes of acquiescence to
the status quo and the conservative power structure were
factual, these attitudes dominated the thinking of respon-
dents. Financially, this was apparent in the lack of
push for operating monies with the last levy vote occurring
in 1968; the failure to continue or augment programs primed
with federal funds; the competitive beginning teacher
salaries that did not proportionately reward experience
or additional training, relying upon teacher commitment to
the city and the school system to hold personnel; the
financial measure of parent support of the schools described
as poor by respondents; and the fact that no firm pre-
tornado plans had been established in April for promoting
a school levy even though the deficit was anticipated to
reach nearly $1 million.

Negotiations with teachers were in serious
difficulty. The financial difficulties of the school
system and the lack of cohesive citizen support left the
school administration and board of education in a defensive
position. Continuing the operation of the school system
without hope of significant additional funds except from
local sources and the accepted belief that the diverse
citizenry would not make additional sacrifices for
education, left the school system policy-makers in a
quandary. The future was complicated if not patently bleak.
Post-Disaster Changes

The disaster destroyed one-fourth of the city and diabolically caused an even greater degree of destruction to the schools. Because of the destruction of residences and businesses, the tax loss to the city was approximately $500,000 with the school system sustaining more than a $300,000 loss. The logistical problems of rebuilding businesses and residences portended that revenues would be severely reduced for a lengthy period of time. With four school buildings demolished and two others unusable without repairs that would take several months, the threat of reduction of state foundation funds to the school system presented a formidable challenge to re-open school for the system's eight-thousand students within a matter of days.

The obvious additional operating expenses incurred as a result of the disaster in planning, salvage, clean-up, securing of materials, supplies and transportation costs projected against the pre-tornado financial realities left the school system inundated with financial concerns.

The reassurances by state and federal officials, including the personal condolences and support of the President of the United States, Richard M. Nixon, created the restorative illusion that all the financial needs of the school system not covered by insurance would be handled by federal disaster legislation and state disaster assistance. The consequent slowness of settlements by the
state and federal governments and the antagonisms that grew out of misunderstandings about the kinds and amounts of support indicated the emotional drain of school officials caused by a ruinous pre-tornado financial situation and the overwhelming problems following the event.

Financial assistance to the city-at-large encouraged school officials to count on substantial support from state and federal sources. The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development announced a planning grant to the city of Xenia one month following the disaster with an additional fifty per cent matching grant from the state on top of a $250,000 grant from the Department of Transportation for street repairs.¹ Other funds were being announced from the Public Health Service and the Department of Health, Education and Welfare for day care services. The planning grants resulted in $3 million being allocated for urban renewal in the city. By October, Congressman Clarence J. Brown announced that $29,484,036 had been spent by the federal government in the city of Xenia.² Ultimately, less than $2.3 million was spent for schools, including the

temporary facilities constructed at a cost of $2.2 million.

The state department assisted in the purchase of buses for the increased demands and replacements necessary following the disaster. By September, the State Controlling Board also approved the expenditure of $300,000 to compensate for lost tax revenue. These provisions were made by existing state law, but there had been no prior use of the law. Auxiliary personnel had been provided the Xenia school system by the Ohio Department of Education at no cost to the system.

Reiterating the expenditures by state and federal sources, added to the generous insurance payments and disaster relief gifts to the school system, gives the impression that the financial concerns were adequately alleviated. Actually, as some financial concerns were relieved, others became exacerbated. The Spirit of Seventy-Four and the City Commission's commitment to renewal delayed city planning and zoning necessitating extensive redistricting planning by the school system; replacing McKinley Elementary, Central Junior High and Xenia High Schools on different sites as studies were suggesting as the most prudent action for future utilization and economy, added the prospects of considerable costs to rebuilding in excess of actual replacement costs; replacement of like kinds of equipment was often impractical or imprudent while upgrading added additional expenditures; salvage and
clean-up bills were presented for payment when services had been presumed free of charge by volunteer groups; new texts added the burden of matching the new materials in the buildings not affected by the disaster; and the tendency to try to extract as many funds as possible while the opportunity existed to obtain long-desired facilities, materials and equipment meant a constant push for additional sources of revenue.

Barriers to securing the envisioned funds to attain the goals of the school system prompted attacks by the superintendent upon state and federal officials that at times appeared to lack restraint in terms of future implications. Attacking Representative Brown, condemning Brown's lack of action and threatening his political future with exposure to the electorate, made good newspaper material but the long-term gains may have been hampered more than helped. Since federal disaster assistance was for expenditures beyond those covered by insurance, the invested insurance payments yielded interest which the federal government announced they would deduct from the disaster assistance since those funds diminished the difference between insurance payments and actual disaster costs. Once again, the superintendent reacted with unguarded attacks upon the federal bureaucracy. Attempts to get state funds for additional building costs also met with failure since the legislation was specifically for loss of tax revenue.
and not for other contingencies.

The city appeared to be able to obtain more funds for a variety of reasons than the school system could. The many facets of city government would account for these needs and opportunities, but it sometimes had the effect of focusing on the lack of support of the school system in contrast to the city government. Few attempts were made to explore joint ventures, with the joint effort in counting the school facilities costs on the required matching basis for urban renewal funding being the most noted exception.

The Marketing Survey commissioned by the city commission estimated the loss of 500 families (from 8,600 to 8,100) between 1974 and 1976 as a result of the disaster.\(^3\) Growth between 1976 and 1980 was projected at 700 families. The study also determined that loss of jobs in Xenia following the tornado would decrease the per household income by $974, and that even with the restoration of most businesses by 1976, the city could expect to have a net loss of 100 jobs.

The termination of 90 employees of the board of education following the disaster and the cessation of negotiations with the teacher association added to the income woes of the citizenry. It also placed the school

\(^3\)Real Estate Research Corporation, Land Use and Market Study. Xenia, Ohio, 1974, p. 27.
system in the position of attempting to restore its pre-tornado organization while planning for future expansion during a period of decreased incomes and a stifled business economy.

The press was on to instigate an increased operating school levy, even at the risk of refusal from a citizenry faced with increased living and reconstruction costs following the tornado. The support of the Spirit of Seventy-Four Committee was announced on August 16. "We will exert pressure on the political arena in behalf of Xenia Schools and will schedule another series of meetings to define and focus attention on community concerns."4

The levy promotion by Adams, Gaffney and Associates conducted a public opinion survey in September, and reported that not enough support existed to pass a levy at that point. Reportedly 51.5 per cent indicated that other ways could be found to support the schools with the conjecture that people felt state and federal funds could be tapped as a result of the tornado. Nonetheless, the school levy vote on November 5, 1974 passed with 53 per cent of the voters supporting it. The 7.25 mill levy added $804,750 to the operating budget—an increase from 23 mills to 30.25 for operations.

4The Xenia Daily Gazette, Xenia, Ohio, September 28, 1974, p. 9.
School System Policy Implications

The financial condition of the Xenia City Schools changed dramatically following the tornado. Despite a pre-tornado characterization of conservativism and pessimism concerning budget matters, the post-disaster period was unmistakably different. The city commission and the Spirit of Seventy-Four Committee's post-disaster commitment to renewal and aggressive pursuit of new business interests and a planned city was joined by the school system's search for new monies at the local, state and federal levels.

Civic support was obtained partially by emphasizing the significance of a viable educational system to attract new business interests to the city. The disaster also gave residents a common bond. The residents who might never have relinquished the old city traditions had to face the rebuilding of a city that could not be like it was. The commuters and former apathetics in regard to the life of the city, began to find it important to voice their hopes for a revitalized community. The progressives had experienced change beyond belief, and their appreciation for the traditionalists and the status quo probably increased as they, too, searched for the familiar. New ties were possible.

A long tradition of conservativism bent toward procuring funds that were necessary if the post-disaster
possibilities for renewal were to come to fruition. A vigorous drive was made to obtain state and federal funds that the school system obviously felt belonged to them without strings attached as a consequence of disaster. This drive was balanced with an equal thrust at the local level to convince Xenians that they, too, had a stake in the future of the schools. Despite increased post-disaster costs and lowered household incomes, the school system promoted the first levy increase in six years—an aggressive stance not noted in the pre-disaster period.

Interview data suggested that respondents had a renewed interest in the schools. Having suffered the pangs of disaster together, there seemed to be a desire to begin again—to ignore past disenchantments with the schools and to build for the future. The loss of schools was deeply felt and restoration was among the first concerns of the citizens. This renewed commitment toward the schools appeared to have a profound impact on the passage of the 7.25 mill levy.

The conservative past of the school system did not disappear. While additional funding was being sought on every hand, the fear of insufficient funds led the administration and school board to dismiss 90 school employees with the promise that they would be reinstated as soon as funds became available. This could have been a political ploy to gain support for the levy, but it was probably more
a reflection of past conservative actions.

The thrust for renewal and the pre-disaster financial woes of the school system were probably the major motivators for attempting to obtain disaster relief funds with such vigor. There was a definite attitude that state and federal assistance was obligatory and should be payable upon demand without administrative delay or interference. Delays in governmental settlements were compared to the rapid, efficient payment of insurance claims with the result that governmental units became the adversaries.

