

BROOKFIELD, CONNECTICUT
AN EXAMINATION OF FISCAL EXPENDITURES
FOR PUBLIC EDUCATION
1905-1965

AN ABSTRACT OF
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Brookfield, at the present time, is one of the fastest growing towns in the State. Until the 1940's and 1950's, the Town was a quiet, rural backwater with little change in population or ways of living. The greatly increased number of young, resident, married couples with children has forced the Town to meet their needs by intensive school planning and building, and hiring of additional teachers.

The School Budget has greatly increased with a proportionate decline in State aid from approximately 50 per cent, twenty years ago, to approximately 29 per cent, as of the fiscal year 1964-1965, leaving the balance of educational costs to be paid by local taxpayers.

Revaluation of taxable property has taken place twice in the last fifteen years, but the relief felt by the taxpayers has been temporary due to the inflationary state of the general economy. Despite the fact that the grand list has increased, as well as the mill rate, financing the schools has been, and remains, a serious problem.

The cost of instruction in the Public Schools has been augmented, not only by comparative large increases in individual teacher's salaries, but also by the determination of the Brookfield Board of Education and the Superintendent of Schools to keep the pupil-classroom teacher ratio low.

Unfortunately, the public is not generally aware of the actual cost of the total School operation due, in part, to the lack of continuity from year to year in the format of the Annual Reports of the Town of Brookfield. The Reports leave the general impression with the

casual reader that the final expenditures of the Board of Education are the actual costs. This is an erroneous conclusion since by close examination it can be found that from 30 to 32 per cent of the School Budget for the last four years has been reimbursed by aid from the State, combined with aid from the National Defense Education Act. Both the General Town, or Selectmen's Orders, and the Board of Education, or School Orders, are included as major headings under the title "General Fund". Any receipts, therefore, are entered in the balance sheet of the General Fund where no final cost analysis is provided for either Town or School operation.

A few local residents, at present, are complaining of crowded living conditions. If projected figures can be believed, Brookfield's population is expected to treble by the year 1984. This will reduce the amount of total area in Brookfield per person from the two-acre figure, at present, to six-tenths of an acre in the future.

Aside from less space per person, the aspect of future school growth is one which needs careful planning and positive public acceptance. There will be an even greater need for genuine, constructive interest in the Public Schools due to the almost inevitable future rise in taxation. This interest is being carefully and, so far, successfully fostered by the combined efforts of the Brookfield Board of Education and the Superintendent of Schools.