

Documenting the Fight for School Desegregation in Greenville/Pitt County

Patrick Cash,
Assistant University Archivist, Joyner Library Special Collections
East Carolina University

Brown v. Board of Education (1954)

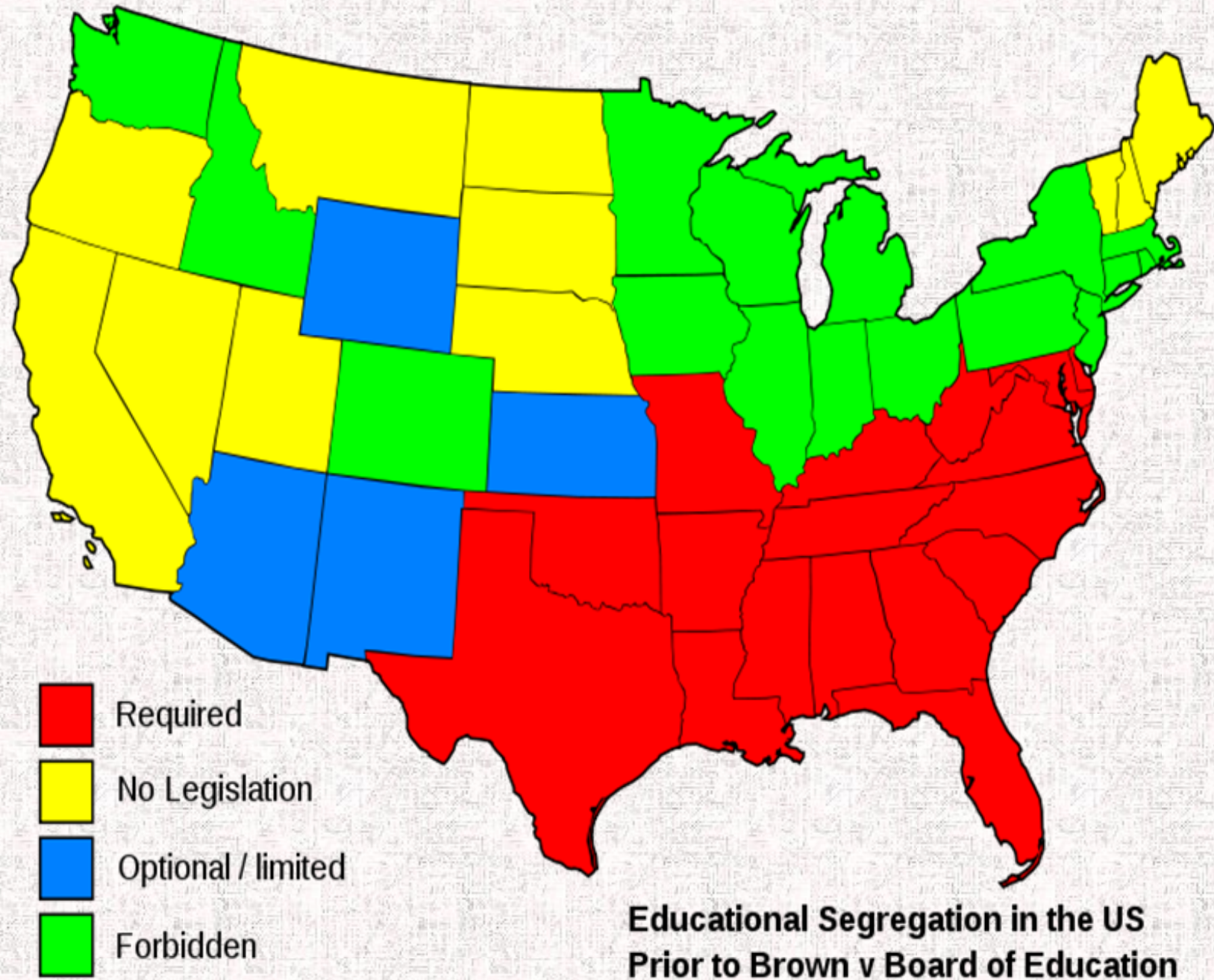


“The doctrine of separate but equal has no place in the field of public education.”

-Brown decision, 1954

A mother explaining to her daughter the significance of the Supreme Court's 1954 ruling in *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka*; photographed on the steps of the U.S. Supreme Court in Washington, D.C., November 19, 1954.

New York World-Telegram & Sun Collection/Library of Congress, Washington, D.C. (LC-USZ62-127042)



**Educational Segregation in the US
Prior to Brown v Board of Education**

William B. Umstead
63rd Governor of North Carolina, 1953-1954



Institute of Government at UNC Chapel Hill's 1954 Report

The use of state funds to provide vouchers to families who wanted to send their child to a private school in order to avoid segregation.

1. The drafting and implementation of a pupil assignment plan.
2. The creation of new attendance districts for schools aimed at keeping the races segregated.
3. Allowing parents to personally choose the district and school their child would attend.

INSTITUTE OF GOVERNMENT
The University of North Carolina
Chapel Hill

A REPORT to the
GOVERNOR OF NORTH CAROLINA
on the Decision of the Supreme Court of the United States
on the 17th of May, 1954

PART I

THE BACKGROUND OF THE COURT'S DECISION

By Albert Coates
Director of the Institute of Government

PART II

THE TEXT OF THE COURT'S DECISION

PART III

AN ANALYSIS OF THE LEGAL ASPECTS
OF THE SCHOOL SEGREGATION DECISION AND
ALTERNATIVES OPEN TO NORTH CAROLINA IN THE LIGHT OF THAT DECISION

By James C. N. Paul
Assistant Director of the Institute of Government

Albert Coates, Director

Assistant Directors

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The Governor's Special Advisory Committee on Education

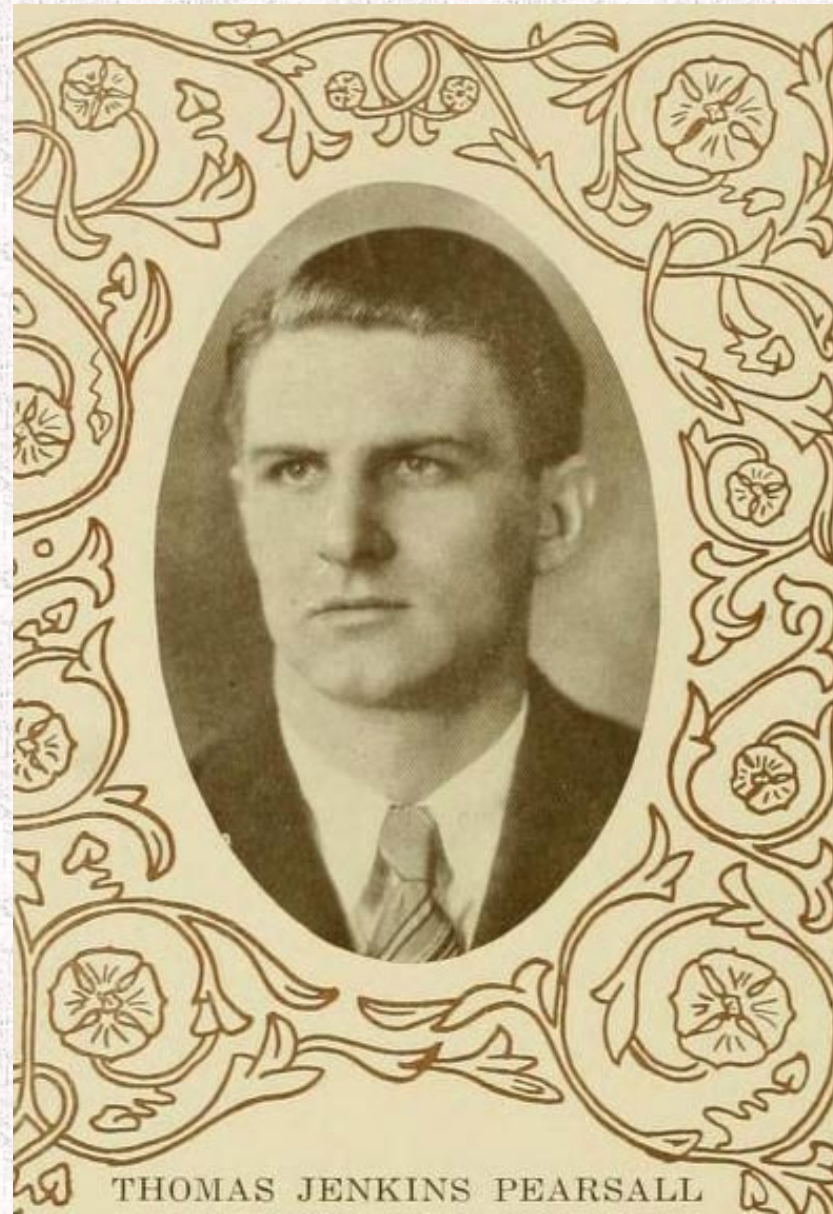
- Thomas J. Pearsall from Rocky Mount, North Carolina, Chair.
 - William T. Joyner from Raleigh, North Carolina.
 - R.O. Huffman from Morganton, North Carolina.
 - Arthur D. Williams from Wilson, North Carolina.
 - I.E. Ready from Roanoke Rapids, North Carolina.
- James C. Manning from Williamston, North Carolina.
- Dr. F.D. Bluford from Greensboro, North Carolina. *
- Dr. J.W. Seabrook from Fayetteville, North Carolina. *
 - Hazel S. Parker from Tarboro, North Carolina. ***
 - Ruth Current from Raleigh, North Carolina. **
 - Helen S. Kafer from New Bern, North Carolina. **
- Dr. Paul A. Reid from Cullowhee, North Carolina.
 - Dallas Herring from Rose Hill, North Carolina.
 - Fred B. Helms from Charlotte, North Carolina.
- Dr. Gordon Gray from Chapel Hill, North Carolina.
 - L.R. Varser from Lumberton, North Carolina.
 - Clarence Poe from Raleigh, North Carolina.
 - J.H. Clark from Elizabethtown, North Carolina
 - Holt Mcpherson from North Carolina.

*Identifies members who were African American

**Identifies members who were female

***Mrs. Hazel Parker was the only African American female on the committee

Thomas Jenkins Pearsall



A Variety of Suggestions

- “Group Enrollment and Registration Law”
- The segregation of schools by gender, not race.
- Gradual desegregation: The desegregation of first grade classes across the state and one grade level would be added every year.
- Voluntary segregation

REFLECTOR

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All Departments

REFERENCE TO FICTION

AFTERNOON, NOVEMBER 8, 1954

Twelve Pages Today Price 5 Cents

First N.C. Governor To Die In Office Since 1891

Umstead Funeral Tuesday

Governor William B. Umstead passed away in office on November 7, 1954.

RALEIGH (AP)—Luther H. Hodges, 56, who was elected lieutenant governor in 1952 in his first political venture, will become North Carolina's governor tomorrow succeeding William B. Umstead who died yesterday.

