


IT CAN BE DONE!



Study Finds Schools Erasing Segregation

By The United Press.

WASHINGTON, Nov. 19—Community efforts to end race segregation in public schools generally have succeeded and a generation hence the nation's schools may have completed the job, a Ford Foundation study reported today.

The study, "Schools in Transition," is based on spot surveys of school integration programs in twenty-four communities from New Jersey to Arizona. It was financed by the Ford Foundation's Fund for the Advancement of Education.

DESEGREGATION —

a progress report

Less than six months after the U.S. Supreme Court ruled segregation in the public schools unconstitutional, inspiring accomplishments were being reported.

In the District of Columbia and in states which had required or permitted segregation, communities had moved ahead of the Court's final decree on when and how segregation should be ended. Without fanfare, school officials, parents and civic leaders had in many cases acted voluntarily in anticipation of the Court's decree to bring a quiet end to segregated education in their areas. In other localities, small groups of determined people had forced hesitant school boards to open their doors to white and colored children, sometimes through court cases, with little resulting friction.

The Ford Foundation, in a report on the subject released at the close of 1954, stated, "Where desegregation has been tried, the typical outcome has been its eventual acceptance. . . . A generation from now the American people may be able with some pride to look back on this period as a time of successful transition, accomplished in a characteristically American way."

In almost every case where steps have been taken to end segregation, the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People has been active. Local branches of the NAACP have worked for years to bring about legislation at state and city levels to outlaw segregation in the schools with outstanding success in several states.

The NAACP has encouraged Negroes to go to court on school segregation issues and has represented them. The NAACP has encouraged Negro parents to send their children to newly integrated schools and has helped to negotiate local conflicts when they have arisen.

The record is a good one but the hardest work is still ahead. Desegregation of the public schools in the Deep South must still be brought about. The Supreme Court will set the legal pattern. Only two communities in the Deep South have moved ahead of the Court's decree. Parents, civic leaders, school officials and organizations like the NAACP can provide the cooperation necessary to make desegregation work.

That schools can be integrated successfully is shown by the encouraging examples on the following pages. The record is a bright tribute to America's new determination to set its house in order. We hope you will actively help to open *your* schools to *all* children.

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF COLORED PEOPLE

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Typical of what is heard from community leaders where schools have been integrated is this comment from a prominent Jeffersonville, Indiana, citizen, "I was against it—but the kids have made it work.

"All the fuss was made by the parents—but the children didn't seem to care.—They just took the whole thing in their stride as though it were the most natural thing in the world."

And George Baker, one of the colored boys who transferred to an integrated school in Jeffersonville said, "Only difference I can think of, is that the schooling is a lot better."

Time after time, it has been shown that children—unmolested by grownups—can make integrated schooling a happy success. The children's natural inclination to accept each other on an equal basis thoroughly discredits the claim that integration is "against Nature," and should serve as an inspiring example to every adult.

In the difficult months ahead, it is to be hoped that authorities in charge of integrating public schools will impress parents with the need for letting the children work out their new associations for themselves. Desegregation tends to become a problem chiefly because of adults.

"We high school students", says a Missouri student paper, "will take the change in stride" if the adults don't make a "big production" of it.

"The kids have made it work—"

Good News -

From West Virginia to Arizona

- ✓ States which announced a permissive policy toward school integration beginning September, 1954, are West Virginia, Missouri, Arkansas and Delaware. Segregation was already permissive rather than required in Arizona, Kansas, New Mexico and Wyoming. In addition, the District of Columbia and the City of Baltimore, Maryland, integrated their schools for the first time.
- ✓ Of the seventeen southern and border states affected by the Supreme Court decision of May 17, 1954, Missouri is out front. All summer schools were immediately opened to Negro students in Kansas City, Missouri. Kansas City Teachers' College followed suit in September. The Kansas City Board of Education has adopted a plan to end segregation in public schools, integrate vocational and junior colleges, and complete integration in all public schools by September, 1955. The St. Louis plan calls for integration of two teachers' colleges and the handicapped children's school in September, 1954, of high schools in February, 1955, and of all elementary schools by September of 1955.
- ✓ One hundred and ten of the 177 school districts in Missouri having Negro pupils have initiated desegregation without incident. In Kennett, the superintendent reports that "the Negro students have entered into high school life and we have had no problems arising from the situation. The white students readily accepted the colored students, electing one to a senior class office."
- ✓ Eight months before the Supreme Court handed down its decision, the school board of Topeka, Kansas, one of the six communities involved in the litigation, voted to "terminate segregation in the elementary grades as rapidly as practicable." Fourteen of the city's 18 elementary school districts were desegregated by September, 1954. Atchison, Wichita and Pittsburg acted before Topeka. Kansas City, Lawrence, Leavenworth and other Kansas cities followed.
- ✓ In West Virginia, 30,000 white and Negro students are attending integrated schools, breaking a ninety-one-year-old color line. Wirt, Nicholas, Braxton, Randolph, Hardy, Monroe, Lewis, Upshur, Barbour, Tucker, Preston, Monongalia and Wetzel counties have accomplished complete integration in their school systems. Twelve other counties have partially desegregated.
- ✓ In Delaware, Wilmington conducted its summer schools on an integrated basis. The Board of Education there has ended segregation in the elementary schools. Courses not available at the Negro high school are now open to Negroes at the white vocational school. Claymont, Hockessin and Arden school districts have already admitted Negro pupils. Dover, Newcastle, Newark and other cities have adopted varying degrees of integration.