The tedious balance of power between governmental levels resulted in disputes and resistance toward any state or federal action perceived as a move to infiltrate that arena. Governmental bodies were perceived as forces to overcome rather than as benefactors. The tactics employed to obtain financial rewards reflected this heightened antagonism and mistrust of governmental agencies.

Buildings

Pre-Disaster Overview

McKinley Elementary School constructed in 1902 and Central junior high school built in 1921 were inadequate educational facilities and needed replacement. Their sites offered no possibilities of expansion or rebuilding. Simon Kenton was a larger facility than would usually be considered ideal for elementary students with a pre-tornado enrollment of 861. Students were bused from various parts
of the city to utilize the large facilities located in neighborhoods with smaller school populations. The growing Windsor Park area needed a school facility and a site had been purchased, but no plans were underway to construct a building.

The ten-acre site for the high school severely limited the possibilities of expanding for community and recreational needs characteristic of schools of the seventies and beyond. The Arrowood/Warner site and buildings constructed in 1967 represented the most modern and adequate buildings and sites in the Xenia School System. Although limited in flexibility for open space or team teaching, their construction and sites allowed for future adaptability. Other buildings in the system were less adaptable, but adequate to serve as educational facilities for the immediate future. Upgrading and modernizing the older facilities was cited by respondents as desirable. The drabness of the buildings was remembered and deplored.

Enrollments were declining prior to the tornado. Projections indicated the trend would have continued in the future. Peak enrollments were reached in the elementary schools during the 1966-67 school year and in the high school during the 1972-73 school year. The drop in enrollments had probably begun to stabilize in the elementary grades, but the junior and senior high enrollments were projected to continue to drop for several years.
The population growth of the city had been westward since the 1960's with the Arrowood/Warner buildings quickly reaching maximum capacity. Residents in the eastern quadrant reaching toward Central State and Wilberforce Universities attributed the stifled growth in that area to the city's unwillingness to extend sewerage facilities in the area. No school facilities existed in the eastern section of the city.

Generally speaking, the facilities planning and construction as well as maintenance had concentrated on providing quantity rather than quality during the pre-tornado years.

Post-Disaster Changes

The high school, both junior high schools and three elementary schools were in shambles following the tornado. Xenia High School, Simon Kenton and McKinley Elementary Schools had to be razed. The other buildings were declared repairable even though the repair work was extensive. The central office building and three elementary schools received minor damage. Much of the downtown area had been destroyed, so that the heart of the city was open for re-mapping traffic arteries, business areas and residential sections.

Immediate attention had to be focused on finding available temporary facilities to complete the school year.
This was accomplished by utilizing the remaining structures in the system and by contracting the use of buildings in adjacent districts during the afternoon and early evening hours. Getting students back in school soon after the disaster was widely acclaimed as desirable by respondents. Even those opposed to the return at the time the decision was made later agreed that the movement toward return to normalcy was wise.

The importance of local autonomy and the maintenance of a local school system quickly became apparent from the community. Nobody seemed to be concerned with the temporary arrangements for the remaining few weeks of school, but their energies were directed toward establishing facilities within the city for the coming year. Returning schools to local territory became paramount.

The rushed temporary facilities plans announced so soon after the disaster were very propitious. Governmental refusal to accept the bids faced an insurmountable emotional tide from the community. Local leadership was esteemed while the credibility of the federal government was diminishing in the minds of the local people. Whatever the mistakes of the local school system leadership, a reinforced cohesiveness in the community led to a strong local sentiment of support accompanied by alienation toward any outside agency that threatened that solidarity.
The capitulation of the federal government and the letting of contracts for the construction of temporary facilities was predictable. The enthusiasm by the community during the early fall for the temporary facilities was also understandable. Getting schools back in the city was a first priority among the citizens, and the problems associated with accomplishing this were borne with very little criticism from the community except that which was directed toward those perceived as hampering this effort. The superintendent left little doubt in the minds of citizens where he stood, and frequently threatened to use local power to accomplish the task.

The planning process for permanent facilities to replace those damaged or destroyed by the tornado became a most complex analyzation problem. The post-disaster community movement toward modernization and the correction of pre-tornado barriers to comprehensive planning and development in the city were evident in the Spirit of Seventy-Four meetings and actions. Respondents in this study exhibited an overwhelming interest in and support for future needs rather than restoring the old. Emphasis was placed upon school/community endeavors to provide more recreational and social services in the community. And yet, discussions about moving the high school to an area with more land met with much opposition. The recommendations by the facility planner to combine the junior high schools into
one building and build a high school for grades 9-12, while sound in its rationale of being able to accommodate the reduced enrollments predicted for the future and enabling the available monies to be concentrated into two buildings instead of three, was not acceptable to the community.

The early announcement by the superintendent that McKinley Elementary would not be rebuilt and a building constructed in the Windsor Park area instead, was joyously received by those in the western section of the city, but rebuffed by the black community in the eastern section where no schools existed. This decision was announced before any community meetings were held by the Spirit group to determine the wishes of the citizenry. The idea of constructing Central Junior High School on the old high school site and relocating the high school was suggested to the public on several occasions by the superintendent, but was never announced as an actual decision by the board of education.

A facilities planner was employed with Title I funds, but the assistant superintendent for instruction soon managed to personally guide the planning of new elementary facilities and turned the high school planning over to the consultant. The disparity between public involvement, philosophies of education, and general planning procedures in the two separate planning projects were astounding but appeared to cause little concern.
The elementary schools were approved quickly with little more than cursory glances by school system personnel or the public. The assistant superintendent interpreted the lack of discussion as consensus. It could have been acquiescence during a period when too many demands were placed upon the public for consideration, and the more pervasive total community attention at the high school level since this affected the entire community in a direct way—there was only one high school.

The high school planning involved a wide spectrum of community participants and carefully provided a variety of ways to incorporate the ideas of citizens. Consequently, reaching a decision became difficult for the board of education.

School System Policy Implications

Community commitment toward renewal also dominated decisions regarding facilities construction. The protests of residents from the eastern sector never reached the decision-making arena because the overriding issue of replacing the ancient McKinley structure with a modern facility on an adequate site dominated the discussions. The determination to start anew clouded the complex issue of placing a school in the eastern section since the implications were that this would mean rebuilding McKinley on the old inadequate site. The rationale was that much of
the pre-tornado McKinley district was destroyed and would not be rebuilt because of urban renewal plans.

With the pressure that had developed over a number of years from the residents in the Windsor Park area to obtain a school facility, there was never any doubt about the relocation of McKinley. There was no room for discussion since a choice had to be made—only one facility could be built and that choice was quickly and irrevocably made. An early announcement by the Spirit of Seventy-Four Committee supported the McKinley location in the eastern area, emphasizing that the McKinley School could not be replaced by a Windsor Park building. That disagreement with the school administration faded away as the focus shifted to urban renewal and the levy issue.

The renewal thrust probably also dominated the Central Junior High School issue. Determination by school personnel and community progressives to build a functional modern facility probably prevented the more pervasive recommendation of the facility planner that the additional junior high school facility be eliminated altogether from becoming a reality. To eliminate the tradition of the two junior high schools as well as the hallowed halls of the old building was perhaps too much to ask the community to assimilate.

The assistant superintendent who did the facilities planning had no input into determining where the buildings
would be located as far as could be determined in this study. The location of buildings appeared to be political decisions aside from instructional ends.

Why the superintendent proposed moving the high school site when efforts toward community/school programs, particularly recreation facilities jointly planned and funded by the school system and the city were depressed or ignored, was unclear. More land was needed, but gaining support for the move would have seemed easier with joint ventures. Protection of the school system domain appeared to prevail, apparently hoping for recreational expansion under the sole aegis of the school system.

The acceptance of the construction of two identical open space elementary buildings represented a change of direction for the school system. Except for the brief and controversial attempts at innovation, there was little to indicate that instructional needs dictated the facilities planning. The influence of the assistant superintendent for instruction upon decisions relating to instruction, particularly at the elementary level, was powerful. His belief that instructional needs could be developed after the facilities were available apparently met with little opposition.
Curriculum

Pre-Disaster Overview

Xenia's curriculum reflected the perceptions of a conservative community. The elementary school curriculum operated without curriculum guides and depended primarily upon textbooks for direction. The junior and senior high school curriculum reflected a close adherence to a college preparatory format and standards. The extreme differences in educational philosophy among teachers noted by Dr. Purdy and the frequent antagonisms related by respondents between high school teachers and elementary teachers regarding innovations and individualization of instruction indicated polar directions in the area of curriculum. All of the innovations listed by respondents had taken place in the elementary schools except for CPL mathematics in the junior high which was largely defunct at the time of the disaster.

