

File

MINUTES
LOCAL EDUCATION COMMISSION
FULTON COUNTY ADMINISTRATION BUILDING
OCTOBER 2, 1964

The Local Education Commission met Friday, October 2, 1964, at 2:00 p.m., in the Board Room of the Fulton County Administration Building with the following members present:

Mr. P. L. Bardin	Mrs. Alan Ritter
Dr. R. H. Brisbane	Mr. Wallace H. Stewart
Mr. Otis M. Jackson	Mr. William M. Teem
Mr. Alan Kiepper, Ex Officio	Mr. Fred J. Turner
Dr. John W. Letson, Ex Officio	Dr. Paul D. West, Ex Officio
Mr. Thomas M. Miller	Mr. James White, Jr.

Minutes of the July 31 meeting of the Steering Committee were read and approved.

Minutes of the July 31 Local Education Commission meeting were read and approved.

Minutes of the September 10 meeting of the Special Committee for Legal Services were read and discussed. During this discussion, it was pointed out that the Commission has an unencumbered balance of between \$6,000 and \$7,000.

Consensus seems to be that a contractual agreement should be drawn between the lawyers and the Commission. This agreement should set forth the duties, expectations and obligations of each party involved. Also, a copy of the minutes of the September 10 meeting of the Special Committee should be sent to each lawyer.

The point was made that the only financial commitment to the lawyers is that the Commission will pay them on an hourly rate for services rendered. The total cost of their services will depend upon the number of hours they devote to the work of the Commission. There are no minimum fees, retainer fees or other such fees involved in this agreement.

Local Education Commission Minutes, cont'd

Dr. Pierce was asked to identify services other than legal which are needed. He stated that the legal and educational aspects of the study are so entwined it is hard to say exactly what can be classified specifically as one or the other. However, it seems appropriate that the Commission should design the desired new school system first and then have the legal counsel describe the legal steps required to create the system. The degree to which legal and educational aspects are interwoven were pointed out by citing the retirement plan for the new system or the amortization of the existing bonded indebtedness of the two systems. Again it was pointed out that the final report of the Commission must be a package plan which includes the totality of dissolving two systems and creating a new one.

Mr. Kiepper asked if it would be desirable or necessary to secure the service of a management consultant firm to help with the organizational structure of the new system. He pointed out that some systems have used such services. The reply was that there are many kinds of services needed and that this may be one. Nashville-Davidson County used the service of a management consultant firm when they combined the two school systems.

Mr. Turner then made the motion that the Commission approve the action of the Special Committee concerning the selection of the two lawyers on an hourly basis; however, the hourly rate must be approved by the Commission before services are requested. Mr. White seconded the motion which was approved unanimously.

Dr. West stated that various news reporters are being advised of the meetings of the Commission, but that apparently their schedules are preventing them from covering the Commission meetings.

Dr. Pierce reviewed the brief he had developed as a result of the charge received at the last regular Commission meeting. However, before giving a detailed analysis of the brief, Dr. Pierce stated that if the report is accepted, the question of whether merger is desirable will be settled. Attention then can be focused upon describing the kind of

Local Education Commission Minutes, cont'd

new school system needed. He also stated that the brief in its present form should be treated as a tentative and confidential document. Each point in the brief was then reviewed and explained in considerable detail by Dr. Pierce.

Official action by the Commission concerning the brief will be taken at a later meeting.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:00 p.m.

ECH/dh

October 5, 1964

MEMBERS OF THE LOCAL EDUCATION COMMISSION - 1964

Chairman P. L. Bardin *J.A. 1964* Co-Ordinator:
Vice Chairman Otis M. Jackson Dr. Truman Pierce, Dean
Secty-Treasurer W. Kenneth Stringer Department of Education - Auburn University

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Ex Officio Members:

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Atlanta Public Schools

Dr. Paul D. West, Superintendent
Fulton County Schools

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Earl Landers, Administrative Asst to Mayor
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Atlanta, Georgia 30303

Alan Kiepper, Fulton County Manager
Fulton Co. Administration Bldg
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Steering Committee Members:

Fred J. Turner
Otis M. Jackson
J. H. Cawthon
W. Kenneth Stringer
P. L. Bardin, Chairman of Commission
W. L. Robinson
Paul D. West
John W. Letson

Recording Secretary:

Dr. Curtis Henson, Coordinator
Metropolitan School Development Council
Atlanta and Fulton County Schools

File →

LOCAL EDUCATION COMMISSION
MINUTES OF SPECIAL COMMITTEE FOR LEGAL SERVICES
FULTON COUNTY ADMINISTRATION BUILDING
SEPTEMBER 10, 1964

The Special Committee appointed to determine legal assistance needed by the Commission met at 10:00 a.m., September 10, 1964, with the following in attendance:

Mr. P. L. Bardin	Dr. John Letson
Mr. J. P. Groton	Dr. Truman Pierce
Mr. Otis M. Jackson	Dr. Paul West
Mr. A. C. Latimer	Dr. Curtis Henson

After the meeting was called to order by Chairman Bardin, Dr. Pierce was asked to review the legal services needed by the Commission. He pointed out that the present study of the Local Education Commission must be much more pointed and specific than the previous studies. Legal steps necessary to abolish the two existing school systems and to create a new one must be described in detail.

Since Mr. A. C. Latimer and Mr. James Groton have worked together for years and are already involved in the study, it was agreed that they be employed as the official attorneys of the Commission, however, the Commission reserves the right to employ additional legal counsel at any future time.

The lawyers will develop a proposed budget for the legal services, and Dr. Pierce will draft a total proposed budget for the Commission. Financial assistance will be sought after the budget has been approved.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:30 a.m.

ECH/dh

September 22, 1964

Recording Secretary

Approved by: _____
Chairman

METROPOLITAN SCHOOL DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL

City of Atlanta and Fulton County Boards of Education

224 Central Ave., S.W.

Atlanta 3, Georgia

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Oby T. Brewer, Jr. *co-chairman*
W. L. Robinson, *co-chairman*
John W. Letson
Paul D. West
Glenn Frick
L. Marvin Rivers

September 28, 1964

COUNCIL STAFF

E. Curtis Henson
Coordinator
Gilbert E. Tauffner,
Executive Director of
Educational Broadcasting

REMINDER

To: Members of the Local Education Commission

From: Curtis Henson, Recording Secretary

This is to remind you that the Local Education Commission will meet on Friday, October 2, 1964, at 2:00 p.m., in the Fulton County School Board Room, County Administration Building.

ECH/dh

Confidential

Tentative

ONE DISTRICT FOR ATLANTA AND FULTON COUNTY SCHOOLS?

Studies of public education in the Atlanta and Fulton County school districts have been underway most of the time since the early years following the close of World War II. The continuous and rapid growth of the Atlanta metropolitan area and the character of this growth have focused attention on problems and issues many of which strongly influence the public schools. The desire of citizens to provide educational programs of high quality has stimulated constant concern for the satisfactory resolution of these problems and issues. The quest for better schools is a thread which runs through all of the various special studies of education during this period.

Some of the studies were authorized by one or both of the local school boards, while others were authorized by the General Assembly of the State of Georgia. The latest of those initiated by the General Assembly was authorized in 1963. It created a Local Education Commission composed of nineteen citizens from the two school districts. The Legislature empowered the Commission "to study the desirability and feasibility of combining the school systems of Fulton County and the City of Atlanta, including the portion thereof lying in DeKalb County; to provide that said Commission may draft a plan or plans for the combining of such school systems and submit same to members of the General Assembly from Fulton and DeKalb Counties."

This Commission can profit from previous studies by taking into account their findings and conclusions as they relate to consolidation.

BRIEF REVIEW OF PREVIOUS STUDIES

The question of whether or not the Atlanta and Fulton County school districts should be combined into a single district has been debated for a good many years. The Local Government Commission of Fulton County gave considerable attention to the consolidation issue in a report of its studies which was issued in 1950. The Commission did not recommend merger of the two school systems because of (1) the "huge cost that would be involved in raising the county system up to city salary and kindergarten standards", (2) the "vast physical job involved in consolidation."

However, the Local Government Commission did not set forth educational reasons as a justification for not recommending consolidation. The report stated that its proposals should not stand in the path of ultimate unification of the two school districts and expressed the view that it would be easier to effect consolidation after changes had been made which minimized the differences in the two school systems. The Commission further expressed the view that combining of the schools would be made easier "if in the meantime the tri-cities and the rural areas would assume a larger share of their school costs."

However, the Commission did recommend certain changes which have had a profound effect on education in the Atlanta-Fulton County school districts. The report, known as the Plan of Improvement, recommended greatly enlarging the city limits of Atlanta and the consolidation of certain city and county services. This plan, as later put into effect by the General Assembly, resulted in the transfer of about 40 Fulton County schools and nearly half of the school enrollment in the County district to the school district of Atlanta. Furthermore, 72 per cent of the taxable wealth to support schools in the County district was included in the annexation. These changes took place in 1952.

Even though the two separate school districts remained in reality, a substantial step toward consolidation took place because of the reduction in the number of schools and in enrollment in the Fulton County district and the subsequent increase in the Atlanta district. Unfortunately, severe financial problems were created in what was left of the Fulton County school district because of the large proportion of taxable wealth to support schools which was transferred into the city district. The financial woes of the Fulton County schools have increased steadily since that time.

The General Assembly of Georgia created a Local Education Commission of Atlanta and Fulton County in 1958 to make a study of their educational systems and to draft a plan or plans for their improvement, submitting the plan or plans to the members of the General Assembly from Fulton and DeKalb counties. The Act stated that "such study shall give full consideration to the position of such systems within the total educational system of the State of Georgia, and the plan or plans shall include any changes in political and administrative and fiscal structure of either or both of such systems which the Commission deems desirable and feasible." Thus, concern for consolidation appears in this legislation and in the assignment of duties to the Commission.

This Commission first gave attention to the legal problems which would be involved in consolidation. Mr. G. Stanley Joslin, Professor of Law at Emory University, was commissioned to study the legal considerations which would be necessary if consolidation were undertaken. Mr. Joslin prepared a memorandum for the Commission on these matters.

The memorandum emphasized an important technical distinction between merger and consolidation, thus indicating two distinct ways in which unification might be achieved. Merger would involve one system becoming a part of the other, thus taking on all the powers and limitations inherent in the system which absorbed it. Consolidation means a completely new school system which would be

created from the present Atlanta and Fulton County districts. These districts would cease to exist when the new district came into being. The newly-created district would be new in every respect, including provisions for a board of education, school taxes, debt limitations, administrative officials, and operational procedures. Mr. Joslin stated that the new system could be constituted in a way that would permit the addition of other school systems or parts of such systems when and if the citizens affected so desired.

No major legal difficulties need be involved in consolidating the two systems according to Mr. Joslin. He recommended that if a decision is made to combine the two systems, consolidation would be better than merger. If merger were to be decided upon, fewer legal difficulties would be involved if the city system joined the county system rather than if the county system joined the city system.

The Commission then turned its attention to other aspects of the consolidation issue. Considerable research was conducted to determine the economic and financial advantages and disadvantages of unifying the two districts. The Commission became greatly interested in the educational implications of consolidation. Thereafter, it viewed consolidation primarily in terms of opportunities which could be provided for improving education in the metropolitan area.

After a careful study of the advantages and disadvantages of consolidation, the Commission decided that "consolidation is neither desirable nor practicable at this time." It went on to state that "consolidation will be much more feasible, in our judgment, if and when (a) the two separate systems have adopted similar policies with respect to kindergartens, (b) teacher pay scales of the two systems are either identical or at least much closer together than at present, (c) citizens of the Fulton County school district have voted to eliminate the Homestead Exemption for school operating tax purposes, and (d) the Atlanta-Fulton

County area has successfully passed through the impending school desegregation crisis." Stated another way, the Commission found itself favorably disposed toward consolidation but did not believe the time was right for the transition which would be required. It stated that mere consolidation of the two school districts per se would be neither good nor bad. The values of such a move lie in whether or not better schools could be provided for the metropolitan area than could be provided by two separate systems, and as economically.

However, the Commission did not drop the idea of improving schools in the metropolitan area by means of improved organizational arrangements. It concluded that a number of the advantages of consolidating the school systems could be achieved through the creation of machinery for joint action and for the development of joint programs by the Atlanta and Fulton County boards of education. Separate and independent action of the two boards on matters involving common interests lack the strength of joint action and would be less economical in cost. The search for ways to improve schools convinced the Commission that continuous research and experimentation were necessary if the improvement program it recommended was to be successfully executed. Furthermore, the demands on education are such that continuous research and experimentation are essential for a school program which is sufficiently up-to-date to meet current needs. These are examples of undertakings which would be more productive if engaged in jointly by the school systems rather than if each system developed its own separate programs.

To achieve these purposes, the Metropolitan School Development Council was created as a separate entity to serve both school systems and to be controlled jointly by them. The Council is the instrument through which many recommendations of the Local Education Commission have been achieved in full or in part. Its success is a demonstration of the ability and willingness of the two boards

of education and their professional employees to work cooperatively for better schools. The Council was viewed initially as a possible intermediate step toward eventual consolidation. This assumption is supported by the success of the Council.

The financial position of the Fulton County Board of Education rapidly deteriorated following the annexation program of greater Atlanta which was completed in 1952. After annexation was complete, only 28 per cent of the former taxable wealth remained for the education of Fulton County public school students, while the number of students remaining was 50 per cent of the total prior to annexation. School population in the County continued to increase at the rate of about 7 per cent each year, thus creating capital outlay problems as well as the necessity of increasing operational budgets. By 1963-64, the Board of Education found it necessary to reduce school support because there was no longer tax leeway for increasing the school budget. All bonding capacity for building purposes had been utilized, also. This dire situation prompted the Fulton County Board of Education to appoint a Study Commission of ten citizens of the County to find ways and recommend ways to the Board for alleviating the financial crisis which gripped the schools.

The Commission projected school enrollments, capital outlay needs, and operational budget needs for the Fulton County schools through the 1972-73 school year, assuming that schools of at least present quality were to be maintained. Eleven different possibilities of financing the schools were considered, all of which proved to be inadequate, if taken singly. It recommended a combination of alternatives for financing the schools of Fulton County, but it expressed grave concern for the future and recommended that the "study of what would be involved in merging the Fulton County and Atlanta school districts should be continued with a view to effecting such a merger when it is feasible."

All of these studies gave serious attention to consolidation and without exception they concluded that the directions toward which the two school systems should move lead to consolidation. As stated in one of the reports, the question seemed to be not whether there should be consolidation, but rather when should consolidation be effected.

DIMINISHING BARRIERS

In the meantime, certain of the barriers to combining the two school districts which were identified earlier have been either overcome or minimized. The State Minimum Foundation Program has been modified in ways which will not require a financial sacrifice in state aid should the two districts be united, as would have been the case earlier. The only loss would be the state allocation for the salary of one superintendent, about \$6,700, and there may be gains which would offset this loss, depending on the kind of new district to be created.

The level of financial expenditures of the two districts has been brought closer together, although troublesome differences remain. Questions concerning kindergartens are perhaps the most difficult.

The trends in school desegregation appear to be clearly established. While citizens generally seem to accept desegregation as a reality, problems which accompany the actual integration of schools are profoundly complex and their solutions are unclear. However, whether one or two school districts exist in Fulton County may be viewed as largely immaterial with reference to desegregation.

Perhaps the most important change is the growth of the two systems toward the same basic assumptions concerning education and the increase in productive cooperative efforts between the two systems. This is progress toward the kind of unity which is essential to physical consolidation.

NEW IMPERATIVES

Meanwhile, other transitions of great importance have been taking place. Foremost among these is the widespread recognition that the provision of education of increasingly high quality is an essential requirement of all districts if its people are to remain in the mainstream of modern civilization. Neither the schools of yesterday nor the schools of today will be adequate for tomorrow. Cultural transitions are taking place at a rate of speed which quickly render obsolete much of current education. Intensive efforts to find the best ways of providing the needed education are underway in many school districts. The national government is keenly aware of these needs as is evidenced by its increasing support of education at all levels. Education is now recognized as the only effective way of eliminating poverty, achieving worthy personal objectives, and developing more satisfactory communities, states, and nations.

The continued rapid growth of the Atlanta metropolitan area is another major force which deeply influences the schools and how they should be organized. A population of three million people is projected for the area by the year 2000. The basic structure of local government in the area has thus far been relatively unaffected by this growth, except for the annexation program completed in 1952. These units of government, including those for schools, become increasingly archaic as the metropolitan area continues its growth and development.

A major aspect of urbanization is the fact that as size increases so does cultural diversity. This complexity of interests and abilities necessarily increases interdependence because a metropolitan area permits many kinds of specialization which are supplementary to each other and when taken together constitute the entire area. Hence, the status of a given unit in such a complex affects the whole.

This is why no part of a metropolitan area can afford a second-rate school system. Therefore, the present fiscal condition of the Fulton County school district is a concern of the entire metropolitan area and not simply of the Fulton County school district alone. As pointed out above, a major imperative is the inability of the present Fulton County school district to sustain an adequate program of education. Since nothing has been done to alleviate the crisis in school finance underscored in the 1963 study, this imperative becomes more compelling.

THE IMPORTANCE OF A GOOD SCHOOL DISTRICT

Before taking a closer look at the question of consolidation, a brief discussion of school districts and their proper functions may be in order.

The American concept of public education includes provisions for substantial control of schools by local communities. The local school district, a creature of the state, was invented to enable people served by the schools to have a voice in their purpose and government. There are thousands of local school districts in America. These districts vary greatly in size and in population. They are easily classified into different types according to the kinds of schools they provide.