Hodges, a former vice president of Marshall Field Co., will be sworn in at 4 p.m. by Chief Justice I. V. Barnhill of the State Supreme Court.

Umstead, 59, had been in poor health since suffering a heart attack on Jan. 8, 1953 two days after his inauguration as governor. He was readmitted to Watts Hospital in Durham Thursday with a severe cold.

His wife and 12-year-old daughter, Merle Bradley, were at his bedside when death came at 9:10 a.m. Death was due to congestive heart failure and bronchial pneumonia.

Funeral services will be held tomorrow at 11 a.m. at the Trinity Methodist Church in Durham. Burial will be in the Mount Tabor Church Cemetery at Bahama, a rural community near Durham.

Umstead was the first North Carolina governor to die in office since 1891 when Gov. David G. Reade was succeeded by Lt. Gov. James M. Hilt.

Umstead, a stern-faced well-known man, was a U.S. representative from 1932-1938 when Congress

enacted much of President Franklin Roosevelt's New Deal into law. He retired in 1938 to enter private law practice at Durham.

In 1946 Umstead was appointed by Gov. R. Gregg Cherry to the



WILLIAM B. UMSTEAD

U.S. Senate to succeed the late Josiah W. Bailey. Two years later he suffered the only defeat of his political career when the late J.

Melville Broughton won the senatorial nomination.

Umstead was elected governor in 1952 to succeed W. Kerr Scott.

Dr. C. D. Barclift, pastor of the Trinity Methodist Church, will conduct the services assisted by Dr. D. D. Holt of Greensboro; the Rev. D. A. Clark, pastor of the Mount Tabor Church, and the Rev. C. S. Hubbard, pastor of the Chapel Hill Methodist Church.

The governor's office was closed today. All state offices in Raleigh will be closed tomorrow.

The body will lie in state for two hours prior to the funeral. Umstead will be buried near the bodies of his father and mother.

Pallbearers will be: John Harden Greensboro; former Gov. Cherry W. Frank Taylor, Goldsboro; F. L. Fuller Jr., Jones Fuller, R. P. Reade Knox Massey, Walter A. Biggs, D. A. Sorrell, all of Durham, and Edward L. Rankin Jr., the governor's secretary.

Regarded as a conscientious person, Umstead launched the state on an ambitious program with his inauguration. During the 1953 Legislature he was either confined to the hospital or the Executive Mansion recovering from a heart attack. His program included big bond issues for school building and for improvements at mental hospitals and other state institutions. The people approved overwhelm-

ingly the bond program in an election last fall.

On Oct. 3 upon the advice of his physician, Dr. Ralph Fleming, Umstead entered Watts Hospital for a period of treatment and rest. He was plagued by a cough and difficulty in breathing. He left the hospital three weeks later, reporting that he felt much better.

Shortly after returning to the Executive Mansion, Umstead caught a severe cold. He attended a meeting of the Advisory Budget Commission last Thursday, but those present remarked he was hoarse and appeared weak. Around 1 p.m. that day Dr. Clarence Royster of Raleigh, who had been attending the governor in Raleigh, summoned Dr. Fleming. Upon the advice, the governor returned to Watts Hospital.

The next day, Dr. Fleming consulted with Dr. Elnor Craig at Dr. Charles Burnett, both of the University of North Carolina Medical School. Rankin reported that the doctors soon suspected he had developed pneumonia. This had aggravated his heart condition.

The governor was reported showing some improvement Saturday but he took a turn for the worse that afternoon. Rankin said Umstead "seemed to feel better" Sunday morning and talked freely with his wife and daughter. Suddenly, he "just stopped breathing," Rankin said.

"Umstead Funeral Tuesday," *The Daily Reflector*, November 8, 1954.

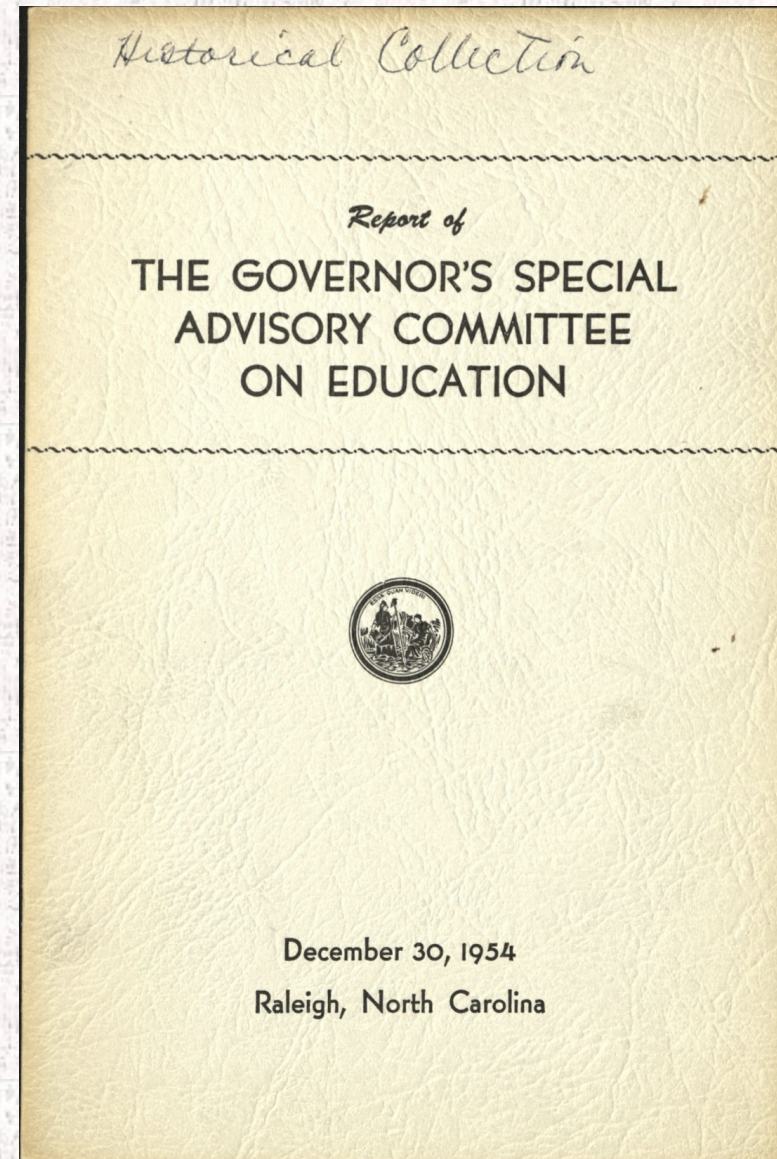
Luther Hodges

64th Governor of North Carolina, 1954-1961



Report of the Governors' Special Advisory Committee on Education

- “Preservation of peace throughout North Carolina.”
- “Preservation of the public education system in North Carolina.”
- The draft report urged North Carolina citizens to “act coolly, exercise restraint, exhibit tolerance, and display wisdom” during this time of uncertainty.



Luther Hodges

64th Governor of North Carolina, 1954-1961



The Pupil Assignment Act of 1955

March 23, 1955

- All mentions of race in law related to public schools was to be removed.
- The responsibility and power of pupil assignment, enrollment, and transportation was to be transferred from the State Board of Education to local boards across the state.
- Parents displeased with their child assignment could appeal the decision to the state courts.
- The power and decision to ultimately close schools was given to local boards of education

Albert Joyner and the Old Fort 5



Albert Joyner and the Old Fort children, *Look Magazine*, 1956.

The 2nd Governor's Special Advisory Committee on Education

Thomas J. Pearsall from Rocky Mount, North Carolina, Chair.

William T. Joyner from Raleigh, North Carolina.

R.O. Huffman from Morganton, North Carolina.

Lunsford Crew from Halifax County, North Carolina.

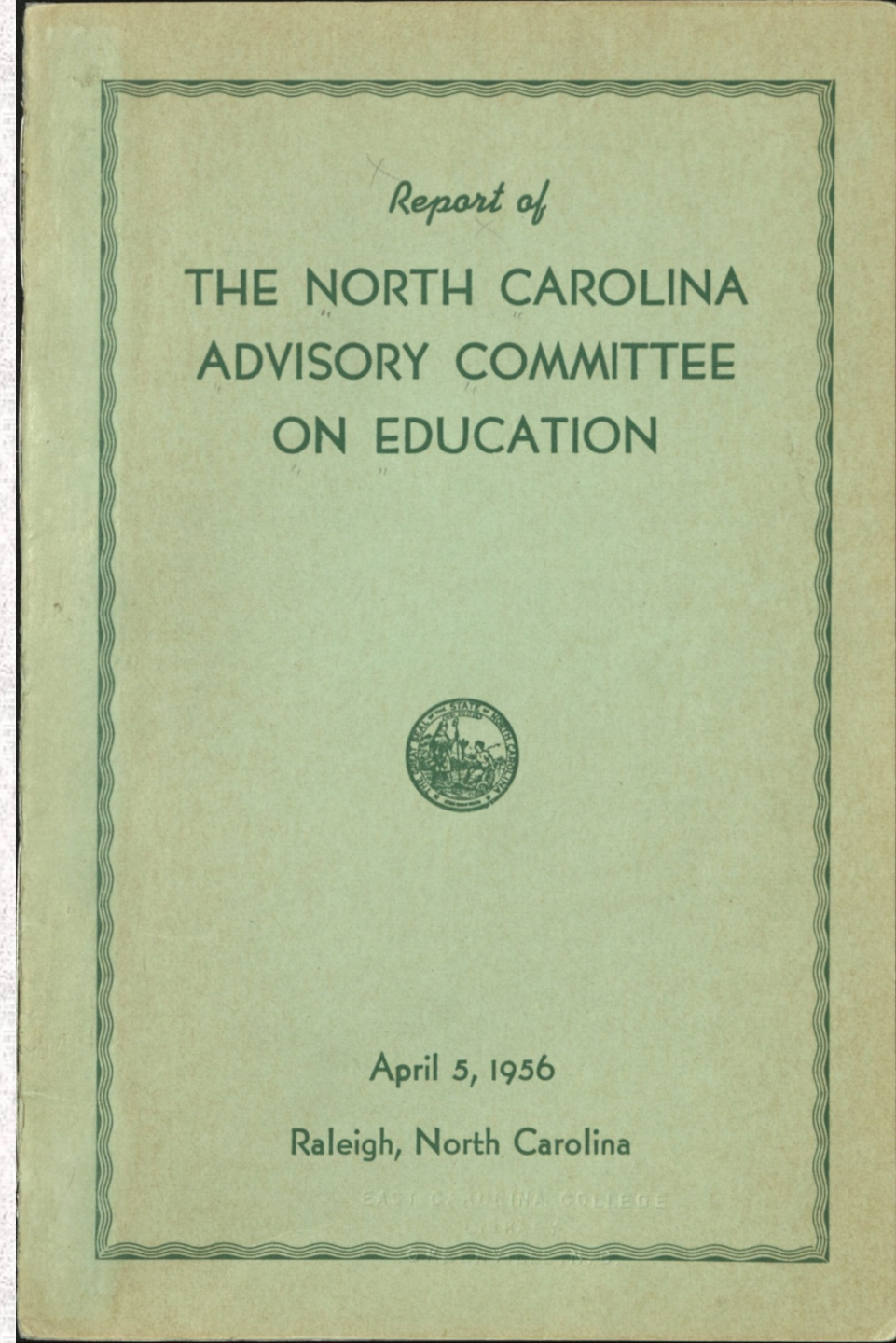
H. Cloyd Philpott from Davidson County, North Carolina.