The emphasis on individualization in the elementary schools was countered by course standards and requirements and highly developed written policies on rights and responsibilities of students at the junior and senior high school levels. The drop-out rate signalled difficulty in meeting the individual needs of high school students although it may have indicated an effective application of standards for achievement. There was a definite lack of compatibility between the lower and higher levels of curriculum and instruction.
A paternalistic attitude dominated the responses of respondents. While teacher participation in curriculum planning was voiced as a strength of the school system, it was frequently accompanied by qualifications that the important decisions were made by administrators. There was great reliance upon the assistant superintendent for instruction as the authority—"we have a curriculum man with a Ph.D. who does that."

An editorial in the Xenia Daily Gazette while supporting the schools as "a direct reflection of the people of the community," also summarized their effectiveness:

A major point is the fact that the schools we've known, though perhaps functional, are several notches beneath many other districts in terms of facilities, curriculum, extra-curricular programs and staff.\(^5\)

The lack of extra-curricular activities were decried by respondents. Few opportunities existed in Xenia for the involvement of young people, and the schools had steered away from social activities involving students. Consequently, parents appeared to be somewhat detached from the schools prior to the tornado. The survey by Adams, Gaffney and Associates indicated that approximately sixty per cent of the residents considered the schools good or fair with

\(^5\)The Xenia Daily Gazette, Xenia, Ohio, Friday, July 26, 1974.
the elementary schools receiving the highest support for good instruction. 6

Abandoning the parent group organized to study goals for the school system was a mysterious action by the administration that intrigued this researcher. Knowing how strongly respondents felt about lack of direction in the school system over a period of time, this appeared to be a significant action to clarify goals and determine future direction. The school administration did not view the group in the same way, and dismissed the disbanding of the group as relatively insignificant. The only reason mentioned was that the group was not getting anywhere.

The curriculum council, made up of one representative from each building and an administrator, had been an active group with members variously describing it as very valuable to worthless in determining curriculum matters. There was general agreement that innovations introduced to the system had been instigated without adequate teacher and administrator in-service and retraining. There was little incentive in the system for continuing education or for in-service days with compensation.

Pupil/teacher ratios of 30-1 meant that teachers sometimes had much larger classes than thirty students.

6The Xenia Daily Gazette, Xenia, Ohio, Saturday, September 28, 1974, p. 11.
This represented higher pupil/teacher ratios than most teacher organizations consider acceptable.

The confusion about school system goals and curriculum direction was a dominant theme of the interviews. Parents, teachers and administrators voiced concern over what they were really attempting to accomplish and how they were progressing. General support of the present superintendent indicated a hope that continuity of leadership would result in clarification of instructional goals.

Post-Disaster Changes

The first dramatic change in curriculum following the disaster occurred with the ordering of $180,000 of new textbooks and adjunct material. Textbook study committees brought closure on the limited studies in progress, and the remainder of the text selections were made by the assistant superintendent with the assistance of an employed university consultant and selected teachers. Most of the selections could not be considered deliberated decisions, since the texts for grades 1-12 were ordered within a few days. Many of the texts being used at the time of the disaster were in excess of ten years old, making it incumbent upon those selecting texts to locate more recent publications.

The second major change was a change in perception of teachers and parents about curriculum practices in other schools operating in the school system and in the schools
observed in other districts. Many parents and teachers expressed surprise at the different curriculum practices both within and without the school system about which they had not been previously aware. New interests were sparked to expand curriculum practices and materials encountered in the host schools or introduced by guest schools using the same building.

Informal sharing of ideas by teachers was a part of this new awareness. The necessity in the elementary schools to have two faculties in the buildings simultaneously for a part of each day brought them into frequent contact in the improvised teacher study areas that were conducive to discussion and contact with new materials.

Two factors merged to bring a new curriculum awareness to teachers. One was the reduced pupil-teacher ratios. The pre-tornado ratios were reduced to less than twenty students in most cases and as low as fourteen in others. Many students were unable to return for the remainder of the school term, creating more intimate class groups with which to work. The other factor was the renewed emphasis on understanding the feelings of youngsters sparked by the trauma of the disaster and refined by the guidance of psychiatric and psychological workers. Generally teachers reported a new awareness of the total needs of youngsters contrasted with more narrow perceptions prior to the tornado.
The endorsement of open space buildings to replace the destroyed facilities, necessitated some commitments to new learning styles and increased innovation in the elementary schools. The high school teachers rejected the concept but stressed the need for flexibility, precise educational planning, clarification of education objectives and the rejection of any innovation that failed to include a definite plan for evaluation and feedback.

Elementary teachers from the two buildings, Simon Kenton and McKinley, were asked to commit themselves to the open space concept or request a transfer to one of the system's more traditional settings. This resulted in almost no changes although the reasons may have differed from the request. One of the administrators quoted faculty members as saying they would agree to anything as long as they could remain together.

There was no discernible difference on the extracurricular emphasis for youngsters on the part of schools following the tornado. The post-disaster period made the lack of recreational activities painfully evident to respondents. The need to escape the realities of destruction through recreational activity caused many respondents to suggest a greater involvement of schools with the recreational needs of Xenia's youth. This may emerge as things become more settled, but no obvious changes have occurred.
In October, the assistant superintendent announced that a series of curriculum guides would be prepared by teachers during the ensuing school year and called attention to the fact that no curriculum guides had been developed since 1965. Since the board was told that lack of attention to this area had been the result of too little teacher time and money or supervisory personnel to accomplish the task, it can be assumed that post-tornado funds enhanced this activity.

Shortened hours of instruction led about half the teacher respondents to express concern that adequate instruction would not be possible. The more optimistic, asserted that the day had been too long anyway, and that the shortened day had resulted in economy of teacher presentations and lessened discipline problems since students had less time to "kill." Many parents had the same concerns, and many were exploring the possibility of private schools for the interim.

**Implications for School System Policy-Making**

Curriculum revision was a costly process that had been difficult to attain in the Xenia schools. Attempts at innovations usually resulted in curriculum pursuits that lacked a firm base of preparation and follow-up. Federal grants that had been available from time to time had been responsible for much of the curriculum innovation during the
past decade, but most federal grants had been the result of hastily devised programs without adequate plans for evaluation and revision. Current text material and sufficient supplementary individualized materials were deficits in the pre-disaster period.

Following the disaster, a new interest was sparked in curriculum revision and updating. The dissemination of curriculum ideas and materials and instructional procedures appeared to be a positive outgrowth of the post-disaster arrangements. The experience of sharing facilities and materials increased the awareness of many teachers to new methods and group sharing possibilities that had not been obvious in their pre-tornado worlds.

The increased attention to the individual needs of youngsters and the availability of new funds to accomplish the task were primarily responsible for the new emphasis on curriculum. The enthusiasm for ordering new textbooks and materials was perhaps unnecessarily rapid, precluding adequate study and input from a cross-section of professional personnel. However, the excitement of obtaining new materials prevented personnel from becoming very critical of the process. The assumption was made that there was not time to involve more people.

The post-disaster curriculum emphasis appeared to follow the pre-tornado pattern when funds (usually federal grants) became available on short notice—rapid unilateral
decision-making with noble goals for implementation. But the short-circuiting of involving those responsible for the implementation may result in the same disenchantment with the newly acquired materials and supplies that was expressed about past ventures.

No additional emphasis was apparent toward teacher in-service except the report to the board in October that teachers would be spending time before and after the school day to develop the new curriculum guides. No over-all framework was emerging to clarify school system goals to develop a unified approach to instruction.

Disaster Preparedness

Pre-Disaster Overview

The city of Xenia lacked any systematic warning system to warn the citizens of impending danger. The media issued weather reports and a television station with its own weather radar was responsible for the major warning issued just prior to the tornado. Confusion existed about the use of the emergency broadcasting system which was ironically never activated as a warning device. Civil defense signals had never been purchased for use by the city of Xenia.

The schools were particularly vulnerable to disaster without warning because most of them found it impractical to monitor news and weather reports during the school
day, and prior to the tornado had not developed disaster preparedness plans and drills to protect the students in case of tornado.

School policy by the board of education was explicit about fire drills and required local school officials to insure orderly procedures to protect students and staff in case of fire. Periodic drills and reports were necessary to comply with the policy. But no such requirement or plan existed for tornadoes.

In 1973, the Ohio Department of Education prepared a guide encompassing several disaster threats for use by school districts in emergency planning. The Emergency Preparedness Planning Guide for Ohio Schools included suggested guidelines for fire, tornado, blizzard, snow, ice, flood, earthquake, civil disturbance, bomb threat and nuclear attack. Prior to the tornado, the publication had not had an impact on the Xenia schools.

Limited attention had been afforded disaster legislation at the local and state levels. The city commission met on the night of the disaster to map plans for dealing with the disaster when it was a reality; the school board had one policy regarding disaster and that dealt with eliminating the bidding procedure under emergency conditions—which was provided by state legislation; and the State Department of Education was empowered to compensate local school systems for tax losses as a result
of disaster.

Disaster legislation was generally considered the purview of the federal government. But federal legislation on disaster was in a serious state of confusion during April of 1974. Some of the funds were depleted, and new legislation was under consideration. Adept political maneuvering rushed the 1974 Disaster Act through Congress with astounding speed shortly after the wave of disasters caused by the April storm system that reached across several states. Traditionally, local governments and state governments have turned to federal coffers for assistance for disasters. The 1974 legislation reinforced that tradition as the federal government provided extensive assistance to local communities to cope with disaster.