Much study of school districts by authorities suggests the following criteria for an adequate district:

1. It should have enough children to educate to enable schools to function effectively and economically.
2. It should be a reasonably complete social and economic unit.
3. It should have taxable wealth adequate to provide healthy local support.
4. It should have adequate bonding power for needed and anticipated capital outlay.

5. It should have tax leeway for both current operations and capital outlay.
6. It should have reasonable fiscal independence.

These criteria were applied to the Fulton County school district in the 1963 study. It was found that the district could meet only the first criterion. It, therefore, by no stretch of the imagination could be judged as an adequate school district. On the other hand, the Atlanta school district meets all of these criteria to a reasonable degree. Atlanta has already recognized a degree of responsibility for the Fulton County school district by supporting a $1\frac{1}{2}$ mill countywide tax for support of Fulton County schools. If the two districts were combined, the single district would be a sound and adequate district, if established on the basis of proper legal provisions.

REASONS FOR CONSOLIDATION

The foregoing discussion traces the historical development of consolidation as an issue and reviews the findings and recommendations of previous studies as they bear on the question. Current developments and trends are also identified and interpreted in relation to their impact on the structure of education in the Atlanta metropolitan area. These facts point clearly toward a single school district.

But the really persuasive reasons which should be considered in making a decision are concerned with consolidation as an instrument for achieving better educational programs for the metropolitan area, a more equitable support basis for the schools, and the provision of structural and procedural arrangements which will facilitate the economic use of personnel and financial resources in the ongoing development of more adequate education, and finally with the provision and stimulation of the research and experimentation which are essential

in the continuous improvement of education in the metropolitan area. These educational advantages to consolidation are listed and briefly discussed in the following pages.

A Better School District

Will Be Provided

The discussion above concerning the proper functions of a school district and the characteristics of a sound district clearly justify this conclusion. Furthermore, sound principles of political science as they relate to units of local government support this conclusion. In addition, maintaining and fostering good relationships with other units of local government would be enhanced by a single district. These factors are obviously related to the ease and convenience of governing the local schools.

Educational Opportunities Can Be

Equalized More Easily

The American dream has long stressed the right of every individual to secure an education. We now believe that every individual has the right to an education appropriate to his purposes, interests, abilities, and needs. Equality of educational opportunity, therefore, does not mean the same education for all, but it does mean the same level of quality for all insofar as is possible. The extreme diversity of cultural interests and socio-economic backgrounds which are found in the metropolitan area of Atlanta, and in any other metropolitan area, require a wide range of educational programs adapted to these basic differences in people. The current nationwide concern for providing more realistic educational programs for children in slum areas is an indication of this kind of need. The Atlanta district is vastly heterogeneous in composition, while

the Fulton County district is more homogeneous. Combining the two would make it possible to provide the variety of educational programs needed in a more economical and efficient manner.

The equalization of educational offerings in the present school districts of Atlanta and Fulton County seems virtually impossible. A single district would contribute much to making this a manageable task with minimum difficulties.

New and Needed Educational Programs Could
Be Provided More Economically

Neither school district has yet provided post-secondary education programs for which there is great need. Perhaps the fastest growing trend in American education is the development of comprehensive junior colleges. These institutions provide two years of academic work either for terminal purposes or for transfer to a senior college. They also usually offer programs in vocational-technical education and in adult education. It is increasingly clear that continuing education is a must for the adult citizen of tomorrow. Furthermore, the kind of world in which we live requires increasing amounts of education. A recent Educational Policies Commission report takes the position that we must provide two years of education beyond the high school at public expense for all high school graduates.

Fulton County is not financially able to provide junior colleges. It would not be the most economical plan for each district to provide its own junior colleges. A program for the metropolitan area would provide the best means of meeting this emerging educational need. The two districts have already found it profitable to cooperate in the provision of vocational education as reflected by the new vocational school which is to serve both districts and provisions for a second such institution.

More Adequate Curricula for Special
Student Groups Can Be Provided

The variety of curricula required to meet the diverse educational needs referred to above means special educational offerings for small groups of selected students. Reference is made to groups of children with serious physical handicaps, those suffering from severe mental retardation, children with extreme emotional difficulties, the exceptionally bright, and those with unusual talents. Since such programs are needed for only small numbers of children, they can be provided more economically if the student population to be served is drawn from the entire metropolitan area rather than if the two present school districts offer duplicate programs. Furthermore, the educational quality of offerings can be more readily improved in a unified district.

Certain Educational Programs and Services
Can Be Provided More Satisfactorily

The richness and depth of both teaching and learning are being enhanced by new discoveries concerning human growth and development. The contributions of science to the effectiveness of teaching and learning processes is increasing at a rapid rate. Integrating into curricula the accelerating flow of new and useful subject matter which the modern school program must offer if it is to remain effective is an increasingly difficult problem.

The modern school must be staffed by professional personnel who keep up with these continuing developments that affect their productivity. Systemwide continuous career development programs for personnel have become a necessity. This is one type of educational service which can be provided better on a metropolitan-wide basis rather than in terms of the present separate districts. The development and use of various learning resources and the appropriate utilization of

technological advances in teaching can be stimulated and fostered better through a single school district.

Required Improvements in Educational Quality

Can Be Achieved More Readily

The search for better schools is a common thread running through all considerations involved in deciding the consolidation question. Unless the ultimate consequence of unifying the two school districts is a better quality of education, there is little need to pursue the issue. Improvements in financing schools in administrative and supervisory services, and in the scope and variety of educational offerings can be justified only in terms of their educational import. The concept of a metropolitan area which is basic to the considerations of this paper demand an educational program for the Atlanta metropolitan area and not a series of separate and structurally unrelated programs.

The search for educational quality is now both universal and continuous. The pursuit of quality is complex in that it is concerned with everything that has a bearing on the educational programs offered by a school district. The unification of such efforts would certainly strengthen the opportunities and resources for enrichment of educational offerings.

Comprehensive, Long-Range Planning

Can Be More Effective

The increasing magnitude of educational responsibility has been stressed. The quantitative aspects of this problem will continue to increase. Projections which have been made through the next several years show no letdown in the rate of population growth. The indicated increase in the educational load calls for the most intelligent planning of which the people responsible are capable.

Since this growth ignores school district lines, adequate planning for new enrollment must also ignore these lines insofar as actualities permit. Comprehensive, long-range planning cannot be satisfactory if it is segmented on the basis of school district lines which have no constructive significance in the context of the metropolitan area as a whole.

More Effective Solutions to Common
Educational Problems Are Possible

Educational problems are not confined to areas marked off by school district lines, as has been emphasized. Some educational problems are unique to certain types of districts, as is true of Fulton County and Atlanta. But many such problems are common to the districts of an area, state, region, or nation. Those which are common seem to be on the increase. The school district which embraces as nearly a self-sufficient socio-economic unit as is possible provides the best structural framework for the consideration of educational problems. Solutions to these problems should not be restricted by artificial district lines which ignore the facts of life. A unified district would provide for a more constructive approach to problem solution than does the present dual approach. This is all the more important since most of the educational problems to be faced are common to the two districts.

More Effective Research Programs Can
Be Stimulated and Executed

As good schools have become more central to personal and community advancement, the place of research in education has become more apparent. Sound analyses of existing programs, the identification and description of strengths and weaknesses, and the determination of grounds for change require research. Planning

ahead so that there will be adequate classrooms and teachers for the children in school at the beginning of a given year rests back on sound research. School systems without strong research programs cannot achieve their maximum effectiveness. The complexity of a metropolitan area and the interrelationship of roles of its different segments require comprehensive research programs based on trends and needs of the entire area rather than of subdistricts which are separate school districts. Furthermore, economy and wise management dictate the metropolitan-wide approach to research.

Needed Experimentation and Educational
Invention Can Be Achieved More Readily

Major advances in our society depend heavily on invention and experimentation. This fact is well recognized in the world of science and technology. The role of invention and experimentation in the improvement of social institutions such as the schools is equally critical. Schools like the world in which they exist must change as their clientele changes. New curriculum materials must be developed and tested on experimental bases. New knowledge of human growth and development must be applied to teaching and learning on experimental bases. New teaching procedures and methods must be tested through tryout and evaluation. Heavy reliance upon invention and experimentation are crucial to needed educational advancement. There is no need for the school systems within the metropolitan area to engage in separate programs of this nature. The interests of both can be served better by unified programs, to say nothing of economies which could be effected.

More Extensive Use of Selected Educational
Facilities and Learning Resources Are Possible

Centers for acquiring, creating, distributing, and servicing curriculum materials, filmstrips, video tapes, films, and the necessary equipment for appropriate use of these materials are becoming common. The creation of teaching materials for local use and on the basis of needs unique to the local situation is an important function of these centers. The use of television in teaching and in professional development programs is increasing. The needed facilities for extensive television programs in the metropolitan area can be centered easily in one location.

It would be foolish to duplicate the above in different school districts serving the same metropolitan area. A single center can provide a constant flow of materials far richer and more comprehensive than would be possible with duplicate facilities in the separate districts.

Equity and Balance of Financial Effort
and Support Can Be Achieved

An axiom of educational finance which is accepted universally is that wealth should be taxed where it is in order to educate children where they are. The most glaring deficiency in the structure of public education in the Atlanta area violates this axiom. The center for commerce and industry is the City of Atlanta. Contributions of most Fulton County citizens to the economy of the metropolitan area are made largely in the City of Atlanta where they do their work. This wealth enriches Atlanta primarily, although the earnings paid to the individual may be spent wherever he chooses. The contribution of the city to support of schools in the Fulton County district is a $1\frac{1}{2}$ mill property tax. The industrial

wealth of the metropolitan area which is a major source of school revenue lies largely within the City of Atlanta.

No equitable system of financial support and effort is possible which does not take into account these economic facts. A single tax program for schools in the metropolitan area with the revenues distributed according to educational need is the only satisfactory answer to the financial dilemma of the Fulton County schools. This is Atlanta's problem as well as Fulton County's problem because of the previously stressed interdependence of the metropolitan area. A single school district would be the most simple and prudent way to achieve this goal. It should be pointed out that a new tax plan would be needed, for Atlanta is approaching the situation of Fulton County under its present tax system.

Greater Financial Stability is Possible

The disadvantages of heavy reliance on the property tax for the support of schools are well known. The primary advantage is that revenues from property taxes fluctuate less than do revenues from more sensitive barometers of economic health. Desirable stability in the financial structure of a school system in the final analysis is related to the soundness of the economy and the fairness of the system of taxation. The better balanced the tax program, the more stable the financial base of the schools. The more complete the economic district or area served by the school district as an economy in its own right, the more stable the local tax base for schools.

It goes without saying that combining the Atlanta and Fulton County districts into a single school system would provide a far sounder economic base for year-to-year stability in school support.

Economies are Possible

Consolidation cannot be justified as an economy measure, if this means an actual reduction in expenditures. Any plan for immediate unification of the two districts would really cost more than the sum of the current budgets of the two systems because costs would be equalized upward instead of downward, assuming the same quality of education is to be provided in the entire district. Nevertheless, some financial economies are possible because of the elimination of duplicate programs and services which can be handled better through single systems. In this connection, special reference is made to experimentation and invention, research, certain district-wide programs and services, specialized curricula for small student groups, and others enumerated in the listing above. These programs could be provided at higher quality levels on a unified basis at a lower unit cost than would be possible in dual programs.

However, the greatest economic gain to consolidation would be in the creation of opportunities to purchase more with the educational dollar rather than in the utilization of fewer educational dollars. This kind of economy is certainly to be sought and is of much greater importance than the mere saving of money. A good test of a school district is not how little money it spends, but how much education it buys for its expenditures.

The above identification and description of advantages to consolidation are predicated on certain assumptions concerning the new school district. Among these assumptions are the following: an adequate legal base for the new district will be provided; an administrative structure which will make possible the necessary leadership for educational advancement in the metropolitan area will be created; an adequate plan for financing the new school district will be adopted, and emphasis on continuously improving educational quality and extending educational services will be continued. Consolidation as such is of no value. It

is valuable only as it results in educational advancement, but it will not guarantee such advancement.

EDUCATIONAL DISADVANTAGES OF CONSOLIDATION

Educational reasons why consolidation is not desirable must be viewed against the backdrop of advantages. It will then be possible to weigh the two sets of reasons and determine the course of action which offers the most promise for educational advancement in the metropolitan area. It will be noted that reference is made to educational disadvantages rather than to other disadvantages or handicaps which might have to be faced in effecting consolidation.

A careful study of the educational problems which might result from consolidation indicates that such problems are related primarily to the factor of size of the district. Some of these problems are discussed below.

Difficulties in Maintaining Local Control

The capacity of schools to make needed adaptations which take into proper account the educational needs of their neighborhoods is related to the size of districts. Considerable uniformity of educational programs within districts has been traditional. As a rule, the larger districts offer a greater variety of educational needs which require much variation in offerings. This makes uniformity particularly undesirable in these districts. Current efforts to develop more realistic school programs for children in slum areas of cities is an example of the need for different kinds of programs according to community backgrounds. A reasonable degree of control must be vested in the local school community if these variations in educational needs are to be met. Neighborhood control generates local responsibility, interest and initiative which are essential to good schools.

Unhealthy Reliance on Bureaucracy

Where local control is missing, decisions are removed from the local scene. Instead of the healthy exercise of community responsibility for schools, directives from the central office take the place of local initiative. Thus, bureaucratic controls grow up which inevitably stress uniformity and discourage the community autonomy which has been one of the great strengths of public education in America. There is evidence to show that the larger the district the more dependence is placed on unhealthy control from central offices which are far removed from the people.

Inadequate Invention and Experimentation

Many very large school districts have been notably lacking in educational invention and experimentation. Some of the major current educational ills of our country are in the slums of large city districts where until recently little effort was made to create and try out school programs which would serve these areas more realistically. Innovation is difficult in situations which do not encourage the exercise of individuality. Uniformity and invention are not compatible. Excessive use of rules, regulations, and directives inhibit creativity.

Poor Communication

The difficulties of maintaining satisfactory channels of communication increase with the size of a school district. The threads which hold a school system together become tenuous as the district grows larger. Greater dependence must be placed on formal and impersonal means of communication in large districts. Opportunities for misunderstanding and conflicting opinions are greater where personal and informal contacts are missing.

Too Much Centralized Decision Making

The disadvantage of bigness in utilizing democratic participation in reaching decisions stems partly from the lack of an adequate structure to permit such participation and partly from the slowness of action characteristic of large units of government. The fact that both the soundness of decisions and an adequate understanding of their meanings are enhanced by participation in their making is of great importance in effective teaching.

Loss of Personal Identity

Many studies have shown that a close relationship exists between the productivity of a person and the degree to which he feels himself to be an integral part of the enterprise which provides his employment. The more he is made to feel that he is but a mere cog in a machine, the more he acts as though this were true. There is no substitute for maintaining warm and personal relationships in achieving satisfaction and success in one's work. This kind of environment is very hard to maintain where large numbers of persons are involved.

The Atlanta and Fulton County school districts, if combined, would be about eleventh in size among all districts in America. In 1963-64, the total school enrollment in the two districts was 157,140, about one-sixth the enrollment in New York City which has more than one million pupils and enrolls more pupils than any other district in the Nation. Both the Atlanta and Fulton County districts have already reached the size of school systems which have suffered from the ills described above. Therefore, combining the school districts would scarcely create problems of bigness beyond those which already exist, if the proper safeguards are observed in the creation and establishment of the new district.

Just as creating a single school district would not guarantee the educational advantages discussed in this paper, neither would the ills described inevitably follow. Knowing the disadvantages to avoid should be sufficient forewarning to assure the provision of an adequate legal base for the new district, satisfactory administrative leadership, and sufficient financial support.

DIFFICULTIES IN ACHIEVING CONSOLIDATION

Transitions in political and civil structures are painful and tedious at best. Existing systems cling to life tenaciously and carry with them the strong support of tradition and custom. Creating a new school district is simple compared to abolishing existing districts.

Basic difficulties fall into three classes: legal, attitudes and understandings, and operational. There may be numerous variations in each type of difficulty in a particular situation where consolidation is undertaken.

Legal difficulties inhere in the necessity for making changes within the limits of legal freedom to dissolve a given district and to create the necessary legislation for establishing and setting into operation the new district. This problem is one which members of the legal profession must solve with the aid of the General Assembly of the State in passing the legislation which has been determined as being necessary.

The handicap of conflicting attitudes and understandings is probably the most difficult to overcome. The question of consolidation must be resolved by the electorate, in the final analysis. Any move to consolidate will be interpreted in many different ways by citizens who already hold varying points of view on the issue. Any plan advanced to effect consolidation will be subjected to abuse without understanding by interests who think their purposes will be served best by maintaining the status quo. Consolidation will be viewed as a

threat by many, even though the typical citizen and the average student will scarcely know the difference after consolidation is achieved. Children will be attending the same schools, which will be operated essentially as before and taught by the same teachers.

Overcoming handicaps of this nature depends largely on the widespread dissemination of adequate information and the stimulation of discussion and examination of relevant facts. One of the great strengths of our democracy rests in the fact that people when properly informed on problems and issues will make wise decisions. Therefore, major tasks, if consolidation is undertaken, will be the planning and carrying out of public information programs and arranging for public discussion of the advantages and disadvantages of the proposed plan.

The third difficulty is creation and implementation of needed operational plans and procedures for the new school system. The responsibility for this phase of consolidation necessarily lies with the professional staff of the school system and the board of education. The function of the board of education will be to provide adequate policies for bringing the new district into full bloom and continuing its operation on a sound basis. The professional staff will have many separate but related tasks to undertake in effecting a smoothly functioning new district where two separate districts existed before .