Edward Yarborough from Franklin County, North Carolina

William Medford from Haywood County, North Carolina.

Report of the North Carolina Advisory Committee on Education, April 5, 1956

Report of the North Carolina Advisory Committee on Education, April 5, 1956.
Verona Joyner Langford North Carolina Collection, East Carolina University



The Pearsall Plan

N. L. Kachan

THE PEARSALL PLAN

to

- *Save*
- *our*
- *Schools*

Here, briefly, is the Pearsall Committee plan to preserve North Carolina's public school system. It is the result of a hard, conscientious study conducted since the U. S. Supreme Court decision of May 17, 1954. This pamphlet does not attempt to answer every question. It is designed to give basic information. Full information may be obtained by writing the North Carolina Advisory Committee on Education, Room 357, Revenue Building, Raleigh.

LEGISLATIVE RECOMMENDATIONS

OF

NORTH CAROLINA ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

The Advisory Committee suggested eight separate bills for submission to the N. C. General Assembly to implement its "Report of April 5, 1956," so that no child in North Carolina will be forced to attend a school with a child of another race. These bills are as follows:

1. *Constitutional Amendment*: This Amendment if enacted by the Legislature and adopted by the people at a general election will permit the granting of education expense grants to any child for whom no public school is available, or who is assigned against his parent's wishes to a mixed public school; and, to provide by a vote of the people for suspending the operation of a school or schools in a community where conditions become intolerable.

2. *Election Machinery*: This bill provides the necessary procedures to submit the Constitutional Amendment to a vote of the people.

3. *Education Expense Grant*: This bill provides that any child for whom no public school is available or who is assigned against the wishes of his parents to a public school attended by a child of another race, and cannot reasonably be reassigned to a public school not attended by a child of another race, may receive a grant of State and local funds to be used in obtaining an education in a private school.

4. *Local Option*: This bill provides that the board of education in your community may subdivide the school administrative unit into local areas and submit to the registered voters in that community the choice of whether they want to continue or suspend operation of public school or schools in that local area.

5. *Amendment to Compulsory School Attendance Law*: This bill does not change the compulsory attendance laws of North Carolina except to provide that when a child assigned against the wishes of his parent to a public school attended by a child of another race and it is not reasonable and practicable to reassign such child to a non-mixed public school, and it is not reasonable and practicable for the child to attend an approved private school, then the child shall not be forced to attend a school.

6. *Appropriations*: This bill provides for allocations from the State's Contingency and Emergency Fund to pay for any education expense grants which are authorized under the law.

7. *Amendment to Assignment Act*: This bill would make certain clarifications in the present Assignment Act which was enacted by the 1955 Session of the General Assembly.

8. *Resolution of Condemnation and Protest*: This bill is aimed at alerting the entire nation to the serious problems created when the Supreme Court of the United States in effect amended the Federal Constitution.

The Pearsall Plan to Save Our Schools. Verona Joyner Langford
North Carolina Collection, East
Carolina University

“Desegregation is not only the law, it is also right.”
-Elmer Grainger, Charlotte Superintendent, March 1957

Token Integration

- Charlotte, Greensboro, and Winston-Salem schools were chosen to admit African American students at the beginning of the 1957-1958 academic year.
- A total of 4 students were enrolled in previously all white school in Charlotte, 6 in Greensboro, and only 1 in Winston-Salem.

“Beginning of a Freedom of
Choice Approach to School
Desegregation.”

- Guy B. Phillips, 1957

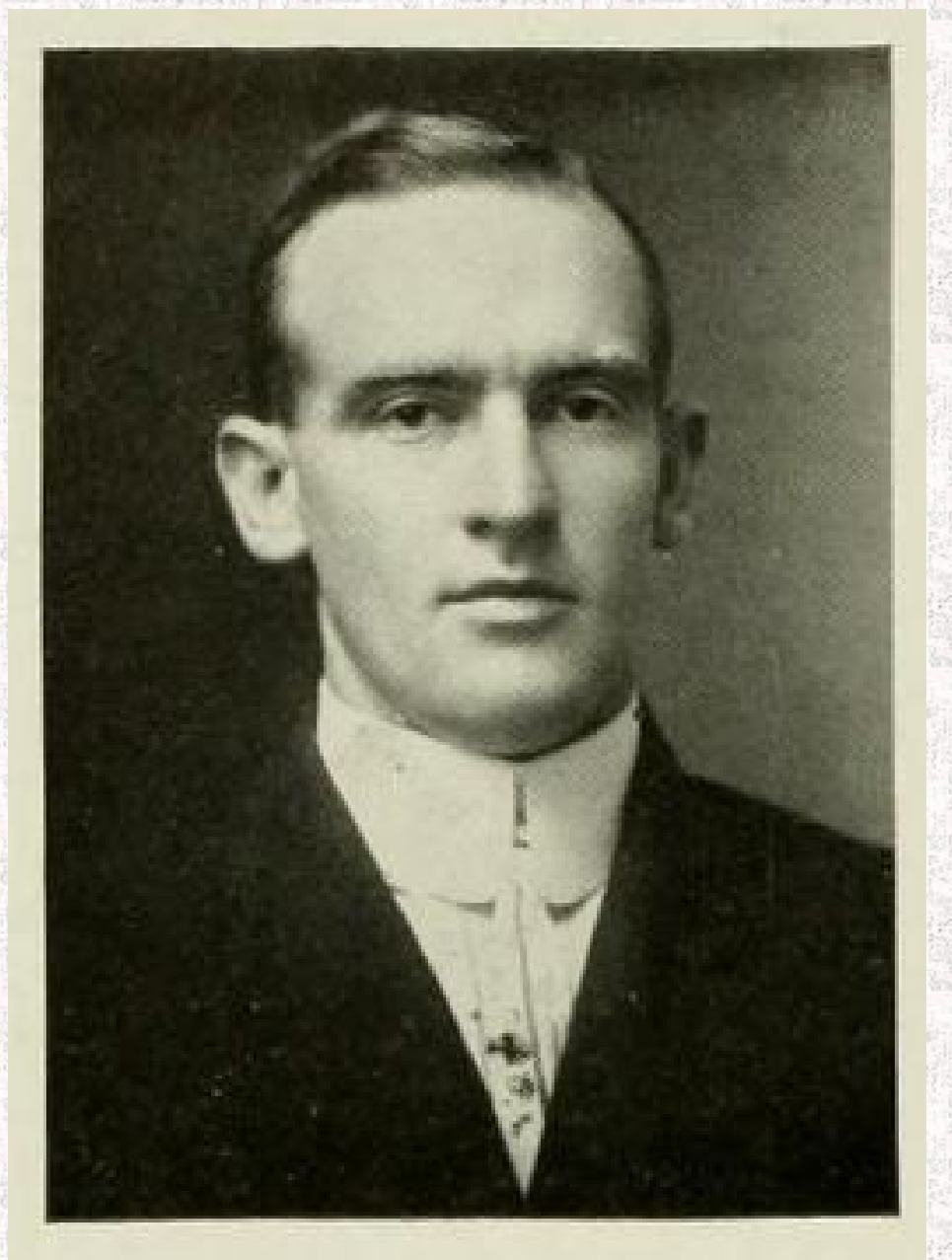
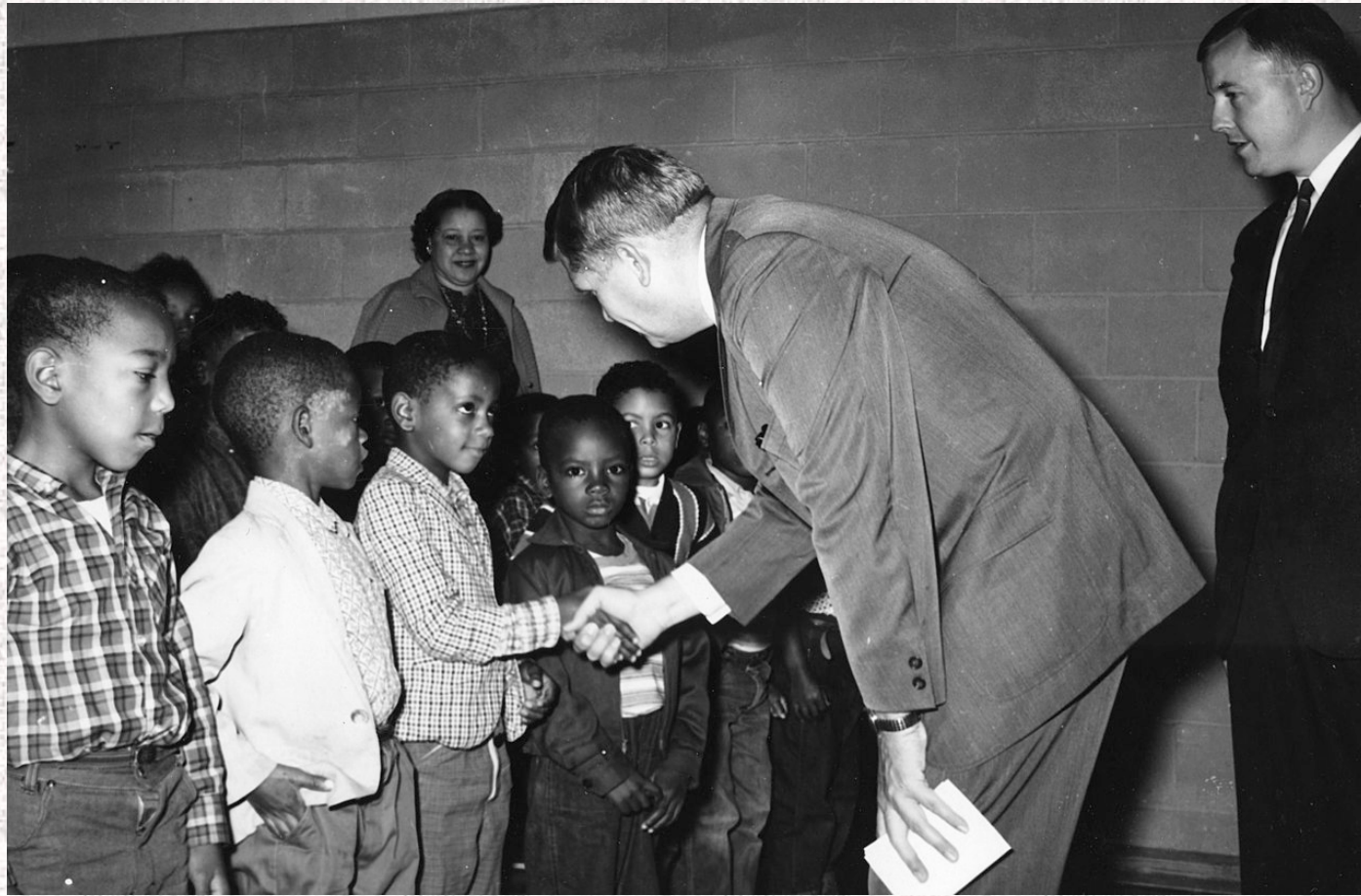


Image Source: Guy B. Phillips, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. *Yackety Yack* 1913. Chapel Hill, Publications Board of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

Token Integration continues

- Havelock-Craven County: 1958-1959
 - Wayne County: 1958-1959
 - The City of Durham: 1958-1959
 - High Point: 1958-1959
 - Chapel Hill: 1959-1960
 - Raleigh: 1959-1960
 - Yancey County: 1959-1960
-
- By the beginning of the 1958-1959 academic year, only 10 of the 300,000+ African American students in North Carolina were enrolled in desegregated schools.