The only local organization that was fully prepared to deal with disaster was the hospital and its affiliate members in surrounding areas. Standard procedure required emergency planning with a series of alternatives. Reports indicated that even with the city in chaos with throughfares impassible and electric power severed, the emergency plans provided excellent medical services for victims of the disaster. The coping actions of the city commission and the school system, while less critical immediately following the event, indicated a lack of emergency organizational planning to cope with the situation with the same efficiency and clear communication.
The coping actions of the school system were admirable and generally effective as they developed on an ad hoc basis, but prior pre-disaster guidelines would have helped avoid confusion, duplication of services and clouded communications.

Post-Disaster Changes

Immediate city-wide attention was given to tornado alerts and warnings. Local police were issued directives to inform the public by loud speaker alerts, and the warning on Easter Sunday morning nearly sent the city into panic. Some fears of the effects of siren warnings grew out of this experience. However, the trauma of the recent disaster would probably have caused citizens to suffer intense fear from any kind of warning so soon after the event.

Interestingly, the city commission had not agreed to purchase an alert system several months after the tornado. A study had been commissioned, with the intent of tapping federal funds to assist with the project.

The school system immediately instigated emergency procedures and tornado drills. Battery-powered bull-horns with sirens and loud speaker capabilities were purchased for the buildings in case of electrical failure rendering public address systems and alert signals inoperative. School officials reported strict adherence to the new drills
with students generally responding to the practices calmly and quietly, although many of them were extremely fearful during these times.

The fears of parents caused school administrators considerable concern. Overreacting to inclement weather, frequently parents appeared at school to get their children. As a result, communications were attempted to assure parents that schools were prepared to deal with an emergency situation if necessary. At least one principal led parents to understand their children would no longer be dismissed for this reason, which was quickly rescinded under parent protest.

Concerns were voiced about the structural ability of the module units to withstand storms as contrasted with permanent buildings. Although these concerns could not be allayed very satisfactorily, apparently the desire to have local schools operating in the city outweighed these concerns. Administrators answered the only reasonable way they could when asked by parents where they would put the children in case of a tornado—in the halls with their heads down. Without basements, the halls offered the greatest protection in the module buildings.

It is usually taken for granted that local public schools will reconvene following damage or destruction of one or more of the buildings in that system. Usually, other buildings can be utilized on a double-shift basis, or
private facilities from churches or businesses rented to house the displaced school or schools. Contingency planning for coping with massive destruction to schools within a city that has been obliterated of buildings capable of serving as school buildings has received no attention by local or state education agencies that this researcher has discovered. Likewise, the Xenia School System had to improvise arrangements with other school districts after the disaster. Assistance was offered by the State Department of Education although the arrangements were bypassed for locally developed arrangements.

Emergency operational procedures within local schools appeared to be equally devoid of development. In many instances, although school buildings have been designated as civil defense shelters, and many school buildings have been used as shelters during community crises, principals and teachers seldom have any prior knowledge of what to expect during the occupation or what responsibilities they might be expected to assume in such an event.

Some Xenia school personnel assumed leadership in the centers while others left the operation entirely to the Red Cross. In the Xenia situation, there was no apparent need for school system concern with the buildings or their contents. The Red Cross assumed competent management and protection of the buildings. This included preparing them for return to classroom usage.
Federal disaster legislation was enacted with benefits retroactive to the Xenia disaster. The provision for temporary school buildings greatly enhanced the recovery process of the Xenia City Schools. Obtaining specific and direct information on federal assistance was difficult for the school system following the disaster. Actually, legislation was in such a state of flux that clear answers would have been difficult for even federal officials to decipher. A publication outlining the necessary steps for obtaining federal disaster assistance in brief form rather than legal terminology would have been valuable to school officials. No such publication was available but the addition of such information explaining the 1974 legislation would be useful to local school systems in the future.

School System Policy Implications

Administrative action was swift in establishing tornado alert and warning procedures. Necessary equipment was provided without delay. This was perhaps the only action they could take given the time restraints following the disaster. To date, no detailed policies have been developed and disseminated to personnel regarding disaster preparedness. Whether any emergency organizational guidelines will grow out of the Xenia experience is not known. Great consternation was expressed by principals and other
administrators over the decision-making operation of the system during the crisis period, and hopes expressed that guidelines would be forthcoming for future use should they be necessary.

Large numbers of volunteers as well as school system personnel made themselves available for post-disaster tasks, and coordinating these persons with tasks was a formidable undertaking. The apparent compulsion for involvement in the post-disaster recovery efforts was noted elsewhere in this study. An emergency organizational blueprint would have been invaluable for this difficult period.

The State Department of Education has given increased emphasis to disaster material and to dissemination of those materials to local school systems in the state. Across the nation, joint ventures with civil defense and school systems are concentrating on advanced alert systems for alerting schools of impending danger.

Perhaps the most crucial need during the crisis period for the school system was for information about school personnel. All other subsequent actions depended upon whether or not large numbers of personnel were injured or dead. Even though this was a priority in the crisis period, no procedure has been instigated to make contact with personnel in the event of future catastrophes.
Considering the extent of the devastation, little attention was given the construction of tornado resistant buildings to replace the destroyed facilities. Some structural features were incorporated into the new facilities, but the adoption of two open space buildings with large open expanses was somewhat surprising since the large expanse areas are particularly vulnerable to tornado destruction. The construction design of the buildings probably counteracts this problem, but the surprising thing was that so little public questioning took place over this issue.

The Xenia experience poignantly served to focus on the disaster preparedness needs for school systems. Specifically, they included the need for:

1. Adequate city-wide and internal school system warning systems to insure adequate action prior to a disaster.

2. The development of emergency drills and practice alerts to protect students and school personnel in the event of disaster.

3. Professional structural building surveys to tailor disaster plans to specific buildings rather than generalized, blanket directives.

4. The development of pre-emergency organizational plans for the direction of school personnel in protecting human life first and prioritizing the subsequent activities
for property protection and salvage.

5. The coordination of local, state and federal government disaster legislation and regulations into the fabric of school system disaster preparedness activities and the provision for frequent review and updating of information.

6. Increased attention to retrieval of school system records and inventory data independent of post-disaster reconstruction activity.

7. Ongoing and long-range school system goal planning involving curriculum and instruction, facilities, districting school populations, finances and organizational communications as prerequisites for disaster preparedness for the recovery and reconstruction period.

Decision-Making

Pre-Disaster Overview

The board of education and administration had traditionally presented a united front to the public. Even though school board policy stated that meetings would be public and conducted on a scheduled basis, they often exercised the right to have closed study sessions. Usually, issues dealt with in open board meetings had been ironed out so that consensus was possible without presenting a public image of dissension.
A rare split-vote occurred soon after the disaster regarding the rental of the Dayton Arena for graduation exercises for the following year after an earlier decision to have the immediate post-disaster graduation there turned out to be a popular and often discussed decision. The attraction toward Dayton and away from Xenia may have prompted the refusal on the part of the board to support the request, but the fact that there was a public display of differences among board members caused more attention than the decision itself.

Some responses of interviewees indicated that the board may have been shielded from some school personnel ideas and concerns. Citizen responses left no doubt that generally they felt awed by the ability of the board to control the agenda and discussions at board meetings.

Contrary to this, principals made monthly written reports directly to the board of education that did not follow the chain of command through the superintendent's office. The reports usually contained only innocuous communications items for the board's information as described by the administrators and evident in the reports. Whether principals failed to utilize this communications channel effectively because they were either apathetic or uneasy about direct input into the policy process, or because, as one administrator put it, "nothing ever happens--you never get a response from the board," the
communications operation was less open than the vehicle for communications indicated.

When questioned about input into the policy process of the schools, respondents always followed one of two avenues--either silence or strict adherence to the chain of command. The silent ones indicated they did not make policy suggestions to anyone, they just internalized their feelings or wrote communications which they never sent. Of those who made overt suggestions, no inference was ever made that going directly to the superintendent or to the board of education was done. Direct teacher input into the central office without going through the principal was done by invitation only--when asked to serve on a study committee to develop group rather than individual policy suggestions.

Teachers appeared to be asked more frequently for their ideas and suggestions on policy matters by principals than principals were by the central office staff, superintendent or board of education. The daily contact in buildings apparently established closer ties in local schools among the staff than occurred between the central office and local schools, resulting in more informal communications and feedback on policy matters.

Likewise, parents were more apt to discuss issues with teachers or principals than they were with central office personnel, the superintendent or the board of education. Their expressions of lack of communications
between the administration and the people indicated a freer flow of information between the local school and parents than school board administration and parents. Attempts to bridge this gap through the central advisory council of parents seemed to help, but there were many indications that the group had to learn which kinds of issues were considered appropriate by the administration for discussion.