While the two districts have drawn closer together in recent years and have worked cooperatively on numerous projects and programs, there are still differences in operational patterns and policies of the two school systems. Some differences are in pension systems, retirement provisions, leave provisions, sick leave policies, employment practices, salary schedules, pupil-teacher ratios and, as pointed out earlier, differences in educational programs and services. The new district would have to develop new policies on these and many other matters. These policies would have to be put into practice before the

consolidation move is completed and a success. This constitutes a tremendous professional job for the staff and requires infinite patience and careful planning.

None of these difficulties are insurmountable. Good will, good judgment, and hard work are the essential ingredients of success.

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE NEW DISTRICT

The Atlanta district consists of 128.395 miles of which 8.420 miles lie in DeKalb County. The Fulton County school district includes 420 square miles of territory. Therefore, the two districts, if consolidated, would make a single district of 548.395 square miles of which 539.975 square miles would be in Fulton County proper.

The new district would have had a population of 632,600 on April 1, 1964, of whom 126,400 were in Fulton County and 506,200 in Atlanta, including 43,900 who live in DeKalb County. School enrollment for the fall of 1964 would be about 145,000 pupils. Professional personnel in the district would number nearly 5,500 individuals. Other school employees would add up to just under 3,000 persons.

The district would contain 170 elementary schools and 35 high schools, plus two night high schools. The elementary schools are now located as follows: 118 in Atlanta, and 52 in Fulton County. Of the regular high schools, 24 are in Atlanta and 11 in Fulton County.

The school budget would be nearly 60 million dollars per year, based on bringing expenditure levels of the present Fulton County School District up to current Atlanta levels, including the provisions of kindergarten.

The school tax digest would be \$1,355,500,000. This is currently divided as follows: \$151,500,000 in the Fulton County district and \$1,203,500,000 in the City of Atlanta.

PROPOSED BUDGET
FOR
ATLANTA-FULTON COUNTY
LOCAL EDUCATION COMMISSION

Items of Expense	Year		Total
	1965	1966	
Legal and Consultant Services	\$ 20,000	20,000	\$ 40,000
Secretarial Services	4,500	4,500	9,000
Coordinator for Commission	6,000	6,000	12,000
Research Coordinator	9,000	3,000	12,000
Travel and Subsistence	2,500	2,500	5,000
Printing and Supplies	1,000	2,000	3,000
Telephone	240	240	480
Contingencies	2,500	2,500	5,000
TOTALS	\$ 45,740	40,740	\$ 86,480

November 19, 1964

*File
School Study Comm.*

MINUTES
LOCAL EDUCATION COMMISSION
DECEMBER 11, 1964

The Local Education Commission met Friday, December 11, 1964, at 2:00 p.m., in the Board Room of the Fulton County Administration Building with the following members present:

Mr. P. L. Bardin	Mrs. Alan Ritter
Mr. Otis Jackson	Mr. Wallace Stewart
Mr. Allen Kiepper	Mr. Kenneth Stringer
Mr. Earl Landers	Mr. William Teems
Dr. John W. Letson	Mr. Fred J. Turner
Mr. Thomas Miller	Dr. Paul D. West

The minutes of the October 2, 1964, meeting of the Local Education Commission were read and adcp~~t~~ed.

The report entitled, "ONE DISTRICT FOR ATLANTA AND FULTON COUNTY SCHOOL SYSTEMS?", which was presented by Dean Pierce at the October 2 meeting was discussed briefly. Mr. Otis Jackson moved that the report be accepted and thereby place the Commission on record as endorsing the position that the two school systems should be combined. Mr. Turner seconded the motion which carried unanimously.

The question was raised concerning the number of Commission members required to constitute a quorum. Mr. Bardin read the following portion of Section 2 of the House Resolution No. 505-1246, "A majority of the persons serving as members of the Commission shall constitute a quorum to do business but a less number may adjourn from time to time." He then ruled that ten members would constitute a quorum whether they were all voting members or not.

A letter from Mr. L. H. Newsome stating that he had moved from Atlanta was read. Dr. Rufus Clement was unanimously elected to replace him.

Mr. Otis Jackson gave a brief report of the trip made to Charlotte-Mecklenburg, North Carolina, School System on November 4, 1964. Mr. Bardin and Dr. Letson made this trip also. Mr. Jackson reported that

all of the people contacted in Charlotte seemed to be well pleased with the new school organization and would not exchange it for the old structure. Mr. Jackson pointed out that combining the North Carolina systems did not require as many changes in legal and financial structures as will be required for Atlanta and Fulton County.

Financial expenditures have not been decreased through combining the systems because salaries and other services have been adjusted upward. Although operating the new system required more money than was required for the two systems, the representatives contacted believe that much better services are now being provided and that in general, the educational opportunities are of a higher quality.

The public relations aspect of the consolidation was very important. Considerable effort was devoted to forming small discussion groups and other structures through which citizens were informed about combining the systems. A complete written report of the process of combining the two systems is not available.

A tentative budget for the years 1965-66 for the sum of \$86,480 was submitted to the Commission. It was pointed out that \$10,000 of this amount had been appropriated by the Atlanta and the Fulton County School Systems. However, approximately \$4,000 was spent for operating expenses during 1964.

Mr. Turner expressed an opinion that every effort possible should be made by the County and the City to finance the Commission's study and that if funds are not available locally, then financial assistance should be sought elsewhere.

Mr. Teem moved that the budget be adopted as presented and that it be entitled a tentative operating budget. The motion was seconded by Mr. Stewart and carried unanimously.

Places to secure funds for the budget were identified and the urgency for contacting foundations early in the year was stressed. Mr. Teem made the motion that the Ford Foundation be approached as a first step in attempting to obtain finances for the operation of the Commission. If the proposal is not received favorably by the Ford

Foundation, then other sources should be contacted. The motion was seconded by Mr. Stewart and passed unanimously. It was agreed that in the meantime, the respective local governments and agencies should be notified that the Commission may ask them for funds to complete the study.

Mr. Bardin stated that Commission funds are now handled by the Comptroller of the Atlanta School System. He stated that Mr. Holley could continue to handle the funds but that Mr. Stringer, as Secretary-Treasurer of the Commission, would authorize expenditures and make financial reports to the Commission. The Commission would approve all large expenditures but out of pocket funds could be authorized by Mr. Stringer or, in his absence by the Chairman or Vice-Chairman. Mr. Thomas Miller moved that this procedure be adopted. Mr. Stewart seconded the motion which passed unanimously.

Dean Pierce then gave a report on the Interim Report which is to be filed with the Representatives of Fulton and DeKalb Counties and the Senators of the 34th, 35th, 36th, 37th, 38th, 39th, 40th, 41st, 42nd and 43rd Districts in the General Assembly of Georgia and with the Clerks of the superior courts having jurisdiction in Fulton and DeKalb Counties and with the City Clerk of the City of Atlanta on the first day of the next session of the General Assembly following January 1, 1965. Mrs. Ritter moved that the report be accepted. The motion carried unanimously.

It was agreed that legal services be delayed until after monies to fund the budget have been obtained.

The meeting was adjourned at 3:40 p.m.

ECH:dh

December 30, 1964

JACK ETHERIDGE
FULTON COUNTY
1026 FULTON FED. BLDG.
ATLANTA, GEORGIA

VICE-CHAIRMAN
LOCAL AFFAIRS

SECRETARY
SUB-COMMITTEE
(JUDICIARY)
GENERAL LAW & PROCEDURE



MEMBER COMMITTEES:

EDUCATION
JUDICIARY

SUB-COMMITTEE
(EDUCATION)
COMMON SCHOOLS

House of Representatives
House Chamber
Atlanta

January 29, 1965

Mr. P. L. Bardin
Bank of Georgia Building
Atlanta, Georgia

Dear Mr. Bardin:

Re: Interim Report of the Local Education Commission

I have read the Commission's Interim Report with great interest and encouragement. One concludes that little question remains as to the need to move promptly toward consolidation of the Atlanta and Fulton County systems.

As I understand it, there is a great need to continue the work of the Commission during the coming year for the purpose of preparing appropriate legislation and making additional necessary studies.

Whatever might be proposed by this Commission must be of necessity presented to the Fulton and DeKalb legislative delegations. My experience has been that it is a mistake for legislation as complex as this, to be presented to the delegation within only a few days or weeks of the session. For that reason, I am writing not only to congratulate you and others upon this interim report, but to urgently call your attention to the absolute need to have legislation prepared well in advance of the next session.

It would seem to me that unless the drafting of the appropriate legislation can be completed by at least September or October of this year, the Commission might well risk the loss of an entire additional year in seeing these statutes enacted. I am quite certain that you are conscious of this problem, yet as one who has had some experience in seeking to deal with legislation that is either hastily prepared or presented to the delegation at the eleventh hour, I feel it is important for all of the

*School Study
Commission*

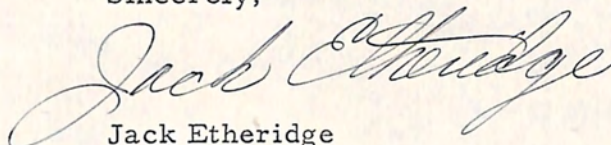
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Mr. P. L. Bardin
Page Two
January 29, 1965

members of the Commission to be aware of this important consideration for the planning of the Commission's work.

Permit me to express to all those having a part in this important study my genuine appreciation.

Sincerely,



Jack Etheridge

JE:lr

cc: Members of the Local Education Commission

File



MINUTES
LOCAL EDUCATION COMMISSION
FEBRUARY 26, 1965

The Local Education Commission met Friday, February 26, 1965, at 2 P. M. in the Board Room of the Fulton County Administration Building with the following members present:

Mr. P. L. Bardin	Mrs. Allen Ritter
Dr. Rufus Clement	Mr. Kenneth Stringer
Mr. Alan Kiepper	Mr. William Teem, III
Dr. John Letson	Mr. Fred Turner
Dr. James Miller, Jr.	Dr. Paul West
Mr. Thomas Miller	

Dr. Rufus Clement was introduced and welcomed as the new member of the Commission.

Minutes of the December 11, 1964, meeting were read and approved.

Mr. Stringer presented the bill from Dr. Truman Pierce for consultant services and expenses from July 1, 1964, through January 1, 1965, which totaled \$2,585.60 (\$2,400 consultant services, \$185.60 expenses). Mr. Stringer moved that the bill be paid. Mr. Fred Turner seconded the motion which passed unanimously.

Mr. Bardin briefly reported on a letter from Representative Jack Etheridge concerning the Interim Report. He also read a portion of the letter from Mr. Leonard Robinson expressing apologies for being absent as much as has been necessary and suggesting that the Commission recommend that the present Fulton County and Atlanta Schools be divided into two equal districts.

Mr. Turner expressed disappointment that the Commission had received only two letters since the approval of the Interim Report. He said he had hoped that there would be considerably more interest in the work of the Commission than the two letters reflect.

Mr. Kiepper stressed the importance of completing the report of the Commission in time for the legislators of Fulton County and DeKalb County to become thoroughly familiar with it before the first meeting of the next General Assembly. He stated that his experience has been that legislators do not have time for very many meetings and discussion periods after the General Assembly convenes.

Dr. Letson reported that Mr. Ed Meade, Jr. from the Fund for the Advancement of Education had been contacted to ascertain interest in financing the current study of the Local Education Commission. It was Mr. Meade's opinion that the foundation would not be interested in such a project. No formal request has been made but could be if the Commission desires.

Mr. Bardin reported that Dr. Pierce's original contract expired in January of 1965, and recommended continuing it. Mr. Thomas Miller moved that Dr. Pierce's services be continued until the first meeting date of the 1966 General Assembly at a fee not to exceed \$3,000 plus expenses. The motion was seconded by Mr. Kenneth Stringer and passed unanimously.

It was agreed that if Dr. Pierce's services are needed beyond that date this could be arranged by mutual consent.

Mr. Bardin stated that during the past month or so some questions and points have been raised concerning whether the Commission should continue with the same course of action. There seems to be considerable agreement that, if voted on today, the voting public would turn down the proposal to combine the two systems. This raises questions concerning how the Commission should proceed. He then suggested that the Commission deviate somewhat from earlier plans and develop only a broad general outline for combining the two systems. This skeleton outline will be presented to the representatives as soon as this session of the General Assembly is over. Suggestions from the representatives will be included in the final draft of the report of the Commission.

Mrs. Ritter asked what has happened to cause the Commission to consider deviating from its previous position. It was pointed out that the people must decide whether the systems will be combined and, currently, it is believed that they would defeat such a proposal. Also, funds to finance an elaborate study have not been forthcoming; some teacher groups are speaking out against combining the systems; and, the amount of work involved in developing a comprehensive detailed outline would be somewhat meaningless unless there was some assurance that the plans could be implemented. It seems best to get approval of the idea before some of the specifics are developed. For example, to draft all of the bills required to merge the respective retirement systems would be an unnecessary expenditure of funds and energy unless agreement had been reached that the two systems would be combined.

Mr. Turner pointed out that we need to discuss the entire issue with teachers in both systems so that they will be well informed. Dr. Letson stated that before these discussion groups can be meaningful, certain questions must be answered. For example, it should be determined if adequate finances will be available on a long range basis to operate a combined system equal to or better than what each system now has.

Dr. West said that in his discussion with County teachers he had focused attention upon the need of combining the two systems, the need for additional finances and the point that the City was not trying to usurp the County's prerogatives. Also, he had pointed out that it would require several years to develop all the details for combining the systems into an entirely new system. One system would not be absorbed into the other.

It was agreed that a skeleton report should be developed which would outline the steps to be taken to combine the two systems and provide adequate information necessary to make intelligent decisions. This report should anticipate pertinent questions and attempt to answer them. For example, the report should state that the pension plans currently in operation are not actuarially sound. If the systems combined, the retirement benefits for any teacher will not be reduced because of joining the two systems. Other points which must be presented pertain to the salaries, financing the new system, additional non-ad valorem taxes, time tables for certain phases of the program to be completed, the selection of Board Members and other pertinent information.

After this report has been completed the Commission will review it and make suggestions. Then the report will be reviewed by the two Boards of Education and by the representatives from Fulton and DeKalb counties. Suggestions from the various groups will be incorporated into the final draft of the Commission's report.

Mr. Fred Turner then made the motion that the skeleton outline with appropriate information be developed and presented to the Commission for approval and to the two Boards of Education and the representatives from Fulton and DeKalb counties for suggestions. The motion was seconded by Mr. Teem and passed unanimously. Mr. Teem's suggestion that the report also show the cost for operating a combined system for a period of time, the cost for operating the two systems separately for the same period of time and the combined cost of operating each system separately was accepted.

Mr. Bardin discussed a letter from Dr. Jerry Miller requesting that a talk outline concerning combining the two systems be developed. Mr. Alan Kiepper stated that all of the pertinent decisions of the Commission to date were included in the Interim Report which he had used as a basis for speeches.

Dr. Pierce summarized his interpretations of the decisions made during the meeting. They are as follows:

- a. The earlier decision of the Commission in favor of a single school district is unchanged but procedures and next steps are to be modified according to the discussion today,
- b. A skeleton plan for combining the two school systems should be developed which will give attention to the many vital questions which should be answered before the voters can make an objective decision on the issue, and
- c. This plan will be reviewed by the Commission, the boards of education, and the members of the General Assembly from Fulton and DeKalb counties. Their suggestions will be sought and given consideration in the final report of the Commission.

The meeting was adjourned at 4 P. M.

ECH:cw
March 4, 1965

Recording Secretary

Approved by: _____

Chairman

file



MINUTES
LOCAL EDUCATION COMMISSION
August 23, 1965

The Local Education Commission met Monday, August 23, 1965, at 2:00 P.M. in the Board Room of the Fulton County Administration Building with the following members present:

- | | |
|-------------------|--------------------------|
| Mr. P. L. Bardin | Dr. James L. Miller, Jr. |
| Mr. J. H. Cawthon | Mr. Leonard Robinson |
| Dr. Rufus Clement | Mr. Walley Stewart |
| Mr. Otis Jackson | Dr. Paul West |
| Mr. Alan Kiepper | Mr. James White, Jr. |
| Mr. Earl Landers | |

Mr. Otis Jackson, Vice Chairman, called the meeting to order and stated that the purpose of the meeting was to take action upon the report mailed to the members since the meeting on May 27.

Dr. Pierce said that the revised report included suggestions presented during the last Commission meeting. He then asked for reactions to the report, suggestions which would strengthen the overall report and editorial comments.

Mr. Robinson stated that he wanted to go on record as opposing combining the two systems. This position is based upon his experience as a member of the Fulton County Board of Education and the National School Boards Association. He stated that many advantages of merger could be realized through expanding the cooperative efforts of the two systems through the Metropolitan School Development Council, but that each system could maintain its identity.

Mr. Bardin commented that the Commission had studied the evidence and had arrived at the conclusion that merger would be best for the two systems involved. It is possible that there are many individual points which may not be enhanced, but the overall picture for both systems would be improved if they were combined.

Dr. Jerry Miller stated that it was his understanding that the study, "Financing Education in the Fulton County School District", pointed out that the Fulton County School System could operate only for a few more years at the present level of quality and effectiveness without additional revenue. Efforts must be started now to combine the two systems or Fulton County may suffer many years before the two systems could be joined.

Mr. James White called attention to the fact that the Commission must take a position and moved that the report, which recommends that the two systems be combined, be accepted as presented. The motion was seconded by Mr. Walley Stewart.