- ✓ In Oklahoma, state and school authorities have announced plans to end school segregation by September, 1955. The public has accepted the situation calmly, and Catholic high schools integrated in September, 1954.
- ✓ To the southwestern State of Arizona the May 17th ruling came as an anti-climax. State courts had already declared segregation in public education illegal and local school systems had begun integration as early as 1953. The peaceful integration process in the Phoenix schools that year was widely and favorably publicized in a magazine of national circulation.



From Washington to California

- ✓ Towns in which public school segregation on a municipal level has ended include: Hobbs, New Mexico; Phoenix, Arizona; Pasadena, California; Chester, Pennsylvania. And, for the first time in history, Indian children in New York and New Mexico need no longer be subjected to the overcrowded conditions on Indian reservations.
- ✓ In Arkansas, the first of the Deep-South states to comply, two towns have integrated their schools peacefully. In Fayetteville and Charleston partial integration has occurred, relieving young Negro students of the 49-to-200 mile trek which they had to make last year to the nearest all-Negro high schools at a cost to Fayetteville of \$5,000 a year. It was white people who initiated desegregation in Fayetteville, the superintendent reports.
- ✓ In Washington, D. C., where desegregation had been ordered by federal authorities after President Eisenhower's request that the nation's capital serve as a model for the rest of the country, more than 30,000 pupils attend mixed schools on all levels of the school system. The goal of the school system is to have all senior high and vocational schools unsegregated by the spring term of 1955, and to complete integration by the fall of that year.
- ✓ In Maryland, public school segregation has ended in Baltimore, and plans are being drawn up in other counties for the expedition of the Supreme Court edict.
- ✓ Representatives of Tennessee school organizations have worked out a plan which provides for gradual integration, grade by grade. Under this plan total integration would not be achieved under ten to twelve years. However, the NAACP looks upon this prolonged process as unnecessary and urges speedier compliance with the Court's ruling.



- ✓ In the field of higher education the fall term found both white and Negro students welcomed at previously segregated Middle Tennessee State College; University of Arkansas School of Pharmacy; Hardin Junior College in Texas; the two teachers' colleges in Washington, D. C.; the nine state colleges in West Virginia; Lincoln University in Jefferson City, Missouri; Southwest Missouri State College, Springfield, Missouri; Joplin (Missouri) Junior College and Central State College, Fayette, Missouri.
- ✓ Catholic dioceses in Texas, Missouri, North Carolina and Virginia, among other states, have announced the ending of segregation in parochial schools.
- ✓ In only five instances has desegregation been reversed and in only eleven were there any reported instances of racial friction. Segregation was reinstated in Rupert and White Sulphur Springs, W. Va.; in Sheridan, Ark.; Clarkton, Mo.; and Milford, Del., after adult-instigated strikes and demonstrations. In Madison, W. Va., protest was quickly squelched by court order. In Hobbs, New Mexico, a threatened boycott failed to develop. The synthetic anti-Negro demonstrations in Baltimore and Washington were curbed. These demonstrations involved only a small percentage of the total students.
- ✓ The Arizona City of Phoenix, operating under a permissive statute, at first strongly resisted NAACP demands to integrate the schools. A court ruling held the permissive law unconstitutional. Pending an appeal, the school board initiated desegregation and finally closed the Negro high school at the end of the school year, 1953-54.

The Delaware Story



(Far left) The Bulah family started the big change in Delaware schools. (Middle) Shirley Bulah, who had to be driven to school in the family automobile, now rides every day on the school bus which refused to stop for her. (Left) White and Negro children peacefully share the school cafeteria as well as classrooms.

An outstanding example of what a few determined people can do to end segregation in their local schools is the story of what has been done in three small Delaware communities.

The ball started rolling in Delaware in 1950 because of one seemingly unimportant fact—a school bus wouldn't stop for a little girl. The little girl was Shirley Bulah of Hockessin and her mother had to drive her to and from the colored elementary school two miles away although the bus bearing white children to another elementary school very close to hers passed her home every day. After two years, when Shirley was about to enter third grade, Mrs. Bulah decided to find out why the state couldn't give Shirley transportation to school. Correspondence with the Supervisor of Transportation in the state capital revealed that Shirley could not ride on the white children's bus because the state constitution required separate educational facilities for colored and white.