Governor Terry Sanford, 1961-1965



Governor Terry Sanford meeting with black school children at Happy Plains School in Alexander County. Photo by Lt. Lloyd Burchett of the North Carolina Highway Patrol. From the Raymond Stone Photograph Collection of Governor Terry Sanford's Education Tour, 1962, PhC.136, State Archives of North Carolina, Raleigh, NC.

North Carolina Advisory Committee on Civil Rights

- Formed under the Civil Rights Act of 1957
- Charged with studying the state's public schools and the process of desegregation
- October, 1960: Reported that the state was failing when it came to integrating African American students in previously all white schools
- 75 African Americans students were enrolled in these previously all white schools
- The report also noted how the state's most populated school districts were lacking significant numbers of integrated students. Raleigh had only 1 case while Charlotte showed only 2

Ongoing Legal Challenges

- 1961: The NAACP took up lawsuits against several North Carolina school districts that they believed had failed at desegregating their facilities at a reasonable pace.
- 1961: Wheeler v. The Durham City Board of Education
- The U.S. Middle District Court stated that students and their families must follow the procedures set forth by state legislation.
- The court also ruled that the district had practiced blatant racial discrimination due to its low numbers of approved African American student transfers.

Ongoing Legal Challenges

- After the Durham City School Board failed to follow through on the decisions made, the case was eventually made it to the 4th Circuit Court of Appeals.
- The lower court's decision was overturned and the school board was ordered to submit a plan that would end racial segregation and discrimination in the district.
- First time in North Carolina that a court ordered for district wide integration due to the failure of the Pupil Assignment Act.

Southern Education Reporting Service

- 1963 Report:
 - Of North Carolina's estimated 346,746 African American students, 1,865 were enrolled in a previously all white school (.538%)
 - Of the 171 school districts in the state, 40 were integrated, 4th most amongst surveyed states.
 - 38 of the districts were integrated voluntarily.

Southern Education Reporting Service

- 1964 Report:
 - Of North Carolina's estimated 349,282 African American students, 4,949 were enrolled in a previously all white school (1.42%)
 - Of the 171 school districts in the state, 84 were integrated, 4th most amongst surveyed states.

Pearsall Plan Defeated

- February 1966: William Medford states that the Pearsall Plan had served no purpose to North Carolina or its citizens.
- A group of three federal judges struck down the law in 1966, declaring it unconstitutional.
- Governor Moore announced the state would accept the court's decision.

Pitt County Schools

- “I believe we will have to proceed according to policy worked out by the Attorney General, the State Board of Education and the legislature. When a study of the decision has been made and the decrees that implement the decision have been fully analyzed, there will then come a general policy for the state.”

-D.H. Conley, Pitt County Superintendent, May 18, 1954

1964 Petition

- A petition dated November 16, 1964 called for the reassignment of the 272 African American students enrolled in Pitt County Schools.
- The petition claimed that Pitt County knowingly operated a racially biased system both before and after the 1954 *Brown* decision.

Petition Loses Support

School Petition's Support Sagging

By G.C. CHAPMAN
Reflector Staff Writer

More than 35 names have been withdrawn from a petition calling for immediate cessation of operations of the Pitt County Schools on a racial basis submitted to the County Board of Education in November.

Superintendent D.H. Conley, at the Board's regular meeting this morning, announced the requests have been submitted in writing and in person by many of the Negro petitioners.

Though 35 written requests were received, the number of names removed will be higher since many were signed by husbands and wives.

Conley said no reason was given for the requests, most of which were written in the same formal style: "I request on this date . . . that my name be withdrawn from the petition regarding the desegregation of the public schools of Pitt County."

F.G. Norcott, chairman of the Pitt Chapter of the NAACP, who submitted the petition on November 17, said this morning he knew nothing about the requests.

"I understand several people were threatened," he said, and

indicated that the threats may have included warnings the petitioners would be "put out," or "moved."

One Negro petitioner appeared before the board this morning to personally request her name be withdrawn. Again, no explanation was offered for the action.

The petition, bearing a number of signatures of parents having a total of about 272 children in six of the county's 12 Negro schools, calls for reassignment of all "minor children herein named . . . to the school to which they would be initially assigned if white"; and for a new plan of operation "without regard to race as to teachers, students and other school personnel."

In a brief discussion of the petition itself this morning, Board Chairman J.S. Moyer said: "My suggestion as of now is that children be reassigned at the end of this school year for the 1965-66 school year, and that parents be given the opportunity to ask for reassignment any time during the month of June, 1965".

No action was taken by the Board, and no discussion of the withdrawal of the signatures was held.

In other business this morning, the Board agreed to hold a public hearing at the next regular meeting, February 1, for the purpose of discussing the closing or consolidation of Grimesland High School.

Currently, only about 75 students are enrolled in the high school, which is far below its capacity. The board would like to have its students enrolled in various other high schools in the county and discontinue operations of Grimesland High.

The public hearing will be held at the County School Offices in Greenville, and will give parents, the State and County Boards, and the public the opportunity to express their views on the matter.

Members also approved the financial report of the Pitt School Unit for the fiscal year ending June 30, 1964, which will be submitted to the State Board of Education, and to the County Commissioners.

The report indicated the total amount of funds available to the County Unit as \$1,760,788.91. Total disbursements for the fiscal year totaled \$1,403,705.74, and the total balance on June 30 was \$357,083.17.

"School Petition's Support Sagging," *The Daily Reflector*, January 4, 1965.

January 6, 1965

- Motions for a court injunction and civil suit against the Pitt County Board of Education were filed in the U.S. District Court in Washington.
- The civil suit was filed in December 1964 and called for the complete racial desegregation of the Pitt County school system.
- Brought on by Moses Teel's desire to have his children transferred to an all white school.
- Teel's application was denied and his children were placed in an all black school that was further from their home.

Was There Intimidation?



Roy Hardee Papers (#1161), East Carolina Manuscript Collection, J. Y. Joyner Library, East Carolina University, Greenville, North Carolina, USA.

The First Court Intervention

Court Orders Pitt Schools Draw Desegregation Plan

WASHINGTON, N. C. — The Pitt County Board of Education was yesterday ordered to submit a plan by April 12 to the United States District Court here for the desegregation of the Pitt County public schools.

At a hearing here yesterday afternoon Judge John Larkins Jr. signed the court order which also restrains the board of education or any of its agents from "refusing admission, assignment or transfer of any pupil on the basis of race or color."

Chief Counsel for the Pitt County Board of Education W. W. Speight explained that the same people who filed a desegregation petition last November filed suit January 4 of this year against the Pitt County Board of Education. He said the suit was filed before the board of education had worked out a plan which was requested by the petition.

"The order is a result of the suit," Speight said.

He noted that it does not require the integration of the plaintiffs at this time, "It requires a plan."

Attorney Speight, together with attorneys Robert D. Rouse of Farmville and C. W. Everette of Bethel will advise the county board of education on what desegregation plans have been ap-

proved by federal courts in other areas. But the board will have to work out the final plan on its own, Speight said.

D. H. Conley, superintendent of county schools, said the board is studying plans and trying to work out the details. He had no other comment to make on the order.

J. S. Moye, chairman of the Board of Education, also had no comment to make on yesterday's action.

The court order follows an action filed last December by Negro parents seeking injunctive relief against the board of education's operation of county schools "on a racially segregated basis." The complaint alleged that the county board operates the schools on a complete segregated basis, that the assignment of teachers and other professional personnel is on a racial basis together with school construction, budgets and disbursements "with the purpose and effect of perpetuating a bi-racial school system."

Moreover, the complaint averred that an attempt by Negro parents to transfer their children to an all-white school under provisions of the North Carolina Pupil Enrollment Act was blocked by applying discrimina-

tory standards. The complaint also requested that the children be reassigned to the nearest all-white school serving their grade levels for the 1964-65 school year.

The December action was preceded by a petition to the county board last November which represented the parents of some 272 Negro children in Pitt County requesting the immediate cessation of operations of the Pitt County Schools "on a racial basis." Conley said he received the petition November 17.

The petition was placed on the agenda of the December 7th board meeting. Conley noted then that the board expressed the opinion that present organization of the schools should be continued until the end of the current school year. Meanwhile, the matter was to be "under advisement."

The petition was submitted on behalf of the group of parents by T. G. Norcott of Ayden, chairman of the Pitt County branch of the NAACP. Schools attended by children of the various petitioners include Grifton Elementary, South Ayden, Haddocks, Robinson Union, Bruce - Falkland and Sally Branch.

"Court Orders Pitt Schools Draw Desegregation Plan," *The Daily Reflector*, February 24, 1965.

Pitt County's Plan

"Education Board Plan for Compliance With Civil Rights Act is Submitted," *The Daily Reflector*, March 23, 1965.

Awaits State Dept. Approval

Education Board Plan For Compliance With Civil Rights Act Is Submitted

The plan for compliance with the Civil Rights Act of 1964 which was adopted by the Pitt County Board of Education has been submitted to J. Everett Miller, assistant state superintendent in the Department of Public Instruction.

From that office the plan will have to go to the United States Department of Health Education and Welfare for federal approval.

Assistant Superintendent of Pitt County Schools Arthur S. Alford said that according to the Department of Health, Education and Welfare, the county will ultimately go to geographical zoning.

The plan must also satisfy the court relative to transportation and personnel.

Alford noted that the courts have recognized the "Freedom of Choice" principle as a transition step in moving toward the ultimate geographical zoning stipulated by the federal department.

The plan which was adopted by the Pitt County Board of Education has incorporated the policy of "Freedom of Choice."

The plan, designed to be effective the 1965-66 school year provides that:

"1. Pitt County, with the exception of the Greenville School District, will constitute one school

district for the assignment of students.