After discussing many points pertaining to the pros and cons of combining the two systems, the Commission passed the motion by a vote of six to one. Those voting for the motion were Mr. P. L. Bardin, Dr. Rufus Clement, Mr. Otis Jackson, Mr. Walley Stewart, Dr. Jerry Miller, and Mr. James White; opposed, Mr. J. H. Cawthon; Ex Officio Members not voting were Mr. Alan Kiepper, Mr. Earl Landers, Dr. J. W. Letson, Mr. Leonard Robinson, and Dr. Paul West.

The question was again asked if the Fulton County School System could afford to wait until it was faced with a serious financial crisis before starting action to merge the two systems. If this occurs the situation may be beyond the control of local leadership.

It was pointed out that the Commission recognizes problems faced by the two school systems and has made the recommendation which seems to be best for both. Whether or not the systems are merged will depend upon the local leaders and the voters.

Mr. White stated that the Commission could go no further with specific recommendations pertaining to new finances and other related problems without extensive legal advice. This would require additional funds. The wishes of the Legislature will dictate if this is accomplished.

It was agreed that Dr. Pierce would edit the report in terms of the suggestions presented during the meeting; that a copy of the revised report be sent to all members of the Atlanta and Fulton County Boards of Education and to the members of the Local Education Commission; and that a meeting of the Boards of Education and the Commission be held at 2:00 P.M. on Monday, September 20, 1965.

Minutes of the May 27 meeting were approved.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:10 P.M.

ECH:cw
August 31, 1965

Recording Secretary

Approved by: _____

File

METROPOLITAN SCHOOL DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL

City of Atlanta and Fulton County Boards of Education

224 Central Ave., S.W.

Atlanta 3, Georgia

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Oby T. Brewer, Jr. *co-chairman*
W. L. Robinson, *co-chairman*
John W. Letson
Paul D. West
Glenn Frick
L. Marvin Rivers

COUNCIL STAFF

E. Curtis Henson
Coordinator
Gilbert E. Tauffner,
Executive Director of
Educational Broadcasting

August 27, 1965

To: Members of the Local Education Commission

From: Curtis Henson, Recording Secretary

The next meeting of the Local Education Commission will be held on Monday, September 20, 1965, at 2:00 P.M. in the Board Room of the Fulton County Administration Building.

During this meeting the report of the Commission will be reviewed with the Atlanta and Fulton County Boards of Education.

ECH

ECH:cw

File

MINUTES
LOCAL EDUCATION COMMISSION
MAY 27, 1965

The Local Education Commission met Thursday, May 27, 1965 at 2:30 P. M. in the Board Room of the Fulton County Administration Building with the following members present:

Mr. P. L. Bardin	Mr. Leonard Robinson
Mr. Otis Jackson	Mr. Wallace H. Stewart
Mr. Alan Kiepper	Mr. Kenneth Stringer
Dr. John Letson	Mr. William Teem, III
Dr. James Miller, Jr.	Dr. Paul West
Mrs. Alan Ritter	

Minutes of the February 26th meeting were read and approved.

Mr. Bardin stated that during the meeting on February 26th, the Commission asked Dr. Pierce to develop a skeleton plan for combining the two school systems and to present it at the next Commission meeting.

Dr. Pierce said he had prepared a rough draft which he thought could serve as the bases for the final report of the Commission and as a resource document for speeches, discussion groups, news releases and related purposes. He invited Commission members to ask questions or make comments as he reviewed the draft.

After many points which might be included, omitted or changed in the report had been discussed, Mr. Bardin called attention to the purpose of the meeting. He stated that the Commission was to receive the report and take appropriate action so that it could be reviewed with Atlanta and Fulton County Boards of Education and the representatives from Fulton and DeKalb Counties.

Dr. Jerry Miller, Jr. then made the motion that the Commission express its confidence in the work Dr. Pierce has done thus far; that Dr. Pierce take into account the many points discussed during the meeting and rewrite the draft and that a copy be sent to the members of the Commission before the next meeting and if approved by the Commission, the report will then be discussed with the Atlanta and Fulton County Boards of Education and the representatives from Fulton and DeKalb Counties.

The motion was seconded by Mr. Walley Stewart and passed unanimously.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:30 P. M.

ECH:cw
June 7, 1965

Recording Secretary

Approved by: _____
Chairman

TABLE II

ESTIMATED ANNUAL SCHOOL BUDGETS OF THE ATLANTA
AND FULTON COUNTY DISTRICTS
1965-1970

Years	Atlanta	Fulton County	Total
1965-66 *	\$46,713,125	\$13,891,184	\$60,604,309
1966-67	51,104,159	15,002,479	66,106,638
1967-68	55,907,949	16,202,677	72,110,626
1968-69	61,163,297	17,498,891	78,662,188
1969-70	66,912,647	18,898,802	85,811,449

* Actual

R O U G H

D R A F T

SCHOOL DISTRICT ORGANIZATION FOR EDUCATIONAL ADVANCEMENT
IN THE ATLANTA METROPOLITAN AREA

Tentative Report
of the

Local Education Commission
of
Atlanta and Fulton County
Georgia

LOCAL EDUCATION COMMISSION
OF ATLANTA AND FULTON COUNTY

P. L. Bardin, Chairman	Thomas M. Miller
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SCHOOL DISTRICT ORGANIZATION FOR EDUCATIONAL
ADVANCEMENT IN THE METROPOLITAN AREA

INTRODUCTION

The present generation is witnessing a revolution in education. Underlying causes of this revolution include social and economic changes of unparalleled speed and magnitude, the development of an immensely complex society and a rapidly accelerating accumulation of useful knowledge. No useful role for the uneducated remains and the cost of ignorance is more than society can afford. The necessity for all persons to secure more education of higher quality than ever before and to continue the quest for learning throughout life becomes more apparent with each passing year.

Major characteristics of the educational revolution are: enrolling children in school at an earlier age, extending the upper limits of formal schooling, providing programs of education adapted to the cultural background of the student in order to equalize educational opportunity, an enormous increase in the kinds and amounts of instructional materials, use in school of a larger number and variety of specialists, technological advances which enhance the effectiveness of teaching, improvement in organization for teaching and improvement in the quality of teaching. Fast growing dimensions of school systems include junior colleges, vocational-technical schools, early childhood education programs and adult education programs.

Additions and improvements in schools are greatly increasing the cost of education. Upward trends in cost will continue into the indefinite future if schools are to meet the demands placed upon them by the public.

The revolution in education places a premium on wise, long-range planning by school districts. Metropolitan areas with their population growth and diversity of educational need pose difficult problems which require much study. Careful long-range plans for educational advancement are essential in these districts as in others if schools are not to suffer in the future. School personnel, members of boards of education and other citizens in the metropolitan area of Atlanta are well aware of these conditions and are giving thought to the further advancement of education in the area.

Such planning for the future was given official status by the General Assembly of Georgia in 1964 when it created the Local Education Commission of Atlanta and Fulton County. The Commission was authorized,

To study the desirability and feasibility of combining the school systems of Fulton County and the City of Atlanta, including the portion thereof lying in DeKalb County; to provide that said Commission may draft a plan or plans for the combining of such school systems and submit same to members of the General Assembly from Fulton and DeKalb Counties.

WORK OF THE COMMISSION

The tasks assigned by the General Assembly to the Commission were both formidable and complex. After considerable study, a plan was adopted through which the responsibilities of the Commission were to be discharged. This plan was revised from time to time as the study progressed and modifications could improve the study. There follows a description of the work of the Commission organized into a series of steps.

1. A review of previous studies relevant to the functions of the Commission.
2. A study of social, economic and educational trends in the metropolitan area of Atlanta.

3. A study of developing educational needs and programs.
4. A study of the Atlanta and Fulton County schools with particular attention to finance.
5. An analysis of the educational reasons which support the creation of a single school district.
6. An analysis of the disadvantages of a single school district.
7. The identification and description of steps necessary to create a single school district.
8. Tasks which should be completed in effecting a transition from the present districts to a single district.
9. Deciding on whether to recommend a single district.

Throughout the entire course of the study the overriding concern of the Commission has been to reach the decision that would serve the best interests of those to be educated in the Atlanta and Fulton County school districts.

The deliberations of the Commission and the more relevant information considered in these deliberations are summarized briefly in the following pages.

REVIEW OF PREVIOUS STUDIES

The charge of the General Assembly to the Commission springs from a background which spans years of citizen concern for good schools in the Atlanta metropolitan area. During these years, several special studies of the metropolitan area have paid attention to the schools and their problems of advancement.

The Local Government Commission of Fulton County recommended in 1950 a Greater Atlanta Development Program. The report of the Commission included

reference to the schools and the possibility of merging the Atlanta and Fulton County school districts. It took the position that merger was ultimately desirable, but not at that time because of differences in expenditure levels and school programs of the two districts.

The General Assembly created a Local Education Commission in 1958 to study the two school systems and to submit a plan or plans for their improvement to members of the General Assembly from Fulton and DeKalb Counties. This Commission also studied the question of merging the two school systems and concluded that while this would be desirable in the future, it was neither desirable nor practicable at that time. It recommended the creation of a Metropolitan School Development Council which would make it possible to achieve some of the advantages of consolidation. The proposed council was established and has become an effective instrument for carrying out joint programs of the two school systems. Among these programs are the following: the Juvenile Court School, Educational Broadcasting, Public Information Services and In-Service Education.

The Fulton County Board of Education appointed a study commission in 1963 to find and recommend ways to the Board for overcoming the financial crisis in which the Fulton County Schools found themselves because of the Atlanta annexation program recommended by the Local Government Commission in 1950 and carried out in the early fifties. As a result of the annexation program, 72 per cent of the taxable wealth of the Fulton County School District and nearly 50 per cent of the students were annexed by Atlanta. The report of this Commission also took the position that merger of the school districts should take place when feasible and recommended that steps be taken to determine what would be involved in bringing about a single district.

Thus, all studies of education or which have concerned themselves with education in Atlanta and Fulton County since 1950 have given serious consideration to the creation of a single school district in place of the two existing districts. All studies have taken the position that this step should be undertaken when feasible. Meanwhile, the two districts have grown closer together in levels of financial support and in educational programs. Furthermore, there has been a marked increase in the number of cooperative undertakings in pursuit of common interests. However, differences remain which would have to be reconciled if a single district is created.

ADVANTAGES OF A SINGLE DISTRICT

Major advantages of a single district over the two present districts number fifteen. There follows a statement of each advantage and a brief discussion of its meaning.

A Better School District

Will Be Provided

Adequate criteria for determining the soundness of a school district have been developed by educational authorities. These criteria are concerned with such things as a sufficient number of children in the district to be educated to assure reasonable educational effectiveness and cost economy, adequacy of the district as a unit of local government, availability of an adequate local tax base, adequate bonding capacity, reasonable tax leeway and some degree of fiscal independence. When these criteria are applied to the present districts of Atlanta and Fulton County, neither is a

satisfactory district. Fulton County meets only one of the six criteria, the number of children to be educated. When the two districts are combined, the resultant district is much more adequate than is either when considered separately.

In addition, maintaining and fostering good relationships with other units of local government would be enhanced by a single district because its boundaries would correspond to those of the county. These factors are obviously related to the ease and convenience of governing the local schools.

Educational Opportunities Can Be
Equalized More Easily

The right of every individual to secure an education is inherent in a democracy. The modern definition of this right is that every individual must secure an education appropriate to his purposes, interests, abilities and needs. Equality of educational opportunity, therefore, does not mean the same education for all, but it does mean the same level of quality for all insofar as this is possible. The extreme diversity of cultural interests and backgrounds which are found in the metropolitan area of Atlanta, and in any other metropolitan area, require a wide range of educational programs adapted to these basic differences in people. Current nationwide concern for providing more realistic educational programs for children in slum areas is an indication of this kind of need. The Atlanta district is heterogeneous in composition while the Fulton County district is more homogeneous. Combining the two would make it possible to provide the variety of educational programs which are needed in a more economical and efficient manner.

The equalization of educational opportunities in the Atlanta metropolitan area is virtually impossible under the present district organization. A single district would contribute much to making this a manageable task with minimum difficulties.

New and Needed Educational Programs
Could Be Provided More Economically

Neither school district has yet provided post-secondary education programs for which there is great need. Perhaps the fastest growing trend in American education is the development of comprehensive junior colleges. These institutions provide two years of academic work either for terminal purposes or for transfer to a senior college. They also usually offer programs in vocational-technical education and in adult education. It is increasingly clear that continuing education is a must for the adult citizen of tomorrow. Furthermore, the kind of world in which we live requires increasing amounts of education. A recent Educational Policies Commission report takes the position that two years of education beyond the high school should be provided at public expense for all high school graduates.

Fulton County is not financially able to provide junior colleges under its present tax structure. It would not be the most economical plan for each district to provide its own junior colleges. A program to serve the metropolitan area would provide the best means of meeting this merging educational need. The two districts have already found it profitable to cooperate in the provision of vocational education as shown by the new vocational school which is to serve both districts and provisions now being made for a second such institution.

More Adequate Curricula for Special
Student Groups Can Be Provided

The variety of curricula required to meet the diverse educational needs referred to above means special educational programs for small groups of selected students. These programs serve children with serious physical handicaps, those suffering from severe mental retardation, children with extreme emotional difficulties, the exceptionally bright, and those with unusual talents. Since such programs are needed for only small numbers of children, they can be provided more economically if the student population to be served is drawn from the entire metropolitan area rather than if the two present school districts offer duplicate programs. Furthermore, the educational quality of offerings can be more readily improved in a unified district.

Certain Educational Programs and Services
Can Be Provided More Satisfactorily

The richness and depth of both teaching and learning are being enhanced by new discoveries concerning human growth and development. The contributions of science to the effectiveness of teaching and learning processes is increasing at a rapid rate. Integrating into curricula the accelerating flow of new and useful subject matter which the modern school program must offer if it is to remain effective is an increasingly difficult problem.

The modern school must be staffed by professional personnel who keep up with these continuing developments that affect their productivity. System-wide and continuous career development programs for personnel have become a necessity. This educational service can be provided better on a metropolitan-wide basis rather than in terms of the present separate districts. The

development and use of various learning resources and the appropriate utilization of technological advances in teaching can be stimulated and fostered better through a single school district.

Needed Improvements in Educational Quality

Can Be Achieved More Readily

The search for better schools is a common thread running through all considerations involved in deciding the consolidation question. Unless the ultimate consequence of unifying the two school districts is a better quality of education, there is little need to pursue the issue. Changes in financing schools, in administrative and supervisory services and in the scope and variety of educational offerings can be justified only if they bring about better education. The educational advancement which is essential to sound progress of the Atlanta metropolitan area requires a unified approach and not a series of separate and structurally unrelated school programs.

The search for educational quality is now both universal and continuous. The pursuit of quality is complex because it is concerned with everything that has a bearing on the educational programs offered by a school district. The unification of efforts to improve quality would certainly maximize both opportunities and resources for enrichment of educational offerings.

Comprehensive, Long-Range Planning

Can Be More Effective

The increasing magnitude of educational responsibility has been stressed in earlier statements. The quantitative demands of this responsibility will continue to increase. Projections which have been made through the next

several years show no letdown in the rate of population growth in the Atlanta metropolitan area. The indicated increase in the educational load calls for the most intelligent planning of which the people responsible are capable. Since this growth ignores school district lines, adequate planning for new enrollment must also ignore these lines insofar as actualities permit. Comprehensive, long-range planning cannot be satisfactory if it is segmented on the basis of school district lines which have no constructive significance in the context of the metropolitan area as a whole.

More Effective Solutions to Common
Educational Problems Are Possible

Educational problems are not confined to areas marked off by school district lines. Some educational problems are unique to certain types of districts, as is true of Fulton County and Atlanta. But many such problems are common to the districts of an area, state, region or nation. Those problems which are common seem to be on the increase. The school district which embraces as nearly a self-sufficient socio-economic unit as is possible provides the best structural framework for the consideration of educational problems. Solutions to these problems should not be restricted by artificial district lines which ignore the facts of life. A unified district would provide for a more constructive approach to problem solution than does the present dual approach. This is all the more important since most of the educational problems to be faced are common to the two districts.

More Effective Research Programs

Can Be Stimulated and Executed

As good schools have become more central to personal and community advancement, the place of research in education has become more apparent. Sound analyses of existing programs, the identification and description of strengths and weaknesses, and the determination of grounds for change require research. Planning ahead to be sure there will be adequate classrooms and teachers for the children in school at the beginning of a given year rests on research. School systems without strong research programs cannot achieve their maximum effectiveness. The complexity of a metropolitan area and the interrelationships of roles of its different segments require comprehensive research programs based on trends and needs of the entire area rather than of subunits which are separate school districts. Furthermore, economy and wise management dictate a metropolitan-wide approach to research.

Needed Experimentation and Educational

Invention Can Be Achieved More Readily

Major advances in our society depend heavily on invention and experimentation. This fact is well recognized in the world of science and technology. The role of invention and experimentation in the improvement of social institutions such as the schools is equally important. Schools, like the world in which they exist, must change as society changes. New curriculum materials should be developed and tested on experimental bases. New knowledge of human growth and development should be applied to teaching and learning on experimental bases. New teaching procedures and methods should be tested through tryout and evaluation.

Heavy reliance upon invention and experimentation are crucial to needed educational advancement. There is no need for the school systems within the metropolitan area to engage in separate programs of this nature. The interests of both districts can be served better by unified programs, to say nothing of economies which could be effected.

More Extensive Use of Selected Educational Facilities and Learning Resources Is Possible

Centers for acquiring, creating, distributing and servicing curriculum materials, filmstrips, video tapes, films and the necessary equipment for appropriate use of these materials are becoming common. The creation of teaching materials for local use and on the basis of needs unique to the local situation is an important function of these centers. The use of television in teaching and in professional development programs is increasing. The needed facilities for extensive television programs in the metropolitan area can be centered easily in one location.