The fact that the mayor of the city was a high school teacher appeared to signal the involvement of school personnel with politics. But this was not the case. No respondents considered the mayor to have any real influence on policy matters either in the city or in the school system. Furthermore, no respondents indicated any personal involvement in politics except as supporters in political campaigns. One respondent had been a member or the board of education in another city, but it had nothing to do with his tenure in Xenia.

In attempting to determine the influencers of policy matters in the Xenia schools, respondents were asked to attempt to identify the power structure in the community. Some respondents did not think there was a power structure; others thought there was such a group but could not identify its members; others felt there were individual influencers of policy, sometimes identifying them and sometimes admitting that they did not know who they were; and when the power structure was identified, it was invariably in general
terms rather than the identification of individuals, except for naming Jack Jordan, the editor of the Xenia Daily Gazette. The power of the press and the editor's outstanding ability to editorialize on community issues made him an obvious choice as an influencer of school system policy. His activity as chairman of the Spirit of Seventy-Four Committee also supported his ability to influence the direction of the school system.

The old, wealthy Xenia families were considered influencers, but no explanations of specifically who or how was ever proffered. At the other end of the continuum some credence was given the influence of "the common man." Laborers, beauty operators, barbers, etc. were listed among those who spread the word in support of or in opposition to school system issues that influenced the outcomes in the community. No clear indication of the influence of members of the city commission or of organized community groups, including civic groups, emerged from the study.

Within the school system, there was a clear agreement that the superintendent of schools and the assistant superintendent for instruction were the major influencers of school policy. Other administrators and teachers, as well as board members themselves, were not considered as influential. One respondent summed up the support of respondents for these two administrators in determining school system policy by indicating that if the two of them
agreed on an issue, it was a foregone conclusion that it would be enacted.

The writer acknowledges the caveat that the perceptions about influencers of policy were inferences only, unsubstantiated by quantitative measures or analysis. No additional facts of the study indicated that the perceptions were in error, however.

Direct contact between the school system and local, state and federal governments had been limited. State legislation and state board of education policies obviously affected and controlled school system operations, but communications were somewhat sparse. Respect for local school system autonomy had long been a politically expedient stance in step with grass-roots democracy. The legal controls over local school systems had been down-played to perpetuate the ideals of cherished local autonomy. Federal governments had been no less cautious about infringing upon local territory but they lacked the jurisdiction of state governments in this domain.

The upheaval caused in the community by closing the black elementary school and the black high school and busing those students to other buildings in the district appeared to be a subject that respondents wished to close the book on forever. Most people insisted that there were no racial problems in Xenia while appearing to fear that just talking about it would unleash a flood of discontent all over again.
In effect, the tornado caused a return to the issue. McKinley School, the one remaining school near the east end with the only black principal in the system, was destroyed. The decision to relocate that building following the disaster raised the question of black influence in the city and in the school system.

**Post-Disaster Changes**

The decision-making process of the school system was confronted with an unprecedented number of individuals and groups during the post-disaster period. Of equal significance was the number of decisions facing the school administration as a result of the disaster. Prioritizing the issues became a major task to be considered on a recurring basis.

For purposes of analyzation, the issues appeared to prioritize into one of three groups: (1) emergency problems, (2) immediate problems or (3) long-term problems.

**Emergency problems** included those problems that demanded first priority. Finding out about the safety and welfare of school system personnel, obtaining information about school facilities and their usability for shelter and storage, establishing communications with city officials, organizing the utilization of volunteers and attending to emergency repairs were all first-priority problems in Xenia.
Immediate problems encompassed those problems that were crucial to the disaster-coping process. Detailed information about the condition of facilities and their contents along with determining the salvageability of records, equipment, supplies, food and materials took precedence in this category. The pursuance of available financial assistance from insurance and state and federal sources affected the ability to repair and replace those things that would be needed immediately. Pre-tornado problems had to be reprioritized in relation to post-disaster demands. On-going projects had to be suspended, terminated, rushed to completion, or postponed depending upon their post-disaster priority.

Long-term problems centered around the goals of the system. Coping with a disaster had to be done, but without long-term planning the coping was a series of diverse actions unrelated to any end goal. To replace two elementary schools, a junior high school and a high school and determine their locations would normally involve many months of planning program and building needs in conjunction with extensive community involvement undergirded by sound educational philosophy. All of this needed to be done in Xenia in as condensed time-span as possible.

Pre-disaster problems that presented new alternatives after the disaster, such as relocating school buildings to match the school populations, offered novel and
creative opportunities for improved long-term planning. But change brought controversy and decision-makers became embroiled with communications problems.

Contacts with local, state and federal representatives became accelerated dramatically. The inability of the school system to cope with such total destruction left no choice but to turn outward. Even the local government was of little assistance except in joint efforts to attract assistance. The local school system became dependent upon state and federal assistance to an extent never before experienced. In a sense, it was an emasculating experience.

Any action by outsiders was easily construed as intrusion into the local bailiwick. Local independence was temporarily suspended and the push to return to a state of equilibrium was strong. The red-tape discussions pointed out the desire for outside assistance to be generous, rapid and unobtrusive. Xenians quickly heard from previous disaster victims that the state and federal governments would "come in and be peaches and cream and jumping all over themselves trying to help you... but then after thirty or sixty to ninety days you are then treated as though you are just another school and now no one believes you... you are just another someone on their priority list." The usual complications in dealing with bureaucracies coupled with the disorientation of disaster and the increased reliance
on and contact with governmental units brewed a cauldron of discontent with school officials and local citizens.

The joint meetings and planning between the Spirit of Seventy-Four Committee and the school board signalled an expanded community cooperativeness. The committee functioned as a facilitator of communications between the citizens and the school administration by probing for the concerns of citizens in local meetings and in newspaper advertisements inviting citizens to write their concerns to the committee.

The emphasis on opening communications followed the protests of parents over redistricting. The volatile issue was protested by parents in the greater eastern section of the city because they felt the constant shifting of their children from school to school was detrimental to their education. The vigorous protests and the hiring of an attorney had little effect on the board decision. A team of state department personnel had been working on the plan for several weeks, but no community discussions had taken place. There was no opportunity for input and when the decision was announced, the flood of protests erupted, but appeared to subside as rapidly as they had arisen.

School System Policy Implications

The decision-making process of the administration and school board of the Xenia school system could scarcely
have avoided being affected by a major disaster. But whether that process was merely interrupted during a crisis period or whether it was permanently altered was one of the concerns of this study.

There was a tremendous thrust for action during the crisis period coupled with an impatience with contemplation and group decision-making. The drive to be involved was strong—to be a part of recovery efforts was extremely important to most respondents. Aside from the psychological explanations of relieving mental anxiety through physical activity, heightened responsiveness to the needs of others and the need to re-establish equilibrium, the result was an increase of individual, discrete actions that frequently had little direction toward over-all recovery efforts. Generally, those who suffered the trauma of the disaster, appear to have been more involved with action than with planning and more concerned with activity per se than with organized efforts.

Within the school system, this meant that most personnel were involved with whatever activity appeared to be needed at the time, usually involving physical activity. Administrators and teachers expressed the hindsight wisdom of performing less physical activity and increasing the planning, communicating and coordinating efforts.

The physical activity probably served an important function for individuals as well as for the community.
restoration efforts but organizationally all activity should have been coordinated and information shared with the various components if the system goals were to be accomplished.

The decision-making process encompassing the identification, prioritizing and acting on problems and the implementation of those actions, were greatly unilateral decisions by the superintendent supported by the board of education. For instance, the immediate ordering of textbooks may have been the most prudent action to take, but alternatives were not explored. When schools re-opened, the elementary schools were sharing facilities and generally chose to share books rather than unpack and reorient to new text material so late in the school year although great effort had been expended to have textbooks available when schools re-opened.

Junior and senior high teachers may have preferred to improvise rather than to have new books chosen for them or to choose without adequate time to study the alternatives. These hypothetical questions point out that prioritizing problems following disaster depends upon the perspectives of all those involved after looking at available information and exploring alternatives based upon clarifying and reacting to that information.

From one perspective it was easy to assume that schools could not operate without textbooks, but from another perspective, it could be seen as both possible and
advantageous until adequate study could guide the selection. Ordering textbooks was an immediate priority in the Xenia schools; in another it could be considered a long-term decision with a secondary priority to immediate action.

The press for decisions during the crisis period placed those responsible for leadership under pressure to take rapid and decisive action. One respondent expressed the feeling that in the amount of time the administration had spent on getting the temporary modules constructed, they could have half-completed the permanent buildings—a grossly distorted view of reality, but representative of the push for action.

The persistent resistance by some city residents to the delayed building permits and prolonged study to guide zoning decisions by the city commission indicated the urge to restore normalcy, perhaps even at the expense of long-term gains. This had its effect upon the school system in pushing for rapid settlement of rebuilding issues. The avoidance of forcing long-term issues into immediate decision-making was a continuing challenge to decision-makers, and possibly inevitable in many instances.

Statements from politicians to "cut the red-tape" exacerbated the tension between local and federal officials. These statements added fuel to the smoldering and potential conflagratory desires for reestablishing equilibrium in the community by rapid decision-making without time to study
the long-term effects.