"2. The parents of all children entering the school system for the first time, beginners and transfers, and parents of all children in all grades already enrolled in the school system will be given opportunity to indicate, without coercion, intimidation, or threat, their choice of school before the Board assigns.

"3. In the event more requests are submitted for a particular facility than its capacity will allow, preference will be accorded on the basis of proximity to the school.

"4. Parents whose original requests could not be honored will

be given an opportunity to indicate a second choice.

In the administration of the policy of "Freedom of Choice" found in the preceding five paragraphs, the Board will:

"1. Publish a legal notice in all the four county newspapers and will supply the four radio stations and one television station in the County with a copy of said legal notice.

"2. Supply all parents with a form for their use in choosing the school in the district which they wish their children to attend.

"3. Send these forms, along with a letter of explanation to the principals to be sent out

with the April report cards, with the provision that these are to be returned within 20 days to the principals or to the Board of Education.

"4. Give ample notification to all concerned that: Students transferring or moving into the system during the summer or while school is in session shall apply directly to the school of their choice, and by the filing of the proper forms shall be duly assigned to said school. In the event school is out, forms can be obtained at the Superintendent's office.

"5. Accept all appeals from assignment that are made within ten days, according to assignment law of North Carolina, and conscientiously review and make a final decision on a nondiscriminatory basis.

"6. Use 30 students per teacher as the criterion in determining the "capacity of a school."

"7. Plan a transportation program which will enable all students to be assigned to the schools of their choice. A choice to attend a distant school, one which would create an impractical routing situation, would be allowed; but the use of public school buses for this choice would not be allowed.

"8. Conduct staff meetings for orientation to the Plan on a desegregated basis; plan for County-wide in-service meetings to be held in the same manner; and

further provide that all principals' meetings and faculty meetings be held on a non-discriminatory basis.

"The Board of Education recognizes that school desegregation includes desegregation of faculty, and that the Board will develop a staff and faculty employment policy. Teachers will be employed on qualifications alone."

The letters and forms which will be distributed to all Pitt County parents will accompany the April report cards next Monday. The forms must be returned by Tuesday, May 18.

On the form parents will indicate their choice of schools for the coming school year. The letter that accompanies the form stipulates that the choice is to be made "without duress, coercion, or intimidation."

"Any violation of this should be reported to the Board of Education."

Moreover, school personnel are not permitted to advise, recommend or influence a parent's decision.

Parents will be notified of the Board's assignment before school is out this year. Final assignments will be subject to appeal within ten days.

The letter also states that "children will be given the opportunity of choosing the most convenient and nondiscriminatory

Pitt County's "Freedom of Choice," 1965

- Pitt County, with the exception of the Greenville City School District, will consist of one school district for the assignment of students.
- Parents of all children will be given the opportunity to choose their choice of school before the board makes assignments.
- If more requests are submitted than a particular school will hold, preference would be given to those living closest to the school.
- Parents whose original request could not be honored may indicate a second choice.

Pitt County's "Freedom of Choice," 1965

- Publish a legal notice in all of the county newspapers, provide radio and television stations with a copy of the notice.
- Supply all parents with a copy of the form needed for them to choose their child's preferred school.
- Along with the form, the school board will also provide a letter to be sent home to parents that explained the process of applying for school.
- Agreed to give ample notifications to all concerned parents as well as accept all appeals related to assignment that are made within 10 days.
- Provide a transportation program that would allow all students to attend the school of their choice.

Opposition to the “Freedom of Choice” Plan

- Many spoke out against Pitt County’s plan, arguing that it did not do enough to overcome the racial bias that existed within the school district.
- Notable opposition came from Jack Greenberg, director of the N.A.A.C.P.’s Legal Defense Fund.
- Greenberg alleged that African American teachers would be dismissed due to Pitt County’s plan.



“As far as I know, no Negro teacher has been fired, or advised to seek employment elsewhere other than a very small number who were not recommended by the principal for various reasons...none of the having to do with civil rights.”

-A.S. Alford, Assistant Superintended of
Pitt County Schools, May 1965

Individuals receive Pitt County Schools Certificates of Merit, May 1966. Daily Reflector Negative Collection (#741), East Carolina Manuscript Collection, J. Y. Joyner Library, East Carolina University, Greenville, North Carolina, USA.

Pitt School Board OKs Requested Transfers

The Pitt County Board of Education last night approved all requests of Negro students to be transferred to previously all-white schools.

The board also approved all transfer requests from white students.

Arthur S. Alford, Assistant County School Superintendent, said some students — both Negro and white — will have to provide their own transportation, "in as much as our pattern of transportation would have to be altered considerably to provide bus service."

"Nearly 120 additional Negro students have been assigned to previously all-white schools as a result of an excessive number of requests for W. H. Robinson and G. R. Whitfield Schools," Alford said.

"These Negro students now attend Nichols and Simpson Elementary Schools."

Alford reiterated that when schools are overcrowded, proximity to the school will be the deciding factor in choosing which students shall attend.

Pitt County's compliance plan is now in the hands of the Department of Health, Education and Welfare in Washington.

The board last night instructed Alford to present contracts for the coming year to principals of schools north of the river. The contracts, Alford said, had been held up because of the consolidation discussion. In effect, sending the contracts to the principals means consolidation will be delayed for a least the coming year, Alford said.

The board announced that six persons have applied for the position of County High School Supervisor, left vacant when William C. Wiggins resigned to become principal at Grifton.

The board discussed, but took no action on school insurance for the coming year. Main point of discussion was the failure of the Walker Agency to make payment for claims submitted for the 1962-63 school year.

Walker was the agency for Summit Insurance Co. of Greensboro, now in receivership.

The school board requested Alford to present to County Attorney W. W. Speight a copy of a contract presented by the Town of Ayden for use of certain school facilities in Ayden's summer recreation program.

It was thought wise to see if agreement of this nature could be used for all summer recreation programs in the county where an authorized body has plans for an organized program.

The board discussed and tabled a resolution to affiliate with the North Carolina State School Board Association for the coming year.

The board took no action on a request from the Ayden School Committee for two more classrooms at Ayden Elementary School.

The possibility of the board's appointing advisory councils for schools was discussed. The board talked about the matters of eligibility, election, organization, length of terms of service, duties and responsibilities.

The board's next meeting is June 7.

N. C.
COLLECTION
JOYNER
LIBRARY

"Pitt School Board Oks Requested Transfers," *The Daily Reflector*, May 29, 1965.

Pitt County Schools, 1965-1966

"Pitt County Schools Quietly Open On A Non-Segregated Basis Today," *The Daily Reflector*, August 27, 1965.

Pitt County Schools Quietly Open On A Non-Segregated Basis Today

By GARLAND WHITAKER

Reflector Staff Writer

All was quiet on the "education front" this morning as Pitt County schools were opened on a non-segregated basis for the first time in history.

School Superintendent A. S. Alford said that "Everything went very well this morning and I'm very pleased with the opening."

Alford said he had not had a school-by-school report on the situation, but in checking the schools which were registering the most Negro students, Alford said everything was going well.

He pointed out that only about half of the 260 Negro pupils that had been assigned to previous-

ly all-white school. He explained that this was due mainly to the many students who are still working with the tobacco crop, but added that in many cases, students were not sure just which bus they were to ride and therefore missed the first day. He said that this was just one of the kinks to be ironed out and the situation should be ironed out by Monday.

He said the nice day made the school opening pleasant and he was very pleased with the proceedings.

Pitt County was expecting some 13,200 students to attend the opening session this morning and so far, expectations seem to be correct.

Alford has estimated the enrollment to rise to 13,800 by the end of the first month.

A survey of principals throughout the county showed that schools operated very smoothly, and there were no incidents involving the desegregation situation.

Ed Warren, principal of Ayden High School reported that his school was operating so smoothly that he could not ask for a better opening. He said students at Ayden High were very understanding of the integration

situation and readily accepted new Negro pupils.

George Stancil, who heads operations at Ayden Elementary School said that pre-planning and anticipation of the day's proceeding, aided the very smooth operation there this morning. Negro students were accepted without incident.

Over in Farmville, Charles Tucker, new principal of Farmville High School, reported his opening as "smooth as silk".

"We have about 550 students here today and everyone is working together and cooperating to expedite the opening."

He said Negro students were being accepted. "We didn't anticipate any problems and so far, we haven't found any."

Kelly Wallace, principal of Child School where some 60 Negro students were assigned because of crowding at Robinson Union, reported his opening was normal.

"We've had no problems with integration and everything is going very smoothly at this point," he said.

Wallace added that some of the new Negro students had not shown up because of the bus confusion but added that the problem would soon be reacti-

fied.

William C. Wiggins, principal of Grifton School, reported that outside of some new students, both Negro and white, who had not pre-registered, things were running very smoothly.

He said approximately 20 students had not pre-registered and had caused undue delay. Otherwise, he termed things normal and smooth.

Walter C. Latham, principal of Bethel High School, said his school was having a quiet opening. He said pictures for the school's yearbook were being taken today to eliminate having to pull students out of classes later in the year.

He also pointed out that collection of fees and registration were the main objectives for the morning session and that things were going well.

E. A. Elliot, principal at Bethel Union School reported that he had more students present today than in recent years and that the assembly program this morning was full.

He added that students had been briefed on various rules for the school year and that they were now busy registering. "Everything's going real smooth," he added.

“Freedom of Choice” approved

- District Judge John Larkins approved Pitt’s “Freedom of Choice” plan on June 3, 1965.
- The district received notice that the U.S. Department of Education approved of the integration plan on September 3, 1965.
- Approval released \$200,000 dollar of federal funding that would be used for school lunches as well as vocational, home economic, and agriculture programs.
- Approval did not end government oversight though.

The Desegregation of Faculty

- Pitt County shifted their focus to the desegregation of it's faculty as the 1966-67 school
- The district had been informed that the "Freedom of Choice" plan would not be approved for the 1966-67 school year if it did not address the desegregation of faculty and the ending of segregated athletic and extracurricular activities.

Faculty Integration Action Taken Last Night By Pitt's School Board

By ROY MARTIN
Reflector Staff Writer

The Pitt County Board of Education last night approved assignment of 13 white teachers to predominantly Negro schools and two Negro teachers to predominantly white schools.

The action was unanimous and came at the recommendation of Supt. Arthur S. Alford.

The superintendent told board members three white teachers would be assigned as "reading specialists" to W. H. Robinson School at Winterville, Nichols Elementary at Arthur and Grifton Elementary.

Two librarians, he said, would be assigned respectively to Bruce - Falkland and Sally

Branch schools. Two teachers each would be delegated to Sally Branch and W. H. Robinson and three more to Bruce-Falkland.

The final assignment, Alford explained, would be a librarian to serve both Grifton Elementary and North Fountain schools.

The Negro teachers—librarians—would be assigned to two schools each, the superintendent said. One would serve Ayden High School and Ayden Elementary and the other would serve the Grimesland and Pactolus Elementary schools.