It is not necessary to duplicate the facilities and resources mentioned above in different school districts serving the same metropolitan area. A single center can provide a constant flow of materials far richer and more comprehensive than would be possible if available financial support is used to provide centers in the separate districts.

Equity and Balance in Financial Effort and Support Can Be Achieved

An axiom of educational finance which is accepted universally is that wealth should be taxed where it is in order to educate children where they are. The most glaring deficiency in the structure of public education in

the Atlanta area violates this axiom. The center for commerce and industry is the City of Atlanta. Contributions of most Fulton County citizens to the economy of the metropolitan area are made largely in the City of Atlanta where they do their work. This wealth enriches Atlanta primarily, although earnings paid to the individual may be spent wherever he chooses. The City already recognizes these facts of the economy of the area by helping to support schools in the Fulton County District through a $1\frac{1}{2}$ mill countywide property tax. The industrial wealth of the metropolitan area which is a major source of school revenue lies largely within the City of Atlanta.

No equitable system of financial support and effort is possible which does not take into account these economic facts. A single tax program for the metropolitan area with the revenues distributed according to educational need is the only satisfactory answer to the problems of providing adequate support for the schools. This is Atlanta's problem as well as Fulton County's problem because of the highly complex interdependence of the metropolitan area. A single school district would be the most simple and prudent way to achieve the goal of equity and balance in financial effort and support.

Greater Financial Stability is Possible

The disadvantages of heavy reliance on the property tax for the support of schools are well known. The primary advantage is that revenues from property taxes fluctuate less than do revenues from more sensitive barometers of economic health. Desirable stability in the financial structure of a school system in the final analysis is related to the soundness of the economy of the district and the fairness of its system of taxation. The better balanced the tax program, the more stable the financial base of the

schools. The more complete the area served by the school district is as an economic unit in its own right, the more stable will be the local tax base for schools.

It is obvious that combining the Atlanta and Fulton County districts into a single school system would provide a far sounder economic base for year-to-year stability in school support.

Economies Are Possible

Consolidation cannot be justified solely as an economy measure, if this means an actual reduction in expenditures. Any plan for immediate unification of the two districts would really cost more than the sum of the current budgets of the two systems because costs would need to be equalized upward instead of downward, assuming that the same quality of education is to be provided in the entire district. Nevertheless, some financial economies are possible because of the elimination of duplicate programs and services which can be handled better through single systems. In this connection, special reference is made to experimentation, invention, research, certain district-wide programs and services, specialized curricula for small student groups and others enumerated in an earlier listing. These programs could be provided at higher quality levels on a unified basis at a lower unit cost than would be possible in dual programs.

However, the greatest economic gain to consolidation would be in the creation of opportunities to purchase more with the educational dollar rather than in the utilization of fewer dollars. This kind of economy is of much greater importance than the mere saving of money. A good test of a school district is not how little money it spends, but how much education it buys for its expenditures.

New Educational Developments

Can Be Better Accommodated

As shown earlier, the revolution in education which is underway is composed of both problems and opportunities. A large school district is in better position than a small district to stay abreast of such developments because of its more complex and varied interacting elements.

Problems and needs often fall into sharper focus in a large district where the dynamics of change appear to express themselves with greater vigor.

Opportunities for new developments in education to be put into practice prevail to a greater degree in the large district. Many resources not formerly available to improve schools are now being made available. The major source of this new support is the Federal Government through numerous pieces of legislation. It is much easier to take full advantage of the funds thus made available if a single district is created. The complexities of government relations to education are vastly increasing. It is far more satisfactory to handle these relationships for the metropolitan area through a single agency than through two agencies.

The above identification and description of advantages of a single school district are predicated on certain assumptions concerning the proposed new district. Among these assumptions are the following:

1. An adequate legal base for the new district will be provided.
2. An administrative structure which will make possible the necessary leadership for educational advancement in the metropolitan area will be created.
3. An adequate plan for financing the new school district will be adopted.

4. Emphasis on continuously improving educational quality and extending educational services will be continued.

Consolidation as such is of no value. It is valuable only as it results in educational advancement, improved educational opportunities for children, youth and adults, but it will not guarantee such advancement.

DISADVANTAGES OF A SINGLE DISTRICT

The Commission was as much interested in identifying and analyzing the disadvantages of one school district as it was in identifying and analyzing the advantages. Without weighing advantages and disadvantages against each other, no objective way of making a decision was open to the Commission. Concern at this point was with both real and possible educational disadvantages of a single district rather than with problems and issues which would have to be faced if the two present districts are dissolved and a new one is created in their stead. However, the latter problems and issues were studied. They are reviewed in a subsequent section of this report. Possible disadvantages of the larger district are presented next.

Difficulties in Providing School

Programs Needed Because of

Differences in Attendance Areas

The capacity of schools to make adaptations which take into proper account the educational needs of their neighborhoods is related to the size of districts. Considerable uniformity of educational programs in the various attendance centers within districts has been traditional. Because of the range of socio-economic conditions which exist in metropolitan areas

a greater variety of educational needs are present in metropolitan school districts which require greater variations in school programs than are needed in smaller more homogeneous districts. Current efforts to develop more realistic school programs for children in slum areas of cities is an example of the need for different kinds of programs according to community backgrounds. A reasonable degree of control must be vested in the local school community if these variations in educational needs are to be met. Neighborhood control generates local responsibility, interest and initiative which are essential to good schools.

Unhealthy Reliance on Bureaucracy

Where at least some degree of local control is not present, decisions are necessarily removed from the local scene. Instead of the healthy exercise of community responsibility for schools, directives from a central office removed from the community take the place of local initiative. Thus, bureaucratic controls grow up which inevitably stress uniformity and discourage the community autonomy which has been one of the great strengths of public education in America. There is evidence to show that the larger the district the greater the likelihood that authority over the neighborhood school will be centralized in administrative offices which are too far away to be responsive to local interests and needs.

Inadequate Invention and Experimentation

Historically, many very large school districts have been notably lacking in educational invention and experimentation. Some of the major current educational ills of our country are found in the slums of large city districts

where until recently little effort has been made to develop school programs which would serve these areas realistically. Innovation is difficult in situations which do not encourage the exercise of individuality. Uniformity and invention are not compatible. Excessive use of rules, regulations and directives inhibit creativity.

Problems unique to large school districts in metropolitan areas have been the subject of much study in recent years. Experiments with new methods and procedures for utilizing the interests and abilities of citizens in neighborhood school centers have been successful. At present, the nature of educational needs of the culturally deprived, curriculum materials and teaching procedures which are adapted to their backgrounds are subjects of important research and experimentation. The Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 provides more than one billion dollars to improve education programs for socially disadvantaged children. Current trends are pointing to ways of stimulating innovation and experimentation in all school districts.

Poor Communication

The difficulties of maintaining satisfactory channels of communication increase with the size of a school district. The threads which hold a school system together become tenuous as the district grows larger. Greater dependence must be placed on formal and impersonal means of communication in large districts. Opportunities for misunderstanding and conflicting opinions are greater where personal and informal contacts are missing.

Too Much Centralized Decision Making

The disadvantages of bigness in utilizing democratic participation in reaching decisions stems partly from the lack of an adequate structure for

such participation and partly from the slowness of action characteristic of large units of government. The fact that both the soundness of decisions and an adequate understanding of their meanings are enhanced by participation in their making is of great importance in education because of the nature of teaching and learning.

It has been difficult for large school districts to avoid making many decisions in central offices which might be made more satisfactorily in local attendance areas.

Loss of Personal Identity

Many studies have shown that a close relationship exists between the productivity of a person and the degree to which he feels himself to be an integral part of the enterprise which provides his employment. The more he is made to feel that he is but a mere cog in a machine, the more he acts as though this were true. There is no substitute for warm personal relationships in achieving satisfaction and success in one's work. The kind of environment which encourages such relationships is very hard to maintain where large numbers of persons are involved.

The Atlanta and Fulton County school districts, if combined, would be about eleventh in size among all districts in America. In 1963-64, the total school enrollment in the two districts was 157,140, about one-sixth the enrollment in New York City which has more than one million pupils and enrolls more pupils than any other district in the Nation. Both the Atlanta and Fulton County districts have already reached the size of school systems which have suffered from the ills described above. Therefore, combining the school districts would scarcely create problems of bigness beyond those which already exist, if the proper safeguards are observed in the creation and establishment of the new district.

Just as creating a single school district would not guarantee the educational advantages discussed in this document, neither would the ills described inevitably follow. Knowing the disadvantages to avoid should be sufficient forewarning to assure the provision of an adequate legal base for the new district, satisfactory administrative leadership and sufficient financial support.

DECISION OF THE COMMISSION

After carefully balancing against each other the educational advantages and disadvantages of one district in place of the two existing districts, the Commission then defined and examined the steps which would have to be taken in order to create a single school district for Fulton County and the tasks which would have to be completed in the transition from one to two districts. Neither set of undertakings appeared to be faced by insurmountable barriers, hence the Commission was free to make its decision on strictly educational grounds.

The evidence before the Commission scarcely permitted a recommendation other than the creation of one school district for all of Fulton County. This is the recommendation. The Atlanta and Fulton County school districts should be dissolved, not merged. An entirely new district should be created. In this way none of the limitations of the present districts need be preserved and the advantages of both can be combined in the new district. Furthermore, desirable features of a school district not present in either Atlanta or Fulton County can be incorporated in the new district.

NEXT STEPS

The foregoing presentation outlines some of the steps taken by the Commission in reaching a decision on the question of merger. Having decided that in its opinion the educational programs needed by the children, youth and adults of Atlanta and Fulton County can be provided better by a single district, the Commission then turned to a study of the actual steps which would be necessary to achieve merger.

The legislation creating the Commission in addition to directing the Commission "To study the desirability and feasibility of combining . . . " (the Atlanta and Fulton County School Systems) also stated that the Commission "may draft a plan or plans for the combining of such school systems."

The decision on whether or not there will be a single district can be decided only by the voters of the present districts. Hence, if the members of the General Assembly from Atlanta and Fulton County accept the Commission's recommendation, their next step would be to draw up and submit for passage necessary legislation for holding a referendum on the issue.

Since the voters are entitled to all information that can be provided in order for them to make the best decision, legislation authorizing the referendum should also spell out the essential characteristics of the proposed new district. The Commission recommends that this legislation include the following:

1. A definition of the necessary legal basis for dissolving the present districts and creating the new district.
2. A description of organizational, administrative and tax structures of the new district.

3. Provisions for safeguarding present commitments and obligations of the two existing districts.
4. The date on which the new district would come into being.
5. Provision for setting up the machinery required to make the transition from the two present districts.

Should the majority of votes cast in the referendum in each of the two existing districts favor the single district, the proposed school district would then be created in accordance with the specifications of the legislation.

The transition from two to one school district is complex and requires careful planning. Problems and issues which will have to be resolved can be foreseen. Their exact nature will depend to some extent on the specific provisions made for dissolving the present district and creating a new district. But the following questions may be anticipated, and satisfactory answers to them are possible at this time.

IMPORTANT QUESTIONS

Since the issue of merger has been discussed from time to time during the past twenty years, opinions already have been formed on both sides of the issue. It may be assumed, however, that the vast majority of citizens have had no opportunity to become properly informed on the basic facts needed in order to reach a wise decision. Much public discussion of the facts concerning the present districts and the proposed new district is essential to reaching a sound decision. These facts should be made available to all citizens. Many questions will be asked and properly so. Citizens are entitled to the best possible answers to these questions. It is,

of course, impossible to foresee just what all of these questions will be, but it is safe to assume the following will be of interest. Answers to these questions are given in light of known facts.

What Would the New District be Like?

The Atlanta district consists of 128.395 square miles of which 8.420 miles lie in DeKalb County. The Fulton County School District includes 420 square miles of territory. Therefore, the two districts, if combined, would make a single district of 548.395 square miles of which 539.975 square miles would be in Fulton County proper.

The proposed district would have had a population of 632,600 on April 1, 1964, including 126,400 in the present Fulton County district and 506,200 in Atlanta, of whom 43,900 were in DeKalb County. School enrollment for the fall of 1964 would have been about 145,000 pupils. Professional personnel in the new district would have numbered nearly 5,500 individuals, and other school employees just under 3,000 persons.

There would have been 170 elementary schools, 35 high schools and 2 night high schools in the district. The schools are now located as follows: 118 elementary and 24 high schools in Atlanta, 52 elementary and 11 high schools in the Fulton County district.

The school budget would have been over 61 million dollars, with expenditures equalized by raising Fulton County School District expenditures up to current Atlanta levels, including the provision of kindergartens. The 1965-66 budget for Atlanta is \$46,713,124.92, the Fulton County school budget for the same year is \$13,891,184, making a total of \$60,604,308.92.

The school tax digest would be \$1,448,147,960 at present assessment ratios. This is currently divided as follows: \$167,691,000 in the Fulton County district and \$1,280,456,960 in the City of Atlanta.

What Will be the Name of the New District?

The Atlanta-Fulton County School District is an appropriate name. Enabling legislation would specify the name of the district.

What Would Happen to the Properties of the Two Present Districts?

These properties would become the property of the new district. These assets belong to the people and are simply held for the people by the present districts. The new district would hold them in the same way and their value would be unaffected by the transfer. Buildings and equipment would serve the same people they now serve and in the same ways. Children would attend the school they now attend and would be taught by the same teachers.

What Would Happen to Debts of the Present Districts?

Nothing. Debts of the Atlanta district amount to \$41,894,556, and the Fulton County district, \$18,100,444. These are bonded debts incurred primarily for the construction and equipment of needed school buildings. Provisions have been made already for retirement of these debts. These provisions would be as binding if there is a single district as they are at present.

What Would Happen to the Teachers, Principals,
and Other Employees of the Present Districts?

All of these individuals would retain their present positions. The only exception would be among administrative personnel on the district-wide level. Some reassignment would be necessary but no one would be assigned to a position of lesser rank than he now holds, except only one superintendent would be needed.

What Would Happen to Salaries of Employees?

No one would take a cut in salary. In fact, those teachers now in the Fulton County schools would receive a small salary increase since the Atlanta salary schedule is slightly better than the Fulton County schedule. Two salary schedules would be untenable, as would be any reduction in salaries of present employees.

What Would Happen to the Present
Teacher Retirement Systems?

Each of the existing retirement systems would be retained for those who are now members as each system provides a binding contract to its members. No teacher could possibly lose in retirement benefits because of a single district. Some way should be found to provide a sound retirement system for the proposed district with each new employee enrolling in this system. Perhaps the present State system could serve this purpose.

What Would Happen to the
Tenure of Teachers?

The proposed new district would not affect earned tenure of teachers in either of the present two school districts. All teachers would carry with them into the new district all of the years of service and all of the benefits of tenure which they have earned.

What Would Happen to Positions Held by
Teachers in the Present Districts?

Nothing. Teachers would continue their work in the same schools in the same capacity in the same school communities with the same colleagues.

Would the Single District Cost Less Money?

No. While various economies could be effected in a single district resulting in some savings for the particular services rendered, the overall cost would be higher than the combined cost of the two present districts, because the single system would provide for the entire district those programs and services which are now provided by only one of the districts. For example, the new district would provide kindergartens for all schools as are now provided in the present Atlanta district. Provisions for pupil transportation would have to be uniform throughout the new district. If the Fulton County policy of transporting pupils who live one and one-half miles or more from school were adopted for the new district, no additional cost would be necessary. Adding kindergartens to present Fulton County schools would cost \$400,000 per year. Capital outlay needs would be \$1 $\frac{1}{2}$ million for the construction of 60 classrooms for kindergartens

How Would the New SchoolDistrict be Financed?

One of the major reasons for creating a single district is to provide a more equitable tax base for education. In view of the fact that Fulton County has reached the maximum tax rate for schools under present provisions and Atlanta is fast approaching fiscal difficulties because of the present tax structure, the new district would be timely in making it possible to work out a more reasonable plan for financing education in the metropolitan area. A tax structure which differs from that of either present district should be sought. The goal sought by the new tax program would be to distribute among the people of the entire county the cost of education on a fair basis. A single district would make possible taxing the wealth where it is and applying it to educational need where it exists -- a long-term guide to good school financing in this country.

A major source of school support should be found to take some of the burden from the property tax and to equalize responsibility for support.

Would School Taxes Paid by the AverageIndividual Be More or LessThan at Present?

A flat answer to this question is not possible without knowing the tax structure of the new district. However, it is safe to assume that the average tax payer will be taxed more fairly in view of one of the main advantages of creating one district. A single tax system for education in the entire county would certainly be fairer than either of the present systems. These systems leave much to be desired, the Fulton County plan

in particular is cumbersome and inequitable. Atlanta is now paying part of the educational bill for Fulton County as a result of annexing 72 per cent of the taxable wealth in the Fulton County School District and almost 50 per cent of the students.

Should a tax be levied to broaden the base of support, the tax bill of the property owner could be reduced.

Wouldn't a Single District Be of
Greater Benefit to the Fulton County
District Than to Atlanta?

Perhaps initially because Fulton County's school finance problems are more severe than those of Atlanta due to the city annexation program recommended in 1950. But what is Atlanta and what is Fulton County as defined by existing boundaries is silly and unreal. The economic life of the two is so interwoven that existing boundaries simply make no sense at all as taxing units. The two districts are now taxing themselves at relatively the same rate in terms of real effort. Fulton County schools are in trouble fiscally partly because of the tax structure. Atlanta is not far behind in this respect. Hence, both districts stand to gain from a single district if a sound tax structure is created.