The statements implied that someone at a high level could immediately attend the needs of the disaster victims when indeed available funds were exhausted and new legislation was tied up in Congress. No high-level person existed to expedite matters as quickly and simply as people were led to believe. But like the music of the ancient sirens, it was what the populace wanted to hear during the period of disorientation, and the politicians knew it.

The post-disaster push for decision-making increased the decision-making from the top of the school administration. Specifically, this appeared to emanate from the superintendent of schools and the assistant superintendent for instruction. There was no indication that the board of education expanded its policy-making impetus over the pre-disaster period. The reliance on administrative leadership for policy development and the decision-making connected with it noted in the pre-disaster period seemed to continue unchanged into the post-disaster period except that the pace of decision-making increased.

The local influencers of decisions affecting the school system did not appear to change following the disaster as far as the respondents in the study could determine. Their influence may have been more noticeable with the increase in post-disaster issues and heightened
community concerns, but no significant change in the identification of particular influencers was noted by respondents.

Influencers at the state and federal levels changed both in who the influencers were and their mode of influence. The personal presence of the state superintendent and his staff represented an involvement into local school affairs unlike the pre-disaster procedures. The appointment of an administrative assistant to the local superintendent by the state superintendent, acted as a liaison, in daily contact with the state superintendent. Following the recovery period, these state influencers will probably withdraw from the local scene resembling pre-disaster relationships. But the results of the post-disaster influences may alter the future of the school system in ways that were different than pre-disaster profiles.

The state influence in planning for facilities, redistricting, curriculum, financial assistance and ultimately in disaster preparedness shows signs of leading the school system into a more prominent educational posture than would have taken place before the disaster.

The federal influencers reached all the way to the President of the United States—hardly a common occurrence for local school systems. It was the President himself who admonished the local superintendent to get schools operating back within the city as soon as possible. The directives to
federal subordinates were toward this end.

Federal officials remained directly concerned only with post-disaster recovery needs and the federal financial assistance associated with that recovery. After the initial survey of the extent of the disaster, there was very little direct federal involvement in the Xenia school system by federal officials except from the Program Director of HEW. His exodus from the city was noticeably short, and future direct involvement appeared to be as limited as possible. Perhaps this was in deference to local wishes to obtain federal financial assistance and nothing more. There were no indications from respondents that they felt the "feds" could have assisted the school system's recovery efforts in any way except by no-strings-attached financial assistance.

While local influencers did not appear to change following the disaster, their combined influences may change the decision-making process of the school system more directly in the future than state or federal influences. The following indications of post-disaster changes affecting the decision-making of the school system were noted:

1. An increased community cohesiveness following the disaster will probably increase the demand for and effectiveness in influencing school system decision-making by having more input into the process.
2. An increased commitment to schools and the education of Xenia's youth following the disaster will probably increase the need for information and feedback on issues on the part of parents and community members.

3. The perspectives on change and alternatives for the effective education of Xenia's youth have been broadened by the increased involvement with other school systems and increased interaction with educational leaders and specialists since the disaster. The forced changes as a result of the destruction will probably increase the kind of, and amount of, input citizens have into educational decision-making as they attempt to influence the educational future of the city besieged with unprecedented changes.

4. The rapidity of decision-making following the disaster decreased the input of community people and a broad range of school personnel. The post-disaster acquiescence to decision-making from the top was apparently motivated by a desire for the re-establishment of equilibrium and not by a decreased interest in the decision-making process.

As equilibrium is restored and the implications of post-disaster decisions realized, citizens and school personnel are likely to express displeasure at the lack of opportunity for input, despite their support and push for rapid decision-making during the crisis period. The result could stimulate involvement in future decisions.
It is too soon to observe long-term changes in the decision-making process of the Xenia school system since the disaster. Nonetheless, evidence points to increased post-disaster citizen involvement and interest in the schools with the implication that new demands for information and increased communications should be expected as the post-disaster rebuilding progresses and new problems demand resolution.
Chapter 6

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

Innumerable factors were involved in the pre- and post-disaster policy-making of the Xenia School System. Certainly all of them were not identified in this study, but several significant issues were pursued within a framework of internal and external influences at the local, state and federal levels. Policy issues were considered significant if they met the criteria established by Katz and Kahn of temporality (affecting the school system for an extended time), generality (characterized by abstractness), and spatiality (extensively influencing the entire organization).

Five areas of policy formulation were traced through a pre-post disaster analysis. Issues relating to school system finances, buildings, curriculum, disaster preparedness and decision-making were innumerated and analyzed in terms of pre-disaster conditions, post-disaster changes and contrasts of pre- and post-disaster policy implications.

Six questions guided the research. These questions concerned the study of possible systemic differences between pre- and post-disaster decisions, their impact upon the school system and the influencers of the decisions.
The Xenia school system had a variety of school facilities, many of which were too antiquated in structure or location to serve current educational needs. Frequent redistricting had been employed as a means of meeting the facilities needs in the city, including busing students from non-contiguous areas. The school system had been unable to change the location of school buildings to match the changing growth patterns of the city.

Elementary school enrollments had been declining for several years, and the junior/senior high enrollments had begun their downward trend. The quantity of facilities needs were diminishing although the need for quality was accelerating. The pre-tornado prospects for building funds appeared to be nil even with increasing pressures for a school facility in the western section of the city where the greatest growth was taking place and the continued use of an elementary building in the downtown area that was constructed at the turn of the century.

Financially, the Xenia schools were in serious difficulty. An anticipated $1 million deficit for the 1974-75 school year and the political soundings of a conservative community with a very diverse population left the school administration in doubt as to the advisability of even attempting to increase the levy by presenting it to the voters. Consensus from the community for increased financial support of the school system seemed elusive.
The tax burden was already high in the community with a decreasing business and industrial nucleus. The tax valuation per pupil was nearly half the state average. Even with high taxation, the Xenia schools could expect modest financial support from the community.

Curriculum and instruction in the school system reflected the conservative viewpoints of the community and school leadership. Few innovations had been launched in the system, and of those undertaken the funds were supplied by federal grants. The push for innovations had been external rather than internal, with the efforts toward individualization creating extensive community disputes over the issue. Internalizing of the innovative efforts had not been very successful despite some strong proponents of the programs. A strong cautious attitude prevailed among parents and teachers about future innovations as a result of inadequate support for past innovations.

The feeling of educational meandering in the system was supported by respondents' concerns about the turnover in the superintendency and Dr. Purdy's findings of lack of consensus among teachers in the system regarding beliefs and values. The efforts toward individualization in the elementary schools and academic standards in the high school unavoidably led to conflict over goals. One interpretation of the high drop-out rate in the school system would be the inability of many students to cope with the
discrepancies of curriculum and goals.

The school system received no kudos for their extra-curricular endeavors from respondents. The lack of recreational facilities in the city of Xenia reflected a lack of cooperative and comprehensive planning between the school system and the city government. Joint school/park facilities did not exist.

The warning system for alerting the community, including schools, of impending dangers, was dependent upon the media. There was no civil defense warning mechanism. The schools had no specific plan for alerting persons in individual buildings, and most students had not been instructed in tornado procedures should the procedures be necessary during the school day. Exceptions to this were a result of local building efforts.

Little attention had been given to investigating and obtaining disaster assistance from outside sources. Attempting to discover what state and federal assistance was available after the disaster compounded with the state of change of federal legislation and bureaucratic hurdles, presented formidable difficulties in communications following the disaster.

Organizational procedures for emergency operation of the school system had not been considered by school officials, as far as this study could determine, and no specific guidelines existed to steer the post-disaster
operations through the maze of problems and added decision-making caused by the event.

The board of education had operated on a consensus basis, following very closely the leadership of the superintendent of schools. Local autonomy was a carefully protected arena from either local or external intrusions. Decision-making tolerated input from others, but the clear understanding that the administration and board of education always held the upper hand in school system matters was made explicit. This probably made it easy for citizens to be critical of actions of the school board.

Access to the policy-making body was considered difficult by respondents. Many refrained from making policy suggestions, and others carefully followed the chain of command rather than direct contact with the administration or the board of education. Direct citizen input usually was accompanied by group activity rather than individual presentations. The board's display of power apparently impressed most individuals of the board's ability to control issues in private study sessions and in public board meetings.

The study indicated a freer flow of information between parents and local school teachers and principals than between parents and the board of education. Parents invited to advise the administration on policy matters through the parent advisory council appeared to follow the
lead of the administration to avoid impinging upon the
decision-making prerogatives of the administration and
board of education.

Influencers of school policy were quite varied as
respondents saw them. They ranged from the editor of the
newspaper to ordinary citizens with no organizational or
political clout except their daily contacts with other
citizens. Within the school system, the superintendent
and the assistant superintendent for instruction were the
dominant figures.

Six of the school system's eleven school buildings
were either destroyed or unusable without extensive repair
work following the April tornado. The high school and two
elementary schools were razed, presenting the question of
whether to plan new structures on the same sites or to
consider new sites. The fifty year-old Central Junior High
school building required such extensive repairs that build­
ing a new building or investing the funds into another
facility was more economical in the long-run. The two
newest facilities were extensively damaged, but warranted
repairs.