"We will send out notification of the assignments to principals Tuesday," Alford said. "This

will be done so principals may contact the teachers and tell them to report to their schools."

The superintendent said he feels the assignments reflect "we have not discriminated in our employment practices."

"We've tried to place the best qualified people we could in the various teaching assignments around the county," he declared. "I would say, generally, we've employed as many Negro as white teachers this summer."

Alford said the reason more white teachers were assigned to Negro schools than Negroes to white schools was because Negro principals had requested their key personnel be allowed

to remain.

"The only way we could have done more than this would have been to tear down programs at Negro schools," the superintendent advised. "It was requested by Negro principals not to take the strongest members of their staffs because they have a program to carry out and need their best teachers."

The board also approved the appointment of six principals to county posts. The appointments include: Charles M. Dickens to Grifton Elementary, Gaston Monk to South Ayden, Eddie Smith to Bruce-Falkland, Frederick Graham to North Fountain, J. R. Carraway to Belvoir-Falkland, and Bryant Tripp to

"Faculty Integration Action Taken Last Night By Pitt's School Board," *The Daily Reflector*, August 16, 1966.

Teel v. Pitt County Schools, 1966

“Board of Education has not attempted to promote integration and will not do so unless ordered to do so by the highest court of this land.”

October 4, 1966 Bond Referendum

“Any Negro Child will have the right to attend any of the new consolidated facilities if they desire to do so.”

“The statement was made to put to rest the fears of the majority of the Pitt County people that we are promoting integration instead of education.”

“The Board of Education will do all that it can insure the rights of every child in this county.”

-Arthur Alford, Superintendent of Pitt County Schools, October 6, 1966

Back to the Drawing Board

- Following the approval of the U.S. Department of Education, Pitt County operated their schools under the “Freedom of Choice” plan as well as 1968 plan that reorganized the school system and shut down the former Grifton Elementary School.
- This all changed when Judge John Larkins rejected the ongoing approach and ordered the district to deliver a new plan that would “end the dual school system and effectively establish a single, nonracial unitary school system by the fall of 1970.”
- Judge Larkins ordered the district to present a time table for completion as well as a report that detailed the exact use of each facility in the system, which schools might be paired with others and which might be closed.

Pitt County Desegregation Numbers as of March, 1969

- 2,464 African American students of the 7,145, African American students enrolled in Pitt County schools were assigned to their school on a nonracial basis. (34.4%)
- 159 of 549 teachers are assigned to a school on a nonracial basis. Pitt County counted teachers who were either the minority in their school or they were in a school where student assignment had been done through geographical zoning. (29%)

Adjustments Needed

- Based on the percentage of students and faculty assigned to school on a nonracial basis, Judge Larkins ordered an additional 11% desegregation for the 1969-70 school year that would be followed up by total desegregation for the 1970-71 school year.
- Larkins denied a plan submitted by Pitt County that would have proposed the percentage of desegregated students for the 1969-70 school year remain the same as those reported in March, 1969 and that a nonracial school system would be created once new high schools were constructed.
- Larkins approved the following plan on April 21, 1969 that would lead to total desegregation in the Pitt County Schools by the beginning of the 1970-71 school year.

1969-1970 Plan

“Judge Okays Pitt School Desegregation Plans,” *The Daily Reflector*, May 5, 1969.

Basically the plan involves:
Assigning all first and second graders in the Bethel attendance area to Bethel Elementary School.

Assigning all first and second graders in the Grimesland attendance area to Grimesland Elementary School.

Assigning all first and second graders in the Winterville attendance area to Winterville High School.

Assigning all first and second graders in the Ayden attendance area to Ayden Elementary School.

Assigning all first and second graders in the Farmville area to the Sam D. Bundy Elementary School.

Assigning all students in grades one through 12 in the Chicod attendance area to Chicod High School.

Assigning all students in grades one through nine in the Grifton area to Grifton High School.

Assigning 60 students living in the Pactolus attendance area but who attend school outside the area to Pactolus Elementary School.

Assigning all students in grades one through nine in the Stokes area to Stokes Elementary School (grades one through five) and Stokes-Pactolus High School (grades six through 12).

Assigning all students in grades one through eight in the Falkland area to Falkland Primary School (grade one through three) and Falkland Grammar School (grades four through eight).

Assigning all students in grades one through nine in the Belvoir attendance area to Belvoir Elementary School (grades one through five) and Belvoir-Falkland High School (grades six through 12).

Assigning all ninth and 10th grade students in Fountain and Falkland to Farmville High School and all eighth and ninth graders in Bethel to Bethel High School.

Assigning all eighth and ninth graders in Ayden to Ayden High School.

Assigning all other students as directed in the Federal Court order dated August 2, 1968 (which closed the Grifton Elementary School, reorganized several other schools by assigning all students in one grade grouping to one school and students in other grade groupings to other schools, and allowed all other students not affected by the order to be assigned under the freedom of choice plan).

1970-1971 Plan

For the 1970-71 school year, the plan submitted by the school board said all students will be assigned non-racially. The plan modifies some attendance areas and makes use of the four consolidated high schools now under construction or in the planning stage.

Under the 1970-71 plan, the North Pitt High School will serve students in grades nine through 12 who live north of the Tar River, with the following feeder schools (serving students in their attendance area): Belvoir Elementary grades one through eight; Bethel Primary School, grades one through three; Bethel Grammar School, grades four and five; Bethel Junior High School, grades six through eight; Stokes Primary School, grades one through three; Stokes Grammar School, grades four through eight; Pactolus Elementary School, grades one through eight.

The South Pitt High School will serve all students in grades nine through 12 who live in the Ayden and Grifton area with the following feeder schools: Ayden Primary School, grades one through three; Ayden Grammar School, grades four and five; Ayden Junior High School, grades six through eight; Grifton Elementary School, grades one through eight.

The Southeast Pitt School will serve all students in grades nine through 12 who live in the Chicod, Grimesland and Winterville attendance areas with the following feeder schools: Grimesland Primary School, grades one through three; Grimesland Grammar School, grades four through eight; Chicod Elementary School, grades one through eight; Winterville Primary School, grades one through three; Winterville Grammar School, grades four through eight.

The West Pitt High School will serve all students in grades nine through 12 who live in the Farmville, Fountain and Falkland attendance areas with the following feeder schools: Falkland Primary School, grades one through three; Falkland Grammar School, grades four through eight; Farmville Primary School, grades one through three; Farmville Grammar School, grades four and five; Farmville Junior High School, grades six through eight.

The plan also calls for trainable schools to be set up in the North Fountain and Belvoir Elementary Schools, as well as the Grifton Elementary School, which closed in September, 1968.

“Judge Okays Pitt School Desegregation Plans,” *The Daily Reflector*, May 5, 1969.

Greenville City Schools

- “We’ve got to keep as calm as we can and work it out as best we can, feeling that the Supreme Court in its decrees is going to take it state-by-state, and take a number of years to work it out. I foresee no change in North Carolina in the next two years. We operate under the authority of the legislature and we’ll have to wait for any changes they make. The local school board has no right to make changes. We have a state school system.”

-J.H. Rose, Superintendent of Greenville City Schools, May 18, 1954

J.H. Rose High Is Integrated

“Approve Eppes Pupils’ Transfer,” *The Daily Reflector*, June 19, 1964.

Approve Eppes Pupils’ Transfer

Two former C. M. Eppes High School students will become the first Negroes to enter J. H. Rose High here after the City Board of Education approved requests for their transfer last night.

Michael Garrett of 1204 West Fifth Street, and Robert Daniels of 1315 West Fifth will enter the ninth grade of Rose High in September.

Applications for transfer were submitted for the two students on June 12. Approval came at the regular meeting of the board last night in a routine manner.

J. H. Rose, Superintendent of City Schools, presented the applications and told the board they were in order. Members voted approval without further discussion.

In other business last night, the board heard nominations for positions on the board which will be open at the expiration of the terms of two present members, Mrs. A. H. Van Dyke and Louis Gaylord Jr.

The nominations will be submitted to the City Council, which will in turn select two persons to serve on the board.

Some discussion was heard concerning a previous decision to impose the right of eminent domain to gain possession of property needed for expansion of a city school.

At the last meeting, the board voted to instruct attorneys to take whatever action necessary to obtain the property after a failure in negotiations by compulsory arbitration.

Action this month was delayed however because of a request by representatives of the property owners to attempt a settlement first.

The board reenforced its previous decision and asked that Rose notify attorneys to begin proceedings immediately.

Rose reported that a check donated by the senior class of 1964 at Rose High totaled \$777.17. The original goal was \$700. The money, which was presented the board by class president John Horne, will go toward construction of a new field house at the school.

Greenville City Schools Committee

- March 9, 1965: The Greenville City School Board approved a committee that was charged with developed a plan for desegregation that would be deemed acceptable by the federal government and other organizations with an interest in the issue.
- W. W. Speight, Chief Counsel for the Board of Education, stated that some sort of freedom of choice plan was the most likely to be accepted and that the plan should integrate all grades at one time.
- Plans from Hertford County, Lenoir County, Moore County, as well as Kinston were reviewed for possible use.

Greenville City School Desegregation Plan Committee

- Dr. F. L. Longino (Chair)
- Mrs. A. H. Van Dyke
 - Louis Gaylord Jr.
 - John Bizzell

Greenville City Schools "Freedom of Choice," 1965

- Adopted by the school board on May 6, 1965
- The plan allowed all students in grades 1st, 9th-12th, and all new students the choice of which school they would attend for the 1965-66 school year.
- For the 1966-67 school year, students in all grades except 7th and 8th would be given the choice on which school to attend and by the 1967-68 school year, schools for students of all grades would be assigned by choice.

"Freedom of Choice Plan Given Final Approval of School Board," *The Daily Reflector*, May 7, 1965.

'Freedom Of Choice' Plan Given Final Approval Of School Board

By LINDA EVANS
Reflector Staff Writer

A plan to allow freedom of choice of schools for children enrolled in grades one, nine, ten, eleven, twelve, and all children transferring into the Greenville school system at any grade level, was adopted last night by the Greenville City School Board as the basis for its plan of compliance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964.

The Greenville School Board plans to allow freedom of choice in all grades except seven and eight for the September, 1966, term, and freedom of choice for all grades by the fall of 1967.

In implementing the plan for 1965, the following criteria will be observed:

a) In the event more requests are submitted for a particular facility than can be honored, preference will be accorded on the basis of curriculum offerings and achievement, with priority being given to those living nearest to the school.

b) Parents or guardians whose original requests could not be granted will be given opportunity to indicate a second choice, which will be granted if possible.

c) Children of parents and guardians not expressing a choice, will be assigned to the nearest school with available capacity, or to the school previously attended.

Acceptance of all appeals from assignment that are made in

writing within ten days of notification of assignment will be accepted by the Board. According to the assignment law of North Carolina, these will be

conscientiously reviewed and a final determination will be made on a non-discriminatory basis.