Can't a School District Become Too Large?

Probably so. The answer depends upon whether size is permitted to foster unhealthy bureaucracy. Atlanta is already one of the largest school districts in the Nation. The new district would occupy about the position among large districts that Atlanta now occupies.

Are There Examples of Similar
New Districts?

Yes. One of the latest to be created is the Nashville-Davidson County School District. All units of local government were merged in this instance. Charlotte-Mecklenburg County, North Carolina, is another fairly recent example of the same kind of change. Others could be mentioned. All such districts have been successful. No failures are known at present.

Is There a Trend in Metropolitan
Government to Larger Units,
Including Larger School Districts?

There are some indications of such a trend, probably due to a growing recognition of the need to streamline metropolitan governments and minimize overlapping and duplication.

No doubt, many additional questions will be asked concerning the proposed new district. Objective answers should be provided insofar as it is possible to do so. It is hoped that every citizen will familiarize himself with the facts concerning schools in the present districts and the arguments for and against creating a single district.

AFTER THE REFERENDUM?

If the voters approve the single district proposal, the time table defined in the enabling legislation would be set in motion. Much work will have to be done to effect the transition.

The autonomy which local school districts in Georgia are free to exercise is considerable. The Atlanta and Fulton County school districts have

freely exercised this autonomy. Being entirely separate districts, they have developed their own policies, procedures and operational patterns. While many similarities exist in these matters, there are also differences. Creation of a new district would require careful attention to such guides and practices. Changes which are necessary must not work injustices on school personnel or reflect unwisely on educational programs. Careful and tedious study are required which will result in the development of policies, procedures and operational patterns needed by the proposed new district and which may or may not currently exist in either of the present districts.

Some of the several aspects of this problem are listed below with types of needed action indicated. Additions to this list are likely to be necessary in the event a single district is created.

1. Development of a system of personnel records for professional and other school personnel.
2. Development of a system of records for pupil accounting.
3. Development of necessary guides and procedures for budgeting.
4. Development of purchasing plans and procedures.
5. Development of plans for appropriate financial accounting.
6. Development of a salary schedule for professional and other personnel.
7. Development of a retirement system, or systems.
8. Development of policies concerning employment practices, professional and other.
9. Development of policies regarding sick leave, vacations, leaves of absence, professional growth, etc.
10. Development of policies regarding size of schools.

11. Development of general school regulations, such as length of the school day, number of days in the school year and holidays.
12. Development of a school calendar.
13. Reach decisions on the school program having to do with kindergartens, special education, vocational education and other program areas.
14. Reach decisions on pupil-teacher ratios to be established and maintained.
15. Reach decisions on services to be provided by the school district, such as food, transportation and health.
16. Reach decisions on instructional materials and supplies which are to be provided.
17. Reach decisions on special professional personnel to be provided such as librarians, school psychologists, counselors and reading specialists.
18. Reach decisions on administrative and supervisory services to be provided.
19. Reach decisions on non-professional personnel to be provided, such as lunch room workers, custodians and secretaries.
20. Determine the curriculum adjustments which are necessary and suggest how they are to be made.
21. Recommend policies regarding expansion of school programs with special reference to junior college education, vocational and technical education and adult education.
22. Propose a method of combining the two central office staffs.

23. Propose a plan for the internal organization and administration of the new school district, answering questions such as: Will there be area superintendents? Will there be junior high schools? How many grades will be in the elementary schools?
24. Recommend the future of the Metropolitan School Development Council. Will it have served its purpose if the new school district is created? If not, should it be extended to include the entire metropolitan area?
25. Recommend plans for handling textbooks and instructional supplies.
26. Make recommendations concerning teaching loads.
27. Make recommendations concerning the visiting teacher program.
28. Make recommendations concerning organizations which exist in the respective school districts, such as Parent-Teacher Associations, local teacher associations and the various student organizations.
29. Make a budget for the new school district.

DEVELOPMENTS SINCE CREATION
OF THE COMMISSION

This document begins with a paragraph which states that a revolution in education is underway due to swiftly moving cultural changes of profound impact on all areas of civilization. Several developments occurred during the course of this study which have major bearings on the recommendation for one school district to serve Fulton County. Among these developments are the following:

1. Mounting sentiment for a new Atlanta annexation program. Any such move could only further aggravate the already serious financial

problems of the Fulton County schools under the present district organization.

2. A statewide educational study has been completed which strongly recommends fewer, more efficient, school districts for the State. While main emphasis is on districts of sufficient enrollment to provide economically the wide range of educational programs and services needed, the basic concern is with sound districts.
3. The Federal Government has passed an education support bill for elementary and secondary schools which seems to signal a new and far stronger role of the National Government in education for the future. Other Federal legislation which influences schools supports this conclusion. The impact of this changing role on school district organization is not clear at this time. But present indications point clearly to the importance of strengthening local school districts.
4. The proposed new Constitution for the State of Georgia, if passed, will encourage the consolidation of school districts and make it easier for consolidation to be achieved.

A P P E N D I X

TABLE I
ESTIMATED SCHOOL ENROLLMENTS IN THE ATLANTA
AND FULTON COUNTY DISTRICTS
1965-1973

Years	Atlanta	Fulton County	Total
1965-66	112,129	35,020	147,149
1966-67	115,113	36,210	151,323
1967-68	118,097	37,441	155,538
1968-69	121,081	38,714	159,795
1969-70	124,065	40,030	164,095
1970-71	127,049	41,391	168,440
1971-72	130,033	42,798	172,831
1972-73	133,017	44,253	177,270

METROPOLITAN SCHOOL DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL

City of Atlanta and Fulton County Boards of Education

155 Garnett St., S.W.
Atlanta, Georgia 30303

April 12, 1966

On Calendar

Mr. Earl Landers, Administrative
Assistant to Mayor
Atlanta City Hall
68 Mitchell Street, S. W.
Atlanta, Georgia

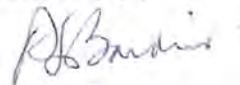
Dear Mr. Landers:

The 1966 Legislature extended the life of the Local Education Commission "to continue the study of the desirability and feasibility of combining the school systems of Fulton County and the City of Atlanta...". The resolution further stated that:

It shall be the function and duty of said Commission to continue the study of the educational systems of Fulton County and the City of Atlanta including the portion thereof lying in DeKalb County for the purpose of considering the desirability and feasibility of combining said school systems and to submit to the General Assembly of the State of Georgia as hereinafter provided a plan or plans together with proposed constitutional amendments and legislation for the combining of such school systems and such plan or plans shall include any changes in political and administrative and fiscal structure of either or both of said systems which the Commission deems desirable and feasible.

I am, therefore, calling an organizational meeting of the Commission at 10:00 A.M. Wednesday, April 27 in the Fulton County Board of Education Room. There are a number of important decisions which must be made concerning the activities and the responsibilities of the Commission. Your help in making these decisions is sorely needed. I hope you can attend this meeting.

Sincerely,



P. L. Bardin

PLB:cw

File



MINUTES
LOCAL EDUCATION COMMISSION
December 21, 1965

The Local Education Study Commission met in the Board Room of the Fulton County Administration Building at 2:00 P.M. on Tuesday, December 21, 1965, with the following in attendance:

Mr. Kenneth Stringer	Dr. Rufus Clement
Dr. James L. Miller	Mr. Earl Landers
Dr. John Letson	Dr. Paul West
Mr. Tom Miller	Mr. P. L. Bardin
Mrs. Alan Ritter	Mr. Alan Kiepper, (Proxy)

Mr. Bardin called the meeting to order and asked for approval of the minutes of the August 23, 1965, meeting. The minutes were unanimously approved.

He then gave a brief review of the work of the Commission since the last regular meeting and pointed out that a meeting was held with members of the Atlanta and Fulton County Boards of Education on September 21, 1965, and with the Representatives and Senators from Fulton and DeKalb Counties on September 27, 1965. The Legislative Delegation later developed a resolution outlining additional information which should be included in the report of the Commission.

Dr. Pierce then presented the addition to the report.

Comments and suggestions offered during the presentation included the following:

Assessed evaluation of property in Atlanta is approximately 70% of the 1956 reappraisal which in reality is about 30% of the current market value for the city and 20% for the county.

Judge Wood's decision does not include independent school districts. Homestead exemptions will not be affected.

The cost for putting Fulton County teachers on the same salary schedule as the Atlanta teachers should be included in the report.

"New board members will be elected as vacancies occur" should be changed to "new board members will be elected as terms expire".

The report should show that Fulton County's bonding capacity is 10% of the digest and Atlanta's bonding capacity is 4% of the digest.

Since board members in Atlanta have been elected for four-year terms beginning January 1, 1966, would any legal difficulty be encountered by calling for a new election of board members in 1968? If so, could this be resolved by having current members of both boards compose the new board until terms expire and then elect only seven new members to the new board?

Wealth behind each child in Fulton County and Atlanta may change if portions of the county are annexed into the city.

It should be stated that support to schools as stated in the report is predicated upon no changes in present tax structure.

The report should include a statement of how the seven districts from which the board members will be elected are to be determined and how they will be readjusted as population changes. Since we now have seven senatorial districts it might be desirable to use them as the starting basis for the seven districts from which school board members will be elected. These districts will be amended as necessary so that areas within the city but which lie in DeKalb County will be included and so that other portions of DeKalb County will be excluded.

Fiscal independence for the school board should refer only to the property tax and not include the ability to set sales tax rate and other similar taxes.

The combined budget for both school systems should be projected.

The Commission accepted the report as presented with the suggested changes presented above. The lawyers were instructed to draw up the necessary proposed constitutional amendment for combining the two systems. A copy of the amendment is to be sent to each member of the Commission for study before the next meeting of the Commission. Copies sent to Commission Members are to be clearly marked Rough Draft and Confidential. The Commission will meet again to review the proposed constitutional amendment as soon as possible.

The meeting was adjourned at 3:55 P.M.

METROPOLITAN SCHOOL DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL

City of Atlanta and Fulton County Boards of Education

224 Central Ave., S.W.

Atlanta 3, Georgia

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Oby T. Brewer, Jr. *co-chairman*
W. L. Robinson, *co-chairman*
John W. Letson
Paul D. West
Glenn Frick
L. Marvin Rivers

COUNCIL STAFF

E. Curtis Henson
Coordinator
Gilbert E. Tauffner,
Executive Director of
Educational Broadcasting

File → TO: Members of the Local Education Study Commission

FROM: Curtis Henson

Enclosed is a copy of the proposed Report of the Local Education Commission prepared by Dean Pierce since the last meeting of the Commission on May 27. During that meeting it was agreed that a copy of the report be sent to each member of the Commission before the next meeting.

The next meeting of the Commission will be held on August 23rd at 2 P. M. in the Board Room of the Fulton County Administration Building.

CH:cw
8-4-65

File



MEMBERS OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT COMMISSION
ATLANTA AND FULTON COUNTY

	<u>Bus. Phone</u>	<u>Home Phone</u>
Chairman: Pope Brock, Chairman of the Board Fulton National Bank 2629 Arden Road, N. W. Atlanta, Georgia	875-3411	355-4496
Vice-Chairman Jack W. West Jack W. West Contracting Company P. O. Box 6787 Atlanta, Georgia 30315	577-2357	627-8630
Secretary-Treasurer: Mrs. Earl F. Geiger 4291 East Brookhaven Drive, N. W. Atlanta, Georgia		231-3264
Robert Earl Brown P. O. Box 20787 Atlanta Airport Atlanta, Georgia	767-7501	344-6330
Dr. Samuel D. Cook, Chairman Department of Political Science Atlanta University Atlanta, Georgia	523-6431	525-7512
Dr. Irving H. Goldstein, DDS 826 Peachtree Street, N. W. Atlanta, Georgia	875-7034	872-6671 873-2777
Joseph K. Heyman, Senior Vice President Trust Company of Georgia Atlanta, Georgia 30303	588-7916	233-0747
Max Holt, Comptroller Dittler Bros., Inc. 1375 Seaboard Industrial Boulevard, N. W. Atlanta, Georgia 30325	355-3423	766-0594
Ernest W. Keappler 2266 Campbellton Road, S. W. Atlanta, Georgia 30311	344-3550	761-3775
William T. Malone 774 Lullwater Road, N. E. Atlanta, Georgia	378-0174	378-0174

	<u>Bus. Phone</u>	<u>Home Phone</u>
Joseph M. Maloof, Assistant Vice President First Federal Savings & Loan Association 40 Marietta Street, N. W. Atlanta, Georgia	525-7681	627-8405
William F. Methvin, Jr. W. F. Methvin, Jr. Lumber Company P. O. Box 8121, Station F Atlanta, Georgia	876-0300	876-0300
J. Y. Moreland, Sr., Principal Booker T. Washington High School 12 Chappel Road, N. W. Atlanta, Georgia 30325	758-8871	753-8276
Clifford Oxford Hatcher, Meyerson, Oxford and Irvin First Federal Building 40 Marietta Street, N. W. Atlanta, Georgia 30303	525-3404	237-3900
E. Earl Patton Patton Associates 38 Old Ivy Road, N. E. Atlanta, Georgia 30305	233-7020	255-1179
Paul E. Pressley Hatcher, Meyerson, Oxford and Irvin First Federal Building 40 Marietta Street, N. W. Atlanta, Georgia 30303	525-3404	622-0872
J. W. Stephenson, Jr., Manager College Park Branch Atlanta Federal Savings & Loan Association 3581 Main Street College Park, Georgia	761-0153	761-9845
Freeman Strickland 1208 First National Bank Building Atlanta, Georgia 30303	588-6414	233-2445
Franklin Thomas, Executive Director Butler Street YMCA 22 Butler Street, N. E. Atlanta, Georgia	524-0246	344-2685
Counsel: James B. Pilcher Associate City Attorney 1114 William-Oliver Building Atlanta, Georgia 30303	524-7731	231-4307
For further information contact: Miss Peg Hendrix Room 336 State Capitol Atlanta, Georgia 30334	572-2661	

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File

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COMMITTEES OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT COMMISSION

ATLANTA AND FULTON COUNTY

STEERING COMMITTEE

Pope Brock, Chairman
Jack W. West
Mrs. Earl F. Geiger
Joseph K. Heyman
Clifford Oxford
J. Y. Moreland

ATLANTA CITY GOVERNMENT STUDY COMMITTEE

Clifford Oxford, Chairman
Joseph M. Maloof
Dr. Samuel D. Cook
William F. Methvin, Jr.
Robert Earl Brown

FULTON COUNTY GOVERNMENT STUDY COMMITTEE

Dr. Irving H. Goldstein, DDS, Chairman
Freeman Strickland
Max Holt
J. Y. Moreland
Ernest W. Keappler

SUBURBAN AREA STUDY COMMITTEE

Joseph K. Heyman, Chairman
Paul E. Pressley
J. W. Stephenson, Jr.
William T. Malone
E. Earl Patton
Franklin Thomas

For further information contact:

Miss Peg Hendrix
Room 336 State Capitol
Atlanta, Georgia 30334

572-2661

File
School Study
Commission

ATLANTA PUBLIC SCHOOL TEACHERS' ASSOCIATION

197 CENTRAL AVENUE, S. W.

ATLANTA, GEORGIA 30303



May 22, 1967

Mr. Earl Landers, Admn. Asst. to Mayor,
City Hall,
Atlanta, Georgia.

Dear Mr. Landers:

The enclosed Resolution was adopted at our General Meeting on Monday, May 15, 1967. We are quite disturbed and concerned about the problem.

We thought that it was agreed that representation selected and authorized to represent our professional personnel would be chosen by the Legislature to represent us on the Commission. This was not done. Consequently we are forced to protect our people by explaining the present situation to you and requesting proper representation.

We shall appreciate your cooperation and help in arriving at a proper and satisfactory solution.

Sincerely yours,

A. D. JONES, President,
Atlanta Public School
Teachers' Association.

ADJ:dw

Encl. (Resolution)

A RESOLUTION

ATLANTA TEACHERS REPRESENTATION ON THE
LOCAL EDUCATION COMMISSION OF ATLANTA AND FULTON COUNTY

WHEREAS, the legislators were asked to name the presidents of the Atlanta and Fulton County Teacher Associations, as representatives of teachers on the commission, and

WHEREAS, this request was made at our dinner conference with the Fulton County delegation and at the formal hearing in the State Capitol, and

WHEREAS, the delegation indicated their interest in honoring this request each time it was made, and

WHEREAS, the request was not honored in H. B. 623, and

WHEREAS, our presidents are the elected representatives of all professional personnel other than Superintendents, and

WHEREAS, our presidents are knowledgeable in matters pertaining to the problems involved, and

WHEREAS, our presidents act after apprising the organizations of the facts, and

WHEREAS, the organization, which is composed of over ninety five percent (95%) of the professional personnel, act as directed, by their constituents, and

WHEREAS, the education of our children is vitally involved in the study of problems and decisions reached, and

WHEREAS, the future of Metropolitan Atlanta is at stake, and

WHEREAS, the livelihood of all employees of the Atlanta and Fulton County Boards of Education is involved in the final solution, and

WHEREAS, the past action of the Commission has not appeared to be adequately informed about the total nature of the subject "Better Schools for Atlanta and Fulton County", and

WHEREAS, we deny anyone other than our president or his appointed representative the authority to speak, write or act on our behalf, and

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that we are not represented on the Commission, and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that we request formal representation as voting members of the Commission, occupying vacancies now on the Commission.