After getting classes back in session following
the tornado, enrollments vacillated, but ended the 1974
school year with a 10 per cent decrease from the enrollment
recorded at the beginning of the year. When schools opened
in September of 1974, in double sessions and in temporary
facilities within the city of Xenia, enrollments totaled 70 less than the end of the previous June figures.

Schools frequently must operate in temporary quarters or on reduced schedules following disaster. The unusual circumstance in Xenia was that the school population could not all be housed in the city following the destruction of three school buildings and extensive damage to three other school facilities. It was necessary to turn to adjacent school systems for assistance.

Massive destruction in Xenia changed the pre-tornado population concentrations in the city, affecting the location of school sites for the future. Even pre-tornado shifts in population had necessitated site utilizations that were unsuitable and/or inadequate. The responsibility to reassess school sites of destroyed facilities to fit post-disaster city planning was obvious. However, the Xenia story indicated that the need for equilibrium following the tornado may have caused parents to vehemently oppose redistricting plans so soon after the ordeal. Greater receptivity may have been possible with a longer planning period for facilities and sites in conjunction with population needs. The location and utilization of the temporary modular units did not necessarily have to coincide with permanent facilities planning and redistricting.

A renewed interest in schools was expressed by respondents following the tornado. Even during the crisis
period, schools were being discussed by citizens. There was little doubt that citizens valued education for their children and felt a deep loss with the destruction of school facilities. This was evident in the Spirit of Seventy-Four Committee and in the support of citizens to the schools following the disaster.

A new excitement was expressed for the future of the Xenia schools by citizens and school personnel. The building of new facilities and the procuring of new textbooks, materials and equipment provided a thrust of optimism for the future. The experience of sharing facilities and materials increased the awareness of many teachers to new methods and group sharing possibilities. Differences in the operation of local schools became more evident to parents and teachers as they operated in different environments following the disaster.

The need for post-disaster city planning increased the interaction between city officials and school administrators. The formation of the intermediary citizen's Spirit of Seventy-Four Committee facilitated this increased communication. Citizen's ideas and reactions to city rebuilding efforts in relation to the public school system were freely aired in community meetings independent of the city commission or of the school board. Although citizen input increased, it by no means reached the expectations of citizens. Many continued to feel that their input
caused little change in the actions of those in authority.

Attempts to open communications with citizens sometimes left the impression that the move was perfunctory. The joint meeting of the Spirit of Seventy-Four Committee and the school administration at the USSO Home on September 21, to clarify planning issues and to answer questions was organized with less than four days to notify the public, and questions from the floor were to be submitted in writing—an automatic deterrent to any but the most persistent. The low attendance was decried as citizen apathy, but it may well have been lack of knowledge of the meeting and a feeling of inability to cope with the communications system.

The disaster caused a severe dysfunction of operations of the Xenia schools. Coping and recovery operations were dependent upon assistance from external sources. The volunteer services of agencies and individuals to assist in salvage and clearance work were invaluable during the emergency period and the volunteer work of professionals in educational, social and psychological service fields during the immediate restructuring and coping period were indispensible. The funds donated by schools and other agencies boosted the morale of Xenians as they searched for a return to normalcy.

Even with volunteer assistance including financial contributions and adequate insurance coverage, the school
system faced financial ruin without external assistance from state and federal sources.

The millions of dollars needed for temporary school facilities, replacement of building contents, construction of new facilities, providing operating funds to supplant those lost by property tax losses, and the addition of personnel for specific planning and rebuilding needs were dependent upon legislated assistance. The magnitude of these needs were beyond the scope of local government or volunteer sources.

The distinct difference between volunteer assistance and governmental assistance stemmed from the perception that volunteer assistance was a benevolency whereas governmental assistance was obligatory; volunteer efforts were charitable but governmental assistance was a duty. Consequently, the local school administration demonstrated unveiled displeasure to state and federal officials when assistance was not delivered on the local system's terms.

Respondents perceived persons to be less critical of school system operation following the disaster, and particularly less critical in small matters. Indeed, responses indicated that through all of the problems of re-opening schools after the tornado and the difficult temporary operating problems, few criticisms were voiced and in retrospect most respondents found it difficult to think of ways it could have been improved. There was an
acceptance of administrative action that transcended personal concerns. "They did the best they could under the circumstances."

As would be expected, the occurrence of the disaster created an increased awareness of disaster preparedness in the Xenia schools. Systematic tornado drills and the acquisition of battery-powered radios and alert horns underscored the post-disaster caution against future threats. Individual school building requests were made to the Miami Valley Disaster Center for consultation in determining the safest areas within a building during a tornado. The architectural variety of buildings and ages of structures presented a need to seek professional advice on where to congregate youngsters during a tornado for maximum safety.

Assuming that basements or halls are the safest areas can ignore other structural features that could preclude their use. Generally, large expanse areas such as gymnasiums and multipurpose areas should be avoided and smaller inner areas, such as halls and small windowless rooms utilized. However, exceptions to these generalizations were noted in the Xenia tornado. The wisdom of assessing individual buildings by disaster experts was recognized by some principals as they attempted to outline disaster procedures for the students under their direction.
At first glance, the post-disaster possibilities for the school system appeared to be a tabula rasa. But while the destruction necessitated a rebuilding of the city, post-disaster planning could not begin with a blank page. The past greatly controlled the future just as it would have without the intervening disaster.

The alternatives available in new facilities, new sites, redistricting, new programs, increased community involvement and new instructional materials could only be visualized in terms of pre-disaster planning and philosophy. The past did not disappear with the disaster. Viewpoints may have been broadened, new perspectives on change may have resulted, and group cohesiveness may have been increased, but a pervasive philosophy or lack of it controlled post-disaster decisions.

For example, the opportunity was quickly seized to change the location and size of facilities based upon pre-tornado conceptions of program operation and community needs. The opportunity to explore a community-school concept was not pursued although it was introduced as desirable by individuals and discussed in group sessions, primarily because the concept was not a part of the fabric of school system goals prior to the tornado. It may become so in the future, but the mere introduction of an idea made possible by the disaster did not necessarily make it a viable alternative for those making the decisions.
New possibilities emerged, but so did new limitations. Property loss meant tax loss; loss of student enrollment signalled lessened state foundation support; prorated payments for building contents did not mean that funds were sufficient for replacement; logical relocations of facilities were more costly than rebuilding on the same site; rebuilding a fifty year-old building appeared to be the only affordable thing to do while the educational and economic logic for the next half-century dictated replacing the structure with a more expensive facility; and the need for expediency in the crisis period sought the avoidance of red tape, but seldom was it possible to avoid technical procedures without future complications. The push for action without adequately considering the long-term ramifications caused many of the communications problems in the Xenia schools.

Rational decision-making based upon logic was limited by the emotional reactions of those involved to a greater extent following the disaster than before. The pursuance of alternatives for action during the post-disaster period had to consider the emotional impact of those alternatives, and some logical alternatives were not serious considerations because of emotional opposition.

A new aggressiveness to catapult the school system into the next decade with adequate financing commensurate with the new facilities, books, materials and equipment
prompted the school administration to promote a successful levy campaign. Support for the levy was an indication of a new community cohesiveness and increased awareness of the value of the educational system.

The push for rapid decision-making to reestablish the familiar functioning institutions in the community may have forced some long-term decisions into the immediate decision-making arena. Future dissatisfactions with the post-disaster policy-making process and post-disaster decisions may result from the prioritizing of issues and the reliance of the administration upon unilateral decision-making during the emergency and coping period.

The school system's relationships with local, state and federal governments experienced lack of communication and mistrust as a result of pre-disaster perceptions of power domains and post-disaster actions that attempted to bypass the bureaucratic complexities. The easy flow of verbal agreements during the crisis period emphasized that written agreements were as necessary during the crisis period as at any other time.

Does traumatic change really make a difference in the long-run? The Xenia story resounds with every indication that it does. The city will never be the same, nor will the school system. The indications are that the new opportunities will surpass the new limitations.
The social demands and resources that created or maintained the educational system of the Xenia schools gave every indication of being altered as a result of the disaster. The issues surrounding the five areas of policy formulation amply supported this conclusion. Specifically identifying the systemic differences between pre- and post-disaster policy decisions in relation to these altered demands could only be considered in terms of interpretations and inferences from the qualitative data.

The analysis indicated that post-disaster decisions differed from the pre-disaster period as evidenced by:

1. An expanded awareness of and opportunity to obtain scarce resources for the school system. The elimination of some of the prior physical limitations by the disaster and the expansion of financial support at the local, state and federal levels increased the possibilities for future development. New limitations emerged, but they did not outweigh the increased opportunities.

2. A community commitment toward renewal resulted in a new aggressiveness by school administrators to obtain additional resources for the school system. The post-disaster community cohesiveness and heightened commitment to the educational system resulted in an increased community cooperativeness to provide and obtain through outside sources the resources necessary for expanded wants.
3. An acceleration of rapid and decisive administrative action during the post-disaster period supported by the community for the restoration of equilibrium, resulted in an increase in unilateral administrative policy decision-making.