Mrs. Bulah turned for help to NAACP lawyer Louis L. Redding who advised the next step—to ask that Shirley be admitted to the white school. When she was refused, Redding took the Bulah case to court. On April 1, 1952, the Court of Chancery ruled that the school which Shirley was forced to attend was not equal as required by law and that the school for white children would have to admit Negroes. In the fall, just one week before the schools reopened, this judgment was upheld by the State Supreme Court.

And so, on the first day of school in September, 1952, Mrs. Bulah drove her daughter to Hockessin School No. 29 where the child was enrolled as the first colored pupil. That afternoon when the bus came by, Mrs. Bulah's wish was fulfilled—Shirley got off in front of her home.

Integration at the Hockessin school was carefully watched in other Delaware communities. In Claymont where Negro students above the sixth grade were forced to attend a segregated school in Wilmington seven miles away, School Superintendent Harvey Stahl induced the parents of eleven Negro children to enroll them in the local high school. Only after the Claymont Board of Education and the school faculty had upheld Mr. Stahl's action was an official mandate to admit colored children issued from the State Supreme Court.

In the neighboring community of Arden, Dr. Leon Anderson was now able to send three children to Claymont High School much closer to home than the segregated school in Wilmington. When he inquired whether his two younger children might attend the Arden Elementary School, the trustees agreed to accept them—although again a court mandate ordering the admission of Negro children was lacking, and remained lacking. Arden became perhaps the first community in history voluntarily to integrate a school in direct violation of its state's constitution.



What of the Negro Teacher?

Throughout the South there has been widespread bemoaning of the fate of the Negro teacher who is expected to pass out with the end of the segregated Negro school. The colored teacher's new "friends" are now extending profuse and premature condolences, unmindful of the traditional practice of southern whites of entrusting their children to the care and training of Negro women.

However, in spite of this irrational attitude toward the Negro teacher in the South, there has been no wholesale firing of Negro teachers in newly desegregated systems. Neither in Washington nor Baltimore has there been any reduction in the number or proportion of Negro teachers. For the first time in either city, white and colored classmates are being taught by teachers of both races.

Likewise Negro teachers are now instructing white and colored students in Missouri, West Virginia and Delaware as well as in Kansas, Arizona, and New Mexico. In Kansas City, Kansas, the superintendent reports that the full quota of 175 Negro teachers is being retained.

New Jersey affords a classic example of what desegregation does to Negro teachers. In 1945-46, before segregation was banned in that state there were 479 Negro teachers of whom 415 were assigned to all-Negro schools. In 1953-54, there were 645 Negro teachers in the state, teaching white as well as colored children in non-segregated schools.

With the present shortage of teachers, estimated as high as 150,000, the 113,000 Negro men and women now employed in segregated public school systems have no need to fear loss of employment when schools are integrated. There simply will not be enough white teachers to replace them.

The Big Job Ahead

The record clearly shows that America's children of all races, colors and faiths can go to school together in harmony and with mutual respect and benefit. Even in the face of adult hostility this ideal democratic public school system can be achieved. There is nothing illusory or impossible about such an integrated system.

There are, of course, obstacles to be overcome, but they are not insurmountable. Lawless elements in the Deep South are already attempting to spread alarm by threatening violence. Demagogues are proposing the abandonment of the public school system. Others are seeking devious ways to circumvent the Court's ruling or to delay action toward integration.

To bring about desegregation requires planning and action involving officials and local leaders of both races in the community. Success depends in large measure upon six basic considerations.

1. There must be adequate preparation of the community through full discussion of the meaning of the Court's decision in forums sponsored by your churches, civic organizations, fraternal groups, parent-teacher associations, trade unions and other responsible groups.
2. There must be a clear and straightforward statement of policy by your local school board.
3. There must be firm enforcement and unwavering execution of the policy even if there is initial resistance.
4. Police and other law enforcement officials must act promptly and effectively to prevent violence and to restrain mob leaders.
5. Subtle or open attempts to delay, evade or prevent desegregation must be exposed and opposed.
6. There must be full realization in the community that Jim Crow schools are not only illegal, but also wasteful of economic and human resources, offensive to our moral and political concepts of human equality, and inimical to our national prestige and security.

Under these conditions, America's public schools can be efficiently and expeditiously desegregated. It is up to each of us to provide these conditions and to move ahead with the development of a democratic public school system throughout the nation.

Equal Justice Under Law

We conclude that in the field of public education the doctrine of "separate but equal" has no place. Separate educational facilities are inherently unequal. Therefore, we hold that the plaintiffs and others similarly situated for whom the actions have been brought are, by reason of the segregation complained of, deprived of the equal protection of the laws guaranteed by the Fourteenth Amendment.

—*The United States Supreme Court,*
May 17, 1954.

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