A. G. Jones

Adopted: May 15, 1967
The Atlanta Public School
Teachers' Association,
197 Central Avenue, S. W.,
Atlanta, Georgia 30303

File

LOCAL EDUCATION COMMISSION

of Atlanta and Fulton County, Georgia

CHAIRMAN

P. L. BARDIN
1440 BANK OF GEORGIA BUILDING
ATLANTA, GEORGIA 30303
524-2626

VICE CHAIRMAN

OTIS M. JACKSON
3121 MAPLE DRIVE, N.E.
ATLANTA, GEORGIA 30305
237-4729

SECRETARY-TREASURER

W. KENNETH STRINGER
1393 PEACHTREE STREET, N.E.
ATLANTA, GEORGIA 30309
873-3578

June 5, 1967

R E M I N D E R

To: Local Education Commission Members, Consultants and Attorneys

From: Curtis Henson, Recording Secretary *Curtis Henson*

The Local Education Commission will have a luncheon meeting at 12:30 p.m. on June 19th in rooms 1 and 2 of the Atlanta Public Schools' Instructional Services Center, 2930 Forrest Hill Drive, S. W. Members of the Atlanta and Fulton County Boards of Education have been invited to this luncheon.

The purpose of this meeting is to receive the reports of the studies conducted by Dr. R. L. Johns in finance and business management, and Dr. Willard Elsbree in personnel.

In order for us to make the necessary arrangements for this luncheon, please check the appropriate blank on the enclosed card and return it to me at your earliest convenience.

Thank you for your cooperation.

CH:mt

Encl.

FINANCING THE PUBLIC SCHOOLS OF
ATLANTA AND FULTON COUNTY

A comprehensive approach to a study of the financing of the public schools in Atlanta and Fulton County would involve an appraisal of the future policies of the State of Georgia and the federal government for school financing as well as a study of local school financing. Since such an appraisal is beyond the scope of this study, this section of the report will deal primarily with problems of local school financing in the two districts. However, most authorities on school financing anticipate that in the future there will be further increases in school financial support from the federal government and state governments as well as from local school districts. Although the public schools will no doubt receive increased funds in the future from both state and federal sources, strong local financial support of the public schools will have to be maintained by all districts that desire something better than a mediocre quality level of education for their children.

The following matters are treated in this section of the report: revenue receipts, current expenditures, taxpaying ability and local effort to support education, indebtedness, equalization that would result from consolidation, non-property local taxes and financial arrangements that would need to be made if the two districts were consolidated.

Revenue Receipts

Table I shows the budgeted revenue receipts of the Atlanta and Fulton County school systems. It will be noted from this Table that 55.4 per

cent of the revenue of the Atlanta City schools is derived from the district property tax as compared with 29.6 per cent in Fulton County. However, both of these percentage figures are deceiving.

Just what per cent of the revenue receipts of each school system is provided by property taxes levied on property located in each district? It will be noted that the Atlanta City Council paid \$2,835,045 in 1966 for the debt service on bonds the City issued to construct school buildings. This amounts to 5.3 per cent of the revenue receipts of the Atlanta City board of education. This added to the 55.4 per cent derived from the district property tax makes a total of 60.7 per cent of the revenue receipts of the Atlanta City schools derived from property taxes in 1966-67.

It will be noted that Fulton County receives \$1,762,892 from the county-wide tax ($1\frac{1}{2}$ mills) and \$780,000 from a direct appropriation from the County Commission. This makes a total of \$2,542,892 from these two sources. If it is assumed that the appropriation from the County Commission is also derived from property taxes, what part of this total is paid on property located in Fulton County but outside of the City of Atlanta? Since only about 19 per cent of the digest of Fulton County lies outside of the City of Atlanta, only approximately 19 per cent of this amount, or \$483,149, is paid on the property in Fulton County lying outside the city of Atlanta, and \$2,059,743 on the property in the City of Atlanta. This represents only approximately 3.2 per cent of the revenue receipts of the Fulton County board. It will also be noted that 8.1 per cent of the revenue receipts of the Fulton County district is derived from the $5\frac{1}{2}$ mill levy for debt service. These two amounts, that is, 3.2 per cent plus 8.1 per cent added to 29.6 per cent make a total of 40.9 per cent of the revenue receipts of the Fulton County board of education obtained from property taxes paid on property located in Fulton County outside of the City of Atlanta.

The Fulton County board of education receives 42.6 per cent of its revenue from the state Minimum Foundation Program appropriations as compared with 32.3 per cent for the City of Atlanta. The Minimum Foundation Program law was designed to equalize educational opportunities among school districts that vary greatly in wealth. The $1\frac{1}{2}$ mill countywide tax levied in all of Fulton County but allocated exclusively to the Fulton County board also provides for considerable financial equalization at the local level. The equalization of educational opportunity is sound public policy. Later in this report, it is shown that the adjusted gross digest is 32 per cent greater per pupil in the City of Atlanta than in Fulton County. Table I shows the revenue receipts of the Atlanta Schools totaled \$530.01 per pupil in 1966-67 as compared with \$547.35 in Fulton County. This means that the State Minimum Foundation Program Law together with the $1\frac{1}{2}$ mill county-wide levy and the direct appropriation from the County Commission have gone a long way toward equalizing the financial support of the two systems. It should not be inferred from this comment, however, that educational opportunities are equal in the two school systems. The Atlanta City school system provides kindergartens which are not provided in the Fulton County system. If Fulton County provided kindergartens, the revenue receipts per pupil in that school system would probably be less than the revenue receipts per pupil in the Atlanta system.

Both systems will benefit substantially in 1967-68 from increases from the Minimum Foundation Program Appropriation provided by the 1967 Legislature. It is estimated that the City of Atlanta will receive an increase of approximately \$1,863,000 from this source and Fulton County approximately \$1,075,000.

TABLE 1 - SOURCES OF REVENUE OF ATLANTA AND FULTON COUNTY SCHOOL SYSTEMS 1966-67 (BUDGETED REVENUES 1966-67, DATA FURNISHED BY CITY AND COUNTY SCHOOL OFFICIALS).

SOURCE	ATLANTA		FULTON COUNTY	
	Amount	Per cent	Amount	Per cent
District Property tax for operation	\$29,686,415	55.4	\$ 4,922,451	29.6
County Wide Property Tax			1,762,892	10.6
County Commission			780,000	4.7
Intangible Taxes			230,000	1.4
State Minimum Foundation Program	17,322,038	32.3	7,074,761	42.6
Other State Funds	425,013	.8	0	—
Vocational Funds	628,449	1.2	58,000	.3
National Defence Education Act	520,781	1.0	65,400	.4
Fulton County School District 5½ mill levy for debt service	—		1,350,000 [#]	8.1
Federal Impacted Area Funds	802,366	1.5	210,000	1.3
City Council Payments for Debt Service on Sch. Bonds	2,835,045 [#]	5.3		
Other Income	1,358,747	2.5	159,500	1.0
Total Revenue Receipts	53,578,854	100.0	\$ 16,613,004	100.0
Beginning Cash Balance	532,250	—	818,609	—
Sub-Total	54,111,104	—	17,431,613	—
Federal Funds - Elem. & Sec. Act. 1965	2,519,743	—	461,383	—
GRAND TOTAL	\$56,630,847	—	\$ 17,892,996	—

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Not included in the operating budget.

Continued--

TABLE I - (Cont.)

SOURCE	ATLANTA		FULTON COUNTY	
	Amount	Per cent	Amount	Per cent
Average Daily Attendance Jan. 1, 1967	101,068		30,352	
Revenue Receipts Per Pupil in ADA*	\$ 530.01		\$ 547.35	

* Excludes federal funds received under the Elementary and Secondary Act of 1965 which cannot be used for the regular school program.

The federal revenues received from the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 are also shown in Table 1. These revenues are shown separately because they are all earmarked for special purposes by the federal government and cannot be expended for the regular school program. Practically all of these revenues must be expended for compensatory education for the children of the disadvantaged.

Current Expenditures

In Table 2 an analysis of the budgeted current expenditures of the two school systems for 1966-67 is presented. Both systems expend 75 per cent or more of total current expenditures for instruction. This is typical practice in large school systems.

Caution should be exercised in comparing the different percentage allocations given to the same expenditure functions in the two systems. These systems differ considerably in their bases of financial support, the spread of population and other factors. For example, Fulton County allocates 3.0 per cent of its current expenditures to transportation but Atlanta spends no funds for pupil transportation.

The difference between the two systems in current expenditures per pupil is negligible. Atlanta budgeted \$486.07 per pupil for 1966-67 and Fulton County \$493.34. The Research Division of the National Education Association estimated that the average current expenditure per pupil in average daily attendance for the 50 states and the District of Columbia was \$564 in 1966-67. Therefore, the current expenditures per pupil in both the Atlanta and Fulton County School systems are very low when compared with the national average.

TABLE II

CURRENT EXPENDITURES OF ATLANTA AND FULTON COUNTY SCHOOL SYSTEMS 1966-67[#]
(BUDGETED EXPENDITURES FOR 1966-67)

ACCOUNT FUNCTION	ATLANTA		FULTON COUNTY	
	Amount	Per cent	Amount	Per cent
1. Administration	\$1,796,920	3.7	\$ 309,784	2.1
2. Instruction	36,977,443	75.3	12,149,333	81.1
3. Operation of Plant	4,224,543	8.6	1,228,200	8.2
4. Maintenance of Plant	2,810,500	5.7	663,550	4.4
5. Health Services	96,368	.2	0	—
6. Food Services	41,209	.1	9,300	.1
7. Transportation	0	—	444,160	3.0
8. Fixed Charges	2,417,800	4.9	169,368	1.1
9. Other	754,819*	1.5	0	—
TOTAL	49,119,602	100.0	14,973,695	100.0
Average Daily Attendance Jan. 1967	101,068		30,352	
Current Expenditures Per Pupil in ADA	\$486.07		\$493.34	

[#]Data furnished by county and city school officials. Expenditure accounts do not include expenditures from federal funds received from the Elementary and Secondary Act of 1965.

*This account consists principally of undistributed expenditures made from federal funds received under the National Defence Education Act.

Financial Ability

The best measure of the relative local taxpaying ability of the Atlanta and Fulton County school systems is the gross property digest per pupil in average daily attendance computed on the basis of 100 per cent valuation. This is due to the fact that most local school revenue is derived from property taxes.

Following is the adjusted 100 percent gross digest for 1966 of the Atlanta City School district estimated by the State Revenue Department:

Atlanta City in Fulton County	\$ 4,141,663,000
Atlanta City in DeKalb County	<u>173,149,000</u>
Total	\$ 4,314,812,000

The average daily attendance of the Atlanta City schools was 101,068 in January, 1967. Therefore, the gross digest of the Atlanta City school district adjusted on a 100 per cent basis was \$42,692 per pupil.

The 1966 gross digest of the Fulton County school district adjusted on a 100 per cent basis was \$982,348,000 according to data furnished by the State Revenue Department. The gross digest includes the valuation of homesteads even though homesteads up to a valuation of \$2,000 are exempted from County operating levies for schools. It is necessary to include the valuation of homesteads in order to compute an accurate measure of the relative wealth of the two districts. The ADA of the Fulton County schools in January was 30,352. The gross digest per pupil in ADA was \$32,365. Therefore, the Atlanta City school system has a gross digest approximately 32 per cent greater than the Fulton County school system. However, each of these school systems has considerably more wealth per pupil than the average school district in the United States.

Local Financial Effort to Support Education

A valid measure of local tax effort to support schools can be obtained by dividing the taxes paid on the property located in each school district by the adjusted 100 per cent gross digest of that district.

It is difficult to compute exactly the local tax effort of the Atlanta City District, because a part of that district is in DeKalb County. However, the following is a fairly close approximation for 1966-67.

1. District property tax	\$29,686,415
2. Payments of City Council for debt service on school bonds	2,835,045
3. The portion of the $1\frac{1}{2}$ mill county-wide tax and the portion of the approximation made by the County Commission which was paid on property located in the City	<u>2,059,743</u>
TOTAL LOCAL PROPERTY TAXES FOR SCHOOLS	\$ 34,581,203

The 100 per cent gross digest of the Atlanta school district for 1966 was \$4,314,812,000. The total local taxes for schools divided by the gross digest equals .008 or 8 mills on the adjusted 100 per cent gross digest or true value of property.

The local taxes for schools in the Fulton County school district in 1966-67 were as follows:

1. District property tax	\$ 4,922,451
2. The portion of the $1\frac{1}{2}$ mill county-wide tax and the appropriation made by the County Commission which was paid on property located in the county district	483,149
3. Fulton County district levy of $5\frac{1}{2}$ mills for debt service	<u>1,350,000</u>
TOTAL LOCAL PROPERTY TAXES FOR SCHOOLS	\$ 6,755,600

The 1966 gross digest of the County school system on 100 per cent basis was \$982,348,000. The total local taxes for schools divided by the gross digest equals .006877 or approximately 6.9 mills on the gross digest on true valuation of property.

It is evident that the Atlanta City school district made a greater local tax effort in proportion to its ability to support schools than Fulton County. If the Fulton County school district had made as great a tax effort in proportion to its ability as the Atlanta school district in 1966-67, it would have raised .001123 times \$982,348,000 or \$1,103,176 in additional local revenue in 1966-67.

Special attention is directed to the fact that Fulton County could not legally have made this extra local effort in 1966-67. The District levied 25 mills of operating taxes which was the legal limit it could levy. Furthermore, property was assessed at less than 25 percent of true value. However, the limitations on the taxing power of the Fulton County board of education will be eased somewhat in the future because of the ruling of the court in the McLennon vs State Revenue Commission case. The court ruled that all property must be assessed at a uniform percent of true value regardless of the class of property or where it was located. Upon the ruling, the Revenue Commissioner ordered that all county digests be based on assessing all property at 40 per cent of true value. This will make it possible to increase considerably the local revenues of the Fulton County school district beginning with the 1967-68 fiscal year.

There are no legal limits on the amount of mills which the Atlanta City board of education may levy for the operation of the public schools of the city. Therefore, there are no legal barriers to increasing local school support for schools in Atlanta.

Actually the local taxes for schools are extremely low both in Atlanta and in Fulton County when compared with the school taxes levied in other sections of the nation. Recently one of the members of the staff making this survey participated in a study of school financing in all school districts of 20,000 population or more in Illinois. It was found that the average school district in Illinois levied local property taxes for schools equivalent to 12 mills on the 100 per cent true valuation of property. This is a fifty per cent greater local effort than the City of Atlanta. The local tax effort for schools in the Fulton County school district is only 58 per cent of the average effort in Illinois.

Indebtedness

The bonded indebtedness of the Atlanta City Council for schools totaled \$52,905,000 in 1967. This was less than 3.8 per cent of the unadjusted gross digest.

The bonded indebtedness of the Fulton County school district was \$22,661,000 in 1967. This was 9.1 per cent of the unadjusted gross digest of the county school district. This is close to the 10 per cent constitutional limit on school indebtedness for the Fulton County district. However, the bonded indebtedness margin of Fulton County will be greatly increased when the property digest is raised from an estimated 25 per cent of true value to 40 per cent. The unadjusted 1966 gross digest for the Fulton County district was approximately \$248,000,000. Assuming that the 1966 digest was at 25 per cent of true value, the 1967 digest at 40 per cent of true value should be approximately \$400,000,000 allowing for a reasonable amount of growth. The present county school indebtedness would be less than 5.7 per cent of the gross digest at a 40 per cent valuation.

Another way of looking at the indebtedness of the two districts is to compute the per cent that the school indebtedness of each district is of the adjusted gross digest of each district at 100 per cent of true value. In 1966 this figure for the Atlanta city district was 1.23 per cent and for Fulton County 2.31 per cent. If the two districts were consolidated, it is assumed that the territory that originally issued the bonds would continue to be responsible for the debt service on the bonds that it had issued. It does not appear that this would work any great hardship on either district because the indebtedness of neither district is excessive.

Non-Property Local Taxes

Some school districts in the United States have obtained legal authority to levy non-property local taxes for schools. There are arguments both for and against this practice. Following are some arguments against the levy of local non-property taxes for schools:

1. Usually only urban or metropolitan school districts are able to derive substantial funds from this source.
2. The state can collect most types of local non-property taxes more efficiently than local units of government.
3. Local non-property taxes for schools place cities in competition with each other for industries.
4. If the larger urban districts are able to levy local non-property taxes for schools, they may not support a state financing program which helps the less fortunate school districts.
5. Some types of local non-property taxes make it possible for wealthy districts to shift a part of the incidence of their taxes on the residents of less wealthy districts.

Some arguments for the levy of local non-property taxes for schools are as follows:

1. The property tax is a regressive tax and public resistance to it is growing. If we maintain the vigor of local school support, many believe that a source of local revenue more nearly related to ability to pay than the property tax must be found.

2. The more progressive areas of a state desire a better quality program than the legislature is usually willing to provide from non-property state taxes. Those areas should be given the authority to provide this higher quality program from some local source other than the property tax.

3. It is possible to select types of local non-property taxes the burden of which can not be shifted to the taxpayers of less wealthy areas.

4. The cost of administering local non-property taxes can be held to a reasonable level by using the state's tax collection machinery or by levying local non-property taxes by metropolitan areas rather than by individual school districts.

5. The taxpayer should be given the choice of what type or types of local taxes he will levy for schools in order to broaden the base of local taxation.

As has been pointed out above, local property taxes for schools are very low both in Atlanta and in Fulton County. There is considerable leeway in both districts for increasing local property taxes for schools without those taxes becoming burdensome. Therefore, there is no immediate urgency for the consideration of obtaining the authority to levy local non-property taxes for schools.

