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Junior Academy

A PRELIMINARY SURVEY OF SCIENCE CLUBS IN MINNESOTA

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This survey of science clubs in Minnesota came about as the result of a plan which was suggested at the second annual meeting of the Council of the Minnesota Junior Academy of Science which met on Friday, December 1, 1939, at the University Farm in St. Paul. Valuable suggestions for carrying on this survey were given by the president of the Junior Academy and other Council members.

Briefly, a plan was designed to find out which schools of the state had science clubs and to make known to them some of the services of the Junior Academy. In order to accomplish this the Junior Academy Council approved a plan to print and mail a postal with reply card attached to the high schools of the state. In mailing out these cards they were sent to all public high schools in Minnesota in towns having a population of 500 or more and to a few smaller schools selected for various reasons. A sprinkling of Junior high schools and private schools were also included in the survey.

During the month of December, 1939 and early in the month of January, 1940, postals were mailed out to about 250 high schools in the state. Later a packet of materials was sent out to those schools which returned their reply cards. Up to the present time reply cards and other personal correspondence have brought returns from about 60 schools or approximately 25%. The returns have been extremely interesting and quite informative as to the status of science clubs in state high schools, although the survey in itself was very limited.

The information asked for on the reply postal card was as follows:

1. Name of town.
2. Name of the school.
3. Names of science clubs.
4. Number of members in the science club.
5. Date of organization of the club.
6. Names of faculty sponsors.

Of the 60 schools from whom information was received, 22 indicated that they did not have science clubs. Thirty-eight schools indicated that they had science clubs with a total of 58 separate clubs. This includes 9 chapters of the Minnesota Junior Academy of Science. Four schools indicated affiliation with the American Institute of Science and Engineering Clubs of New York City.

In most schools included in the survey there was but one science club. However, many schools have several science clubs. Stillwater High School was the only institution reporting 5 clubs. Edison High School of Minneapolis and Faribault High School reported 4 clubs. St. Cloud Technical High School and West High School of Minneapolis have 3 science clubs. The following high schools reported 2 clubs: Albert Lea, Bloomington of Minneapolis, Montevideo, North of Minneapolis, Proctor, Rochester, Washburn of Minneapolis and Waseca.

One Science club was reported for each of the following high schools: Forest Lake, Benson, Excelsior, Winnebago, Northfield, Stewartville, Blue Earth, White Bear, Cambridge, Elk River, Mechanic Arts of St. Paul, Washington of St. Paul, Worthington, Comfrey, St. James, Chisholm, Roosevelt of Minneapolis, Central of Minneapolis, University High of Minneapolis, Robbinsdale and Hutchinson. Folwell Junior High School of Minneapolis, Hutchinson Junior High School and St. Thomas Military Academy of St. Paul each reported one science club in their respective schools.

The majority of science clubs are organized around the basic high school science subjects: namely, general science, biology, physics and chemistry. Accordingly, many clubs chose names corresponding with the subject field in which they were interested. The most common name reported was just merely "science club." Other names reported are an indication of the fields of interest to some extent. The following named clubs were listed by the various schools: Kinetic Club, Nature Club, Society of Science, Broadcasters, Rails, Camera or Photography Club, Chemistry Club, Radio Club, Carl Linnaeus, Inventors Club, Physics Club, Biology Club, General Science Club, Gamma Phi, Bird and Conservation Club, Science Leadership Club, Floriculture Club, Science and Hobby Club, Botany Club, Wildlife Club, and Conservation Club.

Possibly some question may be raised as to the classification of some of these clubs as science clubs, such as a camera or a photography club. Such a club's program could include much or little science depending upon the club's activities. Other clubs listed by some schools as related to science included archery, Home Economics and stage craft. However, these were omitted from this study.

The size of the science clubs reported varies from 9 to 150 members. The average size of those clubs most frequently reported tends to range from 15 to 30 members. About two-thirds of all the clubs which reported were included in this range. Only three clubs had less than 15 members; while but 11 clubs reported having 40 or more members. The Biology Club of Stillwater High School with 150 members was the largest club indicated. Other clubs with large membership include the Chemistry Club and General Science Club of Stillwater with 66 and 72 members, respectively. A total of 331 students are members of science clubs in Stillwater High School. Proc-

tor High School reported 73 members in its Broadcasters Club and the Rails Club with a membership of 67.

Most science clubs in the state according to this study are comparatively young. Thirty-nine of the clubs studied were 6 years old or younger. Of this number 16 were organized in 1939. The oldest club reported was the Science Club of North High School of Minneapolis which was organized in 1911. Next in date of organization was the Botany Club of Central High School of Minneapolis which was organized in 1917.

There is much need of further research on the status of science clubs in Minnesota for charting the future course of the Minnesota Junior Academy of Science.

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