As Criterion for determining the capacity of a school, the standards recommended by the North Carolina State Department of Public Instruction will be used.

In reference to faculty integration, the plan states that all staff meetings for orientation purposes will be conducted on an integrated basis. All citywide, in-service meetings are to be held in the same manner. All principal's meetings and faculty meetings will be held on a non-discriminatory basis.

Recognizing that school desegregation includes desegregation of faculty, the board plans to develop a staff and faculty employment policy based on competence, training, experience, recommendations, and National Teacher Education examinations. Teachers will be assigned to the schools of the unit on a non-discriminatory basis.

Under Item II of the plan, because of crowding at the elementary and junior high school levels, the assignment of pupils to grades two, three, four, five, six, seven, and eight will be made to the schools previously attended, or to the schools to which they would have been assigned in the 1964-65 school year.

Any student assigned under the plan outlined in Item II may make application for transfer to any other school in the Greenville School District, and such transfer will be made without regard to race, color, or national origin, if such transfer

will not result in overcrowding of the school.

According to the school board, Fleming Street School, which has a student population of 522 Negroes, is grossly overcrowded at present, which has resulted in moving grades five and six from this school to C.M. Eppes High School. Plans have been completed for a new school building to replace the present school, and land has been purchased for this addition.

Funds available from the North Carolina School Bond Issue totaling \$487,000 as of July 1, 1965, have been obligated by the board for this purpose. It is hoped that the facility will be ready for use by September, 1966.

Crowding in the Greenville Junior High School has resulted in transfer of grade nine to the J. H. Rose High School. The Greenville School Board has underway plans for a new junior high school, though not as far advanced as those of the Fleming Street School.

Any student may request a transfer to another school in order to take a course of study for which he is qualified and which is not available in the

school which he is now attending. Such a request will be granted by the board.

The Greenville School district will constitute one school district for the assignment of students.

Under item seven in the plan, parents of students who reside outside the Greenville City School District may request assignment of such pupils within the district, and such assignment may be made by the Board of Education provided that none of the pupils who reside in the district are denied assignment or reassignment to the school of his choice, and providing that

accepting out-of-district pupils shall not create overcrowded conditions.

Transportation under the plan will be based on a non-discriminatory basis.

In the administration of the student assignment plan policy, the Board will publish a legal notice in the Reflector, will supply the three Greenville radio stations and the one television station in Greenville a copy of the legal notice.

The Board will also supply all parents and guardians of children entering grades, one, nine, ten, eleven, and twelve with a form for their use in choosing the school which they wish their children to attend.

These forms, along with a letter of explanation will be sent out by May 13, 1965, to the parents and guardians of all children entering grades nine, ten, eleven, twelve, with the provi-

Greenville City Schools, 1966-67

“Freedom of Choice Plan Will Be Modified by School Board,” *The Daily Reflector*, March 25, 1966.

Freedom Of Choice Plan Will Be Modified By School Board

By GARLAND WHITAKER
Reflector Staff Writer

The Greenville Board of Education, in a special meeting last night, adopted plans to implement essentially the same “Freedom of Choice” plan of school desegregation that was used in the city this year.

The Board gave its approval on a 4 - 1 vote after only about an hour of discussion. The plan, which is for the 1966-67 year is the same as last year except for some procedural changes and performance requirements.

County Attorney W. W. Speight and Superintendent J. H. Rose were both in Raleigh last Friday for a conference on new freedom of choice guidelines. The two men explained the changes to the Board.

Probably the biggest change is the fact that the new guidelines call for the desegregation of school staff. At least one teacher in the school of another race will be expected.

The 1966-67 plan will not be exactly a “freedom” of choice and Attorney Speight explained this as a paradox in the new plan.

Freedom of choice will be offered to all students, white or Negro, but the school system is expected to meet some performance standards in implementing the plan.

If the system had eight to nine per cent desegregation last year, that figure will be expected to double for this year. Likewise, if a system had four to five per cent in 1965, the figure should triple.

If these performances are not met in the 1966-67 year, Freedom of Choice will not be a sufficient method of forcing desegregation in the future. The Office of Education will probably then go to a geographic plan, that is zoning each school system and all students who live in a particular zone, will be forced to attend school in that zone.

Superintendent Rose, in recommending that the Board accept the plan, said he had been informed that the Office of Education in Washington felt that the freedom of choice plan was unconstitutional, but they were allowing it to go untested to soften the blow of enforcement of the Civil Rights Act of 1964.

Pitt County Schools, however, is operating under a federal court - approved freedom of choice plan.

Dr. Frank Longino, who presented the motion to adopt the plan, said, in doing so, that with the good race relations in Greenville, he could not see forcing the issue into court.

Longino added that with the exception of changes in procedure and required performances in the freedom of choice plan, “We’ll be continuing to comply with what we pledged last year.”

J. B. Kittrell voiced the only opposing vote.

Following the approval of the plan, the Board gave their approval to a choice registration period beginning March 30 and continuing until April 30. The Plan of Compliance will have to be in Washington, D. C. 15 days following the choice period.

Among the procedural changes for 1966-67, was the requirement that letters to parents and choice forms be mailed first class to the students rather than distributed through the schools. An addressed return envelope will be enclosed. Both white and Negro will exercise a choice and if a student is 15 years or older or at least in grade nine, the student will have the option rather than the adult.

In making assignments, preference will be given to students trying to get away from the segregated school.

Once the student has made a choice, the choice will be in effect for the entire school year and a second choice later will not be allowed. Some 30 Negro students in Greenville requested reassignment to previously all - white schools last year, but only a small percentage actually attended the white schools.

In the only other business last night, the Board agreed that the proposed \$9,000,000 school bond issue for city and county and the assumption of the county - wide debt service should be separate issues in the bond election scheduled for next fall.

Greenville - Schools

GREENVILLE CITY SCHOOLS
DRAWER 405, 431 WEST 5TH ST.
GREENVILLE, N. C., 27834

NOTICE OF SCHOOL DESEGREGATION PLAN UNDER TITLE VI OF THE CIVIL RIGHTS ACT OF 1964

THIS NOTICE IS MADE AVAILABLE TO INFORM YOU ABOUT THE DESEGREGATION OF OUR SCHOOLS. KEEP A COPY OF THIS NOTICE. IT WILL ANSWER MANY QUESTIONS ABOUT SCHOOL DESEGREGATION

1. *Desegregation Plan in Effect*

The GREENVILLE public school system is being desegregated under a plan adopted in accordance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. The purpose of the desegregation plan is to eliminate from our school system the racial segregation of students and all other forms of discrimination based on race, color, or national origin.

2. *Thirty-Day Spring Choice Period*

Each student or his parent, or other adult person acting as parent, is required to choose the school the student will attend next school year. The choice period will begin on March 30, 1966 and close April 30, 1966.

3. *Explanatory Letters and School Choice Forms*

On the first day of the choice period, an explanatory letter and this notice will be sent by first-class mail to the parent, or other adult person acting as parent, of each student then in the schools who is expected to attend school the following school year. A school choice form will be sent with each letter, together with a return envelope addressed to the Superintendent. Additional copies of the letter, this notice and the choice form are freely available to the public at any school and at the Superintendent's office.

4. *Returning the Choice Forms*

Parents and students, at their option, may return the completed choice forms by hand to any school or by mail to the Superintendent's office, at any time during the 30-day choice period. No preference will be given for choosing early during the choice period. A choice is required for each student. No assignment to a school can be made unless a choice is made first.

5. *Choice Form Information*

The school choice form lists the names, locations and grades offered for each school. The reasons for any choice made are not to be stated. The form asks for the name, address and age of the student, the school and grade currently or last attended, the school chosen for the following year, the appropriate signature, and whether the form has been signed by the student or his parent. [If choice form asks for the student's race, color, or national origin, insert the following sentences: "The race, color, or national origin of the student is requested for purposes of recordkeeping required by the U.S. Office of Education. The information will not be used in any way to discriminate against the student."] Any letter or other written communication which identifies the student and the school he wishes to attend will be deemed just as valid as if submitted on the choice form supplied by the school system. The names of students and the schools they choose or are assigned to under the plan will not be made public by school officials.

6. *Course and Program Information*

To guide students and parents in making a choice of school, listed below, by schools, are the courses and programs which are not given at every school in this school system.

[Here list, by schools, each course and program, such as special education, foreign languages, vocational education, science, commercial courses, and college preparatory courses offered at a particular school which is not offered at the same grade level at every other school in the system. It must include courses and programs offered in grades not yet generally reached by the desegregation plan.]

7. *Signing the Choice Form*

A choice form may be signed by a parent or other adult person acting as parent. A student who has reached the age of 15 at the time of choice, or will next enter the ninth or any higher grade, may sign his own choice form. The student's choice shall be controlling unless a different choice is exercised by his parent before the end of the period during which the student exercises his choice.

8. *Processing of Choices*

No choice will be denied for any reason other than overcrowding. In cases where granting all choices for any school would cause overcrowding, the students choosing the school who live closest to it will be assigned to that school. Whenever a choice is to be denied, overcrowding will be determined by a uniform standard applicable to all schools in the system.

9. *Notice of Assignment, Second Choice*

All students and their parents will be promptly notified in writing of their school assignments. Should any student be denied his choice because of overcrowding he will be promptly notified and given a choice among all other schools in the system where space is available.

GREENVILLE CITY SCHOOLS
431 W. 5TH STREET - P.O. BOX 405
GREENVILLE, N.C. 27834

March 30, 1966

Dear Parent:

Our community has adopted a school desegregation plan. We will no longer have separate schools for children of different races. The desegregation plan has been accepted by the U.S. Office of Education under the Civil Rights Act of 1964.

The plan requires every student or his parent to choose the school the student will attend in the coming school year. It does not matter which school the student is attending this year, and it does not matter whether that school was formerly a white or a Negro school. You and your child may select any school you wish.

A choice of school is required for each student. A student cannot be enrolled at any school next school year unless a choice of schools is made. This spring there will be a 30-day choice period, beginning March 30, 1966, and ending April 30, 1966.

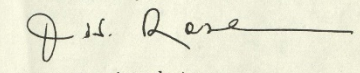
A choice form listing the available schools and grades is enclosed. This form must be filled out and returned. You may mail it in the enclosed envelope, or deliver it by hand to any school or to the address above any time during the 30-day choice period. No one may require you to file your choice form before the end of the choice period. No preference will be given for choosing early during the choice period.

No principal, teacher or other school official is permitted to influence anyone in making a choice. No one is permitted to favor or penalize any student or other person because of a choice made. Once a choice is made, it cannot be changed except for serious hardship.

Also enclosed is an explanatory notice giving full details about the desegregation plan. It tells you how to exercise your rights under the plan, and tells you how teachers, school buses, sports and other activities are being desegregated.

Your School Board and the school staff will do everything we can to see to it that the rights of all students are protected and that our desegregation plan is carried out successfully.

Sincerely yours,



Superintendent.