4. A post-disaster increase in administrative control over policy issues as a result of access to information, increased pace of decision-making and pervasive paternalistic dependencies of the community on authoritative leadership.

The impact of post-disaster policy decisions as contrasted with the pre-disaster period resulted in:

1. An increased community awareness of educational alternatives.

2. An increased demand for input into educational policy decisions, although its emergence during the immediate post-disaster period was characterized by subsuming broad input under pervasive unilateral decision-making by the administration.

3. Difficulty in surfacing and sustaining community policy concerns to the decision-making arena during the post-disaster period because of the increased administrative control at the top.

4. An increased community support of the educational system in an attempt to restore the equilibrium.
5. An increased animosity and distrust of state and federal influences on educational policy issues.

6. An increased dependence of the board of education on administrative leadership for policy development.

The implementation of post-disaster policy decisions closely paralleled pre-disaster considerations:

1. The lack of input into policy-making had resulted in disenchantment with many of the outcomes. The acquiescence to unilateral decision-making following the disaster appeared to be the result of a desire to rapidly return to normalcy rather than lack of interest in the issues. It is conjectured that the implementation period may experience the same concerns in the post-disaster period as experienced prior to the event.

2. The increased community support of the educational system and the concomitant push for input into the policy process is expected to influence the implementation of post-disaster policies by a lessened emphasis on rapid decision-making as equilibrium is reestablished in the community and closer attention to policy input is emphasized.

3. The lack of consensus on educational goals continued into the post-disaster period, with emergency, immediate and long-term decisions enacted with minimal consideration of a pervasive philosophy to guide the end results.
4. The non-decisions of the post-disaster period are likely to continue to surface as concerns affecting the implementation of policies grow in intensity.

The influencers of policy decisions were affected by the disaster to some extent. No change was noted in the influence of school system personnel or the school board in influencing policy issues except that those identified as the influencers became even more influential. The community influencers did not appear to change following the disaster, but there were indications that their influence may increase during the post-disaster period.

State and federal influencers changed as a result of the disaster because of the dependence of the school system upon state and federal sources for assistance and the officials who controlled and administered that assistance. The influence of the Ohio Department of Education was most noticeable in the numbers and services performed by personnel under the guidance of the State Department.

The direct influence of federal politicians and officials appeared to be brief and more directly connected with post-disaster recovery financial assistance. The implementation of policies and the development of future policy in the school system will probably continue to be much more influenced by local influencers than by state or federal sources.
The findings of this study were based upon open-ended interview data placed into a framework of policy inputs identified in discussions, reports, communications and whatever quantitative data could be assimilated relating to the Xenia situation. The conclusions raise more questions than they answer, and they cannot serve as irrefutable guides to future school system functioning during and following a disaster event. However, with the hope that future research will confirm or illuminate in new ways the functioning of school systems after disruptive events, the following hypotheses are offered as a beginning point in that process:

1. The dependence on external sources for assistance following disaster increases local resistance to perceived external intrusions and the bureaucratic impediments to local school system policy goals.

2. Following disaster, there is a community thrust toward immediate decision-making to restore equilibrium resulting in temporary increased support for unilateral administrative decision-making.

3. Immediate decision-making at the exclusion of long-term considerations following disaster will result in heightened resistance to implementation and decreased community support as equilibrium is reestablished in the community.
4. As a result of outside influences and heightened community cohesiveness following disaster, community support for the local educational system and policy development is increased.

5. Broadened perspectives on change and alternatives for educational policy directions following disaster are limited by pre-disaster goals as perceived by the local school administration.
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APPENDIX A

Interview Schedule

I am interested in getting some information about the recent tornado and its effect on the schools. Hopefully, this information can be used to help others in the future. I'll be asking you for your ideas and your reactions. Your responses will be anonymous.

1. How long have you lived in Xenia?
2. Do you intend to remain here?
3. To what fraternal, professional, civic, social or religious groups do you belong?
4. Do you hold, or have you held offices in any of these?
5. What is your political party affiliation?
6. Have you ever held political office? Where?
7. Were you in Xenia when the tornado struck? Where?
8. What kind of warning did you have before it hit?
9. What problems did it cause for you and your family?
10. Would you describe the community destruction as you saw it immediately after the tornado?
11. Would you describe your activities in helping the community get back on its feet after the tornado?
12. What individuals, groups and organizations were of the most help during the first hours after the disaster?
13. How did you find out about available help and services during the emergency period?
14. Have you since learned about available help that you didn't know about at the time that would have made things easier for you?

15. Do you have any suggestions for improving disaster alert and warning systems and disaster readiness programs?

16. At what point did you think about the problems of getting students back in school?

17. What were your thoughts about this?

18. Would you talk about what you did to help get schools open after the tornado, beginning with the first things you did?

19. How were you involved in the planning and decision-making regarding the temporary school arrangements to attend to building needs and get kids back in school?

20. What about the long-term planning (buildings, program, etc.)?

21. What kind of help was available in getting the schools open again from state, federal and local agencies, neighboring communities, etc.?

22. Under the circumstances, do you think the school arrangements were about as good as could be expected or would other plans have been better?

23. As far as you know, did students and school personnel generally adjust to the temporary school arrangements?

24. Were there any unusual problems that should be mentioned?

25. Can you think of anything that might have helped?

26. In the past, what do you consider to be the major strengths of the schools in Xenia?

27. Have there been any particular problems in the schools in the past that have concerned you very much? If so, what were they?

28. In the past, what people have been most willing to listen to you or have actively sought your advice on procedural and policy matters concerning schools?
29. In the past, if you wanted to make a suggestion about a change in school policy or general operation of the schools, to whom did you make it?

30. Did you feel your ideas about the operation of the schools were taken seriously?

31. In the past, do you think the people in Xenia have generally been interested in school affairs? If so, in what ways?

32. What individuals in Xenia would you say have the most influence in community affairs in general?

33. What individuals in Xenia would you say have the greatest influence in determining what happens in the schools?

34. What are some of the ways you have participated in making school policies in the past?

35. In your opinion, what have been the most important problems, projects or issues facing the Xenia schools before the tornado?

36. Which ones caused the most conflict?

37. What community organizations have been most influential in educational matters affecting the schools?

38. Would you say people in the community are more interested, less interested or pretty much unchanged in their concern for schools since the tornado? Why?

39. Do you see any difference in the influence of people or organizations in school matters since the tornado?

40. What about your own role and influence?

41. What do you consider the most important problems, projects or issues facing the Xenia schools since the disaster?

42. Are there any changes you would like to see made in the Xenia schools as a result of the tornado?

43. Have you expressed your ideas to anyone? To whom?

44. Have your professional ideas or general feelings about the schools changed in any way since the tornado? If so, in what ways and why?
45. Regarding the changes that you anticipate in the schools as a result of the tornado destruction, which changes do you hate to see happen and which ones do you welcome?

46. If our discussion about the tornado disaster and the schools has brought to mind anything you would like to add to what has already been said, I'd be pleased to have you add whatever you would like to say.
## APPENDIX B

### PRE-TORNADO XENIA CITY SCHOOL FACILITIES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SCHOOL</th>
<th>REGULAR CLASSROOMS</th>
<th>OTHER ROOMS</th>
<th>SITE SIZE</th>
<th>CAPACITY</th>
<th>ENROLLMENT IN MARCH 1974</th>
<th>DATE OF CONSTRUCTION</th>
<th>ADDITIONS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Arrowood Ele.</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>19 acres with Warner</td>
<td>360</td>
<td>392</td>
<td>1967</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central J.H.</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>1 acre</td>
<td>854</td>
<td>791</td>
<td>1921 1950</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cox Ele.</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5 acres</td>
<td>750</td>
<td>732</td>
<td>1958 1959</td>
<td>1964</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>McKinley Ele.</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>.9 acres</td>
<td>390</td>
<td>326</td>
<td>1902</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shawnee Ele.</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6.4 acres</td>
<td>540</td>
<td>469</td>
<td>1950 1965</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Simon Kenton Ele.</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>12.1 acres</td>
<td>870</td>
<td>861</td>
<td>1957 1960</td>
<td>1964</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spring Hill Ele.</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5.6 acres</td>
<td>540</td>
<td>514</td>
<td>1950 1964</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spring Valley Ele.</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5 acres</td>
<td>480</td>
<td>453</td>
<td>1924 1953</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tecumseh Ele.</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>7.3 acres</td>
<td>630</td>
<td>578</td>
<td>1949 1953</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Xenia H.S.</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>tch. stations</td>
<td>10 acres</td>
<td>2000</td>
<td>1455</td>
<td>1958 1965</td>
<td>1959</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

APPENDIX C

PRE-TORNADO SCHOOL DISTRICT BOUNDARIES

PRE-TORNADO SCHOOL DISTRICT BOUNDARIES
APPENDIX D

POST-TORNADO SCHOOL DISTRICT BOUNDARIES