Notice of School Desegregation Plan Under Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and corresponding letter from J.H. Rose, Greenville City Schools, March 30, 1966. Verona Joyner Langford North Carolina Collection, East Carolina University

The United States Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, 1969-70

- March, 1968: The United States Department of Health, Education, and Welfare stated that school districts had a duty to eliminate the historic dual system of schools across the south and that districts should adopt a plan of compliance that would completely desegregate their schools for the 1969-70 school year.

Greenville City Schools, 1969-70

- In response to The United States Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, Greenville City Schools submitted a plan for approval that shifted away from the “Freedom of Choice” model for a geographic zoning model.
- The plan was rejected by The United States Department of Health, Education, and Welfare due to Sadie Saulter Elementary School remaining an “all-black” school.
- Despite the rejection, Greenville continued forward with the plan, believing it was the best plan that would satisfy the needs of their students with the demands of the federal government.

Local Opposition

- “Those for whom I speak; and I, do not feel that the proposed racial integration plan for the operation of the Greenville City School System in the 1969-70 school year is desirable or practical at this time and we respectfully urge the School Board to reconsider its decision.”

-Dr. John East before the Greenville City School Board, January 20, 1969



Visual Media: Black and White Images. UA55-01, Box [number]. University Archives, East Carolina University, Greenville, NC.

White Students: 3,719 (63.27%)

African American Students:
2,159 (36.73%)

“Big Strides in Desegregation of City Schools,” *The Daily Reflector*, September 8, 1969.

| Students | White | Negro | Staff |
|--|-------|-------|-------|
| <u>Elementary Schools</u> | | | |
| Agnes Fullilove | 215 | 25 | 240 |
| Eastern | 429 | 0 | 429 |
| Elmhurst | 426 | 125 | 551 |
| South Greenville | 293 | 138 | 431 |
| Sadie Saulter | 2 | 508 | 510 |
| Third Street | 136 | 183 | 319 |
| Wahl-Coates | 341 | 71 | 412 |
| <u>Total Elementary Students</u> | 1,842 | 1,050 | 2,892 |
| <u>Junior High Schools</u> | | | |
| Aycock | 948 | 117 | 1,065 |
| Eppes | 0 | 527 | 527 |
| <u>Total Junior High Students</u> | 948 | 644 | 1,592 |
| <u>Senior High</u> | | | |
| Rose (Total) | 929 | 465 | 1,394 |
| <u>Total Pupil Enrollment</u> | 3,719 | 2,159 | 5,878 |

| Faculty | White | Negro | Staff |
|---|-------|-------|-------|
| <u>Elementary Schools</u> | | | |
| Agnes Fullilove | 9 | 4 | 13 |
| Eastern | 12 | 4 | 16 |
| Elmhurst | 18 | 4 | 22 |
| South Greenville | 14 | 5 | 19 |
| Sadie Saulter | 9 | 8 | 17 |
| Third Street | 11 | 3 | 14 |
| Wahl-Coates | 18 | 1 | 19 |
| <u>Total Elementary Faculty</u> | 91 | 29 | 120 |
| <u>Junior High Schools</u> | | | |
| Aycock | 37 | 8 | 45 |
| Eppes | 6 | 20 | 26 |
| <u>Total Junior High Faculty</u> | 43 | 28 | 71 |
| <u>Senior High</u> | | | |
| Rose (Total) | 47 | 16 | 63 |
| <u>Total Pupil Faculty</u> | 181 | 73 | 254 |

White Faculty Members: 181
(71.13%)

African American Faculty Members:
73 (28.87%)

“Big Strides in Desegregation of City Schools,” *The Daily Reflector*,
September 8, 1969.

Disturbances and Demands for Change

- October 24, 1969: A physical dispute erupted at Rose High School when African American students accused the administration of removing two of their fellow students from the school even though they had done nothing wrong.
- The dispute evolved into a fight during the lunch hour that saw one student injured and taken to the hospital and the school closed for the remainder of the day as well as the following Monday.
- In the days that followed, several African American students presented a set of demands to administration which included the teaching of a Black History course, the removal of police from campus, and the re-admittance of students suspended because of the October 24th fight.

Greenville City Schools Responds

- On October 28, 1969, the Greenville City School Board responded to the demands of their African American students. This official response included several clauses, including the following:
 1. The school board agreed to address transportation issues that resulted in overcrowding and tardiness
 2. The school board agreed to ensure fair treatment for all students regardless of race.
 3. A survey regarding the offering of a Black History course would be used to gauge if there was sufficient interest in the course.
 4. Board members agree that there must be an increased effort when it comes to ensuring that problems presented by African American students receive equal interest and concern.
 5. All school activities must be planned in a way in which all students can participate.
 6. Any charges of discrimination made against a staff member will be fully investigated and if found true, will be properly dealt with.

Legal Opposition

- March 3, 1970: A motion asking that “Greenville City Board of Education be required to immediately adopt and implement a plan of desegregation for its schools and for it’s faculty” was filed in the U.S. Eastern District Court.
- The motion also requested that any new school construction be halted until the district adopts such a plan and can prove that any new construction would help further desegregate the school system.
- The motion accused Greenville City Schools of using construction as a means of ensuring a system that would remain fully segregated.

Plaintiffs File Answer In Local Civil Action

By JERRY RAYNOR
Reflector Staff Writer

An answer to the Civil Case pending in federal court against the Greenville City Schools has been filed with District Judge John Larkins in Trenton by County Attorneys W. W. Speight and William C. Brewer, Jr.

The paper, filed March 21, contains point by point answers to those listed in the March 5 motion for further relief, filed in the district court by Douglas Edwards, a minor and his mother, Eula Edwards.

"We have also set forth the history of desegregation within the city schools," Speight commented, "and have asked that a hearing on the operation of our schools be expedited and heard as soon as possible by the court."

In the first point, the answer notes "the defendants deny that any racial discrimination is being exercised against the plaintiffs or any other members of their race."

Point number two in the motion for further relief... that "prior to the beginning of the 1965 school year, the defendant Greenville City Board of Education operated and maintained racially segregated schools" was answered with the notation "the allegations of Section Two are admitted."

A denial was contained in the reply to the third point, which was "as a result of defendants' freedom of choice plan...

schools remained segregated."

The statement contained in point four "which perpetuated defendants' dual school system" was denied in the answer. Other statements in this point, which outlined city schools' action for desegregation in accordance with requirements of HEW were admitted by the defendants in their reply.

The fifth point in the plaintiff's motion for further relief — claiming continuous operation of school on a racially discriminatory basis — received the most detailed answer of any point. The reply, in part, reads...

"the allegations of Section Five are untrue and are, therefore, denied. As the plaintiffs must know, all elementary schools are operated on a neighborhood, geographically zoned basis with all students attending the schools nearest their homes... All students... in grades seven through nine have freedom of choice to attend either school (junior high school)... The defendants have also achieved desegregation of... administrative staff and teaching personnel..."

The charge in point six that the "Board of Education continues to operate and maintain a racially segregated, dual transportation system..." was denied in the answer. "The allegations... are untrue... buses are used... without regard to race."

In response to the seventh point which charges that construction plans are underway that would further segregate the school system, the answer was they were untrue. "There are no building plans presently under consideration... and no construction has been completed which resulted in further segregation of... the school system."

"The defendants are at present operating a unitary school system and not a dual one," is the answer for point eight, in which the charges that the city school board "is maintaining and operating a racially segregated... unconstitutional school system" was denied.

The ninth and final point charges the Greenville City Schools with "no plans to adopt and implement a plan of desegregation which will effectively remove all vestiges of racial discrimination from its school system."

To this, the city answer is "the allegation are untrue and denied."

Following the point by point replies to the March 5 motion for further relief, Speight outlined additional information "as a further answer and by way of defense."

This section included a history of progress in Greenville's desegregation pattern since 1965 — when the percentage of integration was 1.0 per cent

through the 57.7 per cent now applicable this year, to 76.7 per cent for next years school plan.

This portion further points out that "the teaching and professional staff... is fully desegregated... with a reasonable ratio on a racial basis."

On bus transportation the information set forth includes "buses that end up being filled with students of one race are of necessity filled with that race because of residential segregation in areas where children of one race reside in a neighborhood."

Another paragraph submits that "the... board has built schools 'where the children are' in order to provide neighborhood schools in the case of elementary schools... these decisions have been made at open hearings fully attended by... both races. There are no present plans for construction... the funds obtained from... bond issue have been exhausted."

The final of additional sections reminds the court "The Greenville City Board of Education is engaged in an administrative compliance proceeding required by... HEW. The Hearing Examiner has not rendered his decision... it is felt that the defendants have made every effort to comply with the guidelines of the Supreme Court... and are now operating a unitary school system... It is believed that the Board's Plan of operation is consistent with requirements of the Federal Court and will be approved."

In consideration of the facts set forth in the reply, the attorneys for the defendants,

asked the court:

"That the motion for further relief be denied.

"That a hearing... be expedited and heard as soon as possible by the court," and

"That the court retain jurisdiction of the cause, and for such other and further relief as to the court may seem equitable and just."

"Plaintiffs File Answer In Local Civil Action,"
The Daily Reflector, March 25, 1970.

A New Plan is Ordered

- Judge John Larkins ordered that the Greenville City School Board must present a new plan for the 1970-71 school year.
- Larkins ordered the board must “submit to the court within 24 days a plan utilizing paring, grouping, rezoning or other facility or planning method for the achievement of racial integration of student and faculty.”
- Larkins stated that the board’s previous plan was” deficient of teachers and school personnel...”

Greenville City Schools, 1970-71

- One week after Judge Larkins decision, the Greenville City School Board debated 4 different plans desegregation before adopting Plan 4 with a 5-2 vote.
- Plan 4 maintained the geographic zones as they had been with only slight variations, converted Agnes Fullilove Elementary into a kindergarten and school for special programs, and accomplished the required ratios of desegregation by bussing students to each school.

Estimated Total of 1,044 Elementary Students Who Will Need to be Bused to School for 1970-1971

| School | White | Negro | Total | Transport |
|------------------|-------|-------|-------|------------------------|
| Eastern | 323 | 167 | 490 | 167 Negro |
| Sadie Saulter | 292 | 171 | 463 | 132 White |
| South Greenville | 322 | 205 | 527 | 219 White |
| Elmhurst | 332 | 210 | 542 | 150 Negro 133 White |
| Third Street | 133 | 61 | 194 | 61 Negro 44 White |
| Wahl-Coates | 354 | 151 | 505 | 148 Negro |

“School Attendance Plan Voted By 5-2,” *The Daily Reflector*, July 24, 1970.

Plan 4 Opposed

- August 13, 1970: A complaint against the Greenville City School Board was filed by student Barry Christopher Henderson and his parents.
- The complaint was filed on behalf of a group of students who resided in the Hillsdale, Greenbrier, and Carolina Heights sub-divisions that would be bused to Sadie Saulter Elementary.
- The group requested an injunction that prevented Plan 4 from being implemented.