If the Atlanta and Fulton County school authorities decide to study the possibility of levying local non-property taxes, it is recommended that consideration be given to the following:

1. That any local non-property taxes that are levied for schools in the Atlanta area be levied over the entire metropolitan area of Atlanta including all school districts in the following counties: Fulton, DeKalb, Clayton, Cobb, and Gwinnett.
2. That a metropolitan school taxing authority be established with the sole responsibility for collecting any local non-property taxes for schools authorized by law and for apportioning such taxes among the several school districts in the five counties named above in proportion to the average daily attendance of pupils.
3. That only those types of non-property local taxes be levied, the burden of which cannot be shifted to tax payers residing outside of the Atlanta metropolitan area.

Financing Education in a Reorganized District

A number of reports have been presented to the people of the Fulton County and Atlanta School districts in which arguments for and against the consolidation of the two districts have been set forth. It is not the purpose of this report to review those arguments. Therefore, the discussions of school finance presented in this study have been focused primarily on the financing of schools in each district rather than on the financing of schools in a consolidated district. Certain suggestions particularly concerning the level of school financing have already been presented. Those suggestions are as applicable to the financing of education in Atlanta and Fulton County as separate school districts as they would be applicable to the financing of education in a consolidated district.

It would no doubt be possible to provide reasonably adequate school financing in each of the two districts operating as separate districts. However, if the two districts were consolidated, it would be possible to establish a more equitable and more efficient financing plan. It has already been pointed out that the 1966 gross digest adjusted at 100 per cent in the city of Atlanta was \$42,692 per pupil in ADA and in the Fulton County district \$32,365. If the two districts were consolidated, the gross digest at 100 per cent valuation for the consolidated district would be \$40,307 per pupil. It has also been pointed out that the taxpayers in the Fulton County school district are making a lower tax effort to support schools in proportion to ability than the taxpayers in the Atlanta City district. Therefore, consolidation of the two districts would equalize the wealth back of each child and it would also equalize the tax effort to support schools in the Atlanta-Fulton County consolidated district. Consolidation would also simplify local financing because there would no longer be a need for the special $1\frac{1}{2}$ mill county equalizing levy or direct appropriations from the County Commission.

It has been suggested in other studies presented to the Local Education Commission of Atlanta and Fulton County that the consolidation of the two districts might result in the loss of some state school funds under present methods of state apportionment. If there is anything in present state laws that would place a penalty on desirable reorganization of school districts, the laws should be amended and the penalties eliminated. This should not be a difficult undertaking.

As has already been pointed out, improvements in school financing should be made in the Atlanta and Fulton County school districts regardless

of whether they are consolidated. If the two districts are consolidated, consideration should be given to the following financial recommendations:

1. The board of the consolidated district should be given the same power for levying taxes for school operation as that now possessed by the Atlanta City Board of Education and it should be fiscally independent of any other local body.

2. The board should be given the power to issue bonds for capital outlay purposes up to a reasonable per cent of the gross digest. The board should also be given the power to obtain tax anticipation loans to be repaid within the fiscal year.

3. Homestead exemption from school taxes should be abolished in the reorganized district.

4. Present outstanding bonds should be retired in accordance with the commitments made at the time of issuance but all new bonds should be issued on a district-wide basis and retired from taxes levied throughout the consolidated district.

BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION SERVICES

The primary purpose of business administration is to provide the services necessary for obtaining the maximum return per dollar invested in public education. It is not the purpose of business administration to minimize educational expenditures. Business and industry have long been aware of the fact that the investment of additional funds in an enterprise will frequently return more profits per dollar invested than a smaller investment. This same principle applies to the educational enterprise. However, wasteful or inefficient expenditure of funds cannot be justified by the returns received in either business or education.

A limited survey was made of the business administration services and policies of the Atlanta and Fulton County school systems. This survey was made first to determine the adequacy of the business administration services of each school system and second to determine whether major economies in business administration could be obtained by the consolidation of the two systems. The findings of that survey are set forth below.

Atlanta City School System

The Atlanta City school system has a well developed program of business administration services typical of cities the size of Atlanta. Except for staff organization, business administration policies are generally consistent with the policies recommended by authorities on school business management.

Organization. The organization for school business management does not follow the pattern generally recommended by authorities in this field. Finance, including administration of the budget, is under the supervision of a comptroller appointed by the Atlanta City board of education and he is directly

responsible to the board. Legally the comptroller is not required to report to the superintendent nor is he under the supervision of the superintendent. In practice however he works closely with the superintendent. An assistant superintendent for school plant planning and construction reports directly to the superintendent. All other business administration services are under the direction of an assistant superintendent for administrative services who reports directly to the superintendent. The services under the supervision of the assistant superintendent for administrative services include the following: purchasing, school plant operation and maintenance, food services, records center, warehousing, inventory, print shop, statistical services and school detective services.

Authorities on school business management usually recommend that all business administration services should be coordinated by one assistant superintendent directly responsible to the superintendent. However, if those services are divided among two or more assistant superintendents, each of these superintendents should report directly to the superintendent. The disadvantage of this latter system as compared with the system usually recommended is that the superintendent of schools is required to coordinate the different administrative services rather than the assistant superintendent for business affairs.

The system of organization now used by Atlanta violates the principal of coordination of the activities of an organization through a single executive. Potentially this system could cause friction and lack of coordination in the administration of the Atlanta public schools. That it has not done so is a credit to the educational and business executives of the Atlanta school system.

Facilities and Equipment. Office facilities for the business administration staff are provided for in a central administrative building for the Atlanta City board of education. Another building, located approximately one block from the administrative office building, is being renovated to house records and data processing equipment. When this is done fairly adequate office space will be available for the business administration staff at present. However, the central office building is located on a limited site with inadequate parking facilities. It would be difficult and expensive to expand the present central office facilities of the Atlanta City board of education.

Sophisticated data processing equipment is in process of being installed. That equipment includes an IBM 360 computer, tape and disc system and related equipment including a 1428 document reader. When this system is in full operation, the financial accounting system, the central record system for warehouses and other record systems involving data processing can be greatly improved.

All other business administration services are housed in a newly constructed educational services building. This is an excellent building located near an expressway and it is served by a railroad siding. The site is fairly adequate. The building houses the school plant maintenance shop, warehousing for school supplies and school plant maintenance and custodial supplies, storage for school food service, the print shop and other types of educational services.

The warehousing and storage facilities of the educational services building are efficiently arranged for accessions to and withdrawals from stock. At the time this building was constructed it was thought to be adequate for all the storage and warehousing needs of the Atlanta system. However, it was soon found necessary to utilize the old abandoned city jail building to store old

school furniture and certain other types of non-rapidly moving stock. While not ideal, this building is still useful for this type of storage.

School Plant Maintenance. The Atlanta City board of education operates a city owned school plant maintenance shop. It is adequately staffed with employees of the City board of education and well equipped. Experience has shown that a properly operated school plant maintenance shop can not only save money on school plant maintenance but that it usually provides better service than when school plant maintenance is provided for by job contract. The board has developed a program for the repair and maintenance of school buildings and this policy not only extends the life of a building but it also reduces the number of hazards to pupils and school employees. Some difficulty has been experienced in obtaining employees with the desired skills.

School transportation is not provided for at public expense by the Atlanta City board of education.

Budgetary Procedures. Work on the budget starts approximately six months before the beginning of the fiscal year. The budget is not always approved prior to the beginning of the fiscal year. Best practice dictates that the budget be approved prior to the beginning of the fiscal year. However, it is reported that delays in receiving tax digests and estimates of revenue sometimes make it difficult to approve the budget in final form prior to the beginning of the fiscal year.

The comptroller has primary responsibility for preparing the budget document. However, the comptroller consults with the superintendent, the assistant superintendents and the area superintendents before he prepares the budget. The area superintendents consult with the principals. There seems to be no formal

arrangements for providing opportunities for classroom teachers or their representatives to participate in the formulation of the budget.

Certain items, including instructional supplies, library expenditures, band equipment and janitorial supplies, are budgeted by individual schools. The budget for 1966-67 is a formidable document consisting of more than 160 pages. It contains detailed financial schedules of revenues and expenditures, unit costs, and comparisons of the proposed budget with receipts and expenditures for previous years. This is a technical document and is not readily understood by laymen. The board holds public hearings but they are not well attended. The board is fiscally independent and adopts its budget without being subject to review by any other local body. It is sound public policy to make the board fiscally independent. Under this policy the public is able to fix responsibility for the school budget because the board of education is the sole responsible body. However, as taxes increase in the future and the public becomes more tax conscious, the board may need to develop better methods than it is now using to communicate the educational needs of the pupils to the public.

Financial Accounting and Auditing. The financial accounting system utilized in the Atlanta City schools conforms with the principal accounting standards and account classifications recommended by the United States Office of Education. This is important in order that the financial data for the Atlanta City school system may be comparable not only with other school systems in Georgia but also comparable with the financial data from other school systems throughout the nation. The accounting system is completely mechanized by the use of the data processing equipment already described. Accrual or encumbrance

accounting is used. This is essential for close budget control. Under accrual accounting, a budget account is encumbered as soon as an obligation is incurred against that account.

The accounts of the Atlanta City schools are audited annually by a firm of certified public accountants.

The board requires the principal of each school to keep a uniform system of account records of internal accounts. Internal accounts consist of funds collected at individual schools. These accounts are also audited annually.

The accounting and auditing procedures of the Atlanta City school system are in accord with standard practice.

Purchasing Procedures. All items of any importance used by the Atlanta City schools are centrally purchased in quantities on competitive bids. This policy undoubtedly saves large sums of money annually. The construction of central warehousing facilities and the establishment of an efficient distribution system made it practicable for the board to establish its broad policy of central purchasing.

Business Administration, School Lunch Rooms. Central supervision is provided for school lunch rooms. All school lunch rooms receive federal aid in the form of cash and commodities. From 60 to 70 percent of the pupils participate in the school lunch program. This compares very favorably with a national participation average of only 35 percent.

The board provides for central purchasing and central accounting for all school lunch rooms. The business administration policies of the board for the operation of school lunch rooms are in line with best practice.

Insurance and Bonding. School buildings are insured for 100 percent

of appraised worth on blanket fire and extended coverage policies. The board deals with one agent who represents the Association of Independent Insurance Agents. Buildings and equipment are insured at an appraised value of \$77,736,493 at an annual cost of \$53,000. Large school systems sometimes find it advisable to be self insurers. However, since the amount of money expended for fire insurance in the Atlanta City school system is relatively small, very little money could be saved by a self-insurance program.

All officials and employees who handle funds in the Atlanta City school system are bonded. The board pays the cost of the bonds.

Workman's Compensation insurance is provided for all the employees of the board. The board is self-insurer for this type of insurance.

Income Management and Depository Security. The board has been able during the past few years to keep a sufficient working balance on hand to pay all current obligations when due. Therefore the board has not been required to obtain tax anticipation loans. The board does not have the authority to borrow money. All borrowing, either on short term loans or bonds, must be done by the Atlanta City Council for the board of education. The board follows the sound policy of operating on a balanced budget and it carries over a reasonable working balance from one fiscal year into the next year.

The board wisely follows the policy of investing its idle funds in appropriate United States Government obligations. It obtained \$302,301.24 in interest earnings from this source in 1965-66.

The board requires its depository bank to escrow collateral in another bank in the amount of \$500,000 in order to protect the funds it has on deposit. The balances in the depository sometimes exceed this amount. However, the board

follows the policy of promptly investing its idle funds and this provides some protection.

Fringe Benefits for Employees. The following fringe benefits are provided for all employees of the board, both certificated and uncertificated: retirement, sick leave, medical and hospitalization insurance and a limited amount of life insurance. Both the board and the employee participate in financing most of these benefits. Boards of education must participate in making provisions for these benefits if they compete on equal terms with the private sector of the economy in obtaining needed personnel.

The Fulton County School System

The Fulton County board of education has provided fairly adequate business administration services for the public schools of the County. The business administration policies are basically sound. As indicated below, improvements that need to be made involve increasing the size of staff and providing for additional space and equipment rather than any change in operating policies.

Organization. The principal business administration services are under the direction of an assistant superintendent for maintenance and operation and a director of finance. Each of these officials reports directly to the superintendent. The assistant superintendent for maintenance and operations supervises school plant operation and maintenance, warehousing and storage and distribution services, school plant planning and purchasing. The director of finance and his staff keep all accounts, administer the budget and audit internal accounts. In addition, school transportation is supervised by the director of attendance and transportation and the director of the school lunch program is under the supervision of the

assistant superintendent for curriculum. This latter arrangement is a little unusual because the central services provided for the school lunch program at the county level have more relationship to finance, accounting, purchasing and storage and distribution which are business administration services, than to curriculum. It is generally considered good organization policy to organize similar types of operations in the same organizational units.

All the top officials responsible for business administration services report to the superintendent rather than directly to the board. This is sound policy because it provides for central coordination of all educational services at the county level.

It appears that the staff employed by the board for accounting, purchasing, budget administration, etc., is inadequate in size to provide for these services. The staff provided for these services is as follows: a director of finance and assistant, a purchasing agent, an administrative assistant, four bookkeepers, and three secretaries. This is a very small staff for these services in a school system with a budget exceeding sixteen million dollars annually.

Facilities and Equipment. The central staff for business management is housed in office space provided in the Fulton County Court House. This space is inadequate.

Data processing equipment is not available. Accounting machines are used for payroll purposes and account records. If Fulton County remains a separate school system, the board should investigate the possibility of installing or renting certain types of data processing equipment.

The board has constructed an excellent educational services building on a site some distance from the court house. This building is located centrally adjacent to an expressway. However, it was constructed on a very limited site with but little room for parking or expansion. It is understood that another story can be added to the present structure. However, this too would become inadequate in a few years and parking space is already inadequate. Therefore the present site should be expanded if possible.

The educational services building houses the school plant maintenance shop, warehousing for school supplies, school plant maintenance and custodial supplies and storage for school furniture, instructional materials and supplies. This is a very useful building. It makes it possible for the board to do quantity purchasing on competitive bids. This policy is not possible without adequate warehousing and a distribution system.

School Plant Maintenance. The board has established a centrally located school plant maintenance shop located in the educational services building. It is well equipped and staffed with personnel possessing the necessary skills. Reports from the State Department of Education indicate that the board has an excellent school plant maintenance program. However, it is reported that some additional employees are needed.

School Bus Maintenance. The board operates 78 county-owned buses and contracts for eight other buses. The policy of district ownership and operation of school buses almost always results in better service at a lower unit cost than contract transportation. The provision of school transportation is not a simple matter in the Fulton County school district because of its geography. The district is divided into two separate parts by the Atlanta City School

district. It is approximately 70 miles between a school in the northern part of Fulton County and a school located in the southern part of the County school district. Road and traffic conditions vary from the conditions typically found in rural Georgia to conditions usually found in a densely settled metropolitan area.

The board contracts for bus maintenance and inspection with a private garage at a cost of \$1,300 per month. Parts used in repairing buses are billed to the board at list price less 10 percent. Buses appear to be well maintained and very few road failures are experienced. The operator of the garage with whom the board contracts for its bus maintenance takes a genuine pride in maintaining school buses. He appears to have the interest and enthusiasm of a board employee.

The board has explored the possibility of constructing its own school bus repair shop and operating it. Available evidence does not indicate that the board could save money by establishing its own shop as long as it is able to contract for its bus maintenance at so favorable a rate. The contractor operates a branch shop in the northern part of the County which does light repairs and inspections. This reduces the amount of empty mileage traveled by buses.

The board buys its gasoline for school buses from filling stations. Discounts are received at only a few stations. The board has considered purchasing its own tank truck and serving its own buses. However, schools are so widely separated that this method would probably not save very much money. The board could probably save some money on its gasoline purchases if filling stations were required to bid for the board's business.

Financial Accounting and Auditing. The financial accounting system follows in general the account classification for receipts and expenditures recommended by the United States Office of Education. It also conforms to state requirements. The accounts of the Fulton County schools can readily be compared with the accounts of school systems not only in Georgia but also throughout the Nation.

As pointed out above, data processing equipment is not available for keeping financial accounts. Furthermore, the staff provided for accounting, purchasing and budget administration is insufficient in number to provide all of the services needed. For example, expenditure accounts are not kept on an accrual basis. This should be done in order to provide a more efficient method of budget control. If Fulton County is continued as a separate school system, accrual accounting should be installed along with data processing equipment.

The accounts of the board have been audited eight times during the past four years, four times by state auditors and four times by independent certified public accountants.

The board requires school principals to maintain a uniform system of accounts for all of the internal funds handled at school centers. These accounts are audited annually.

Budgetary Procedures. The director of finance is assigned the responsibility of preparing the budget document. As pointed out above, he is directly responsible to the superintendent and works under his supervision in preparing the budget. He also works with the assistant superintendents, director of instruction, principals and others in preparing the budget.

Work is started on the budget from 6 to 12 months prior to the beginning of the fiscal year but it is not always approved in final form by the beginning of the fiscal year.

The budget is a technical budget not readily understood by the lay public. Detailed schedules of anticipated receipts and proposed expenditures by function and object are presented. In addition certain unit costs and data for the previous year are included in the budget. Program accounting is not used in interpreting the budget.

Budget hearings are held but they are not well attended. The budget is advertised in the newspaper and adopted by the board at a later date as prescribed by law. The board is fiscally independent and its budget is not subject to review by any other local body. However, as school costs continue to increase and the public becomes more tax conscious, the board will undoubtedly find it advisable to develop more adequate means than are now used to communicate school needs to the public.

Purchasing Procedures. The board purchases all important items in quantity and requires competitive bids for all items costing in excess of \$150.00. This policy undoubtedly results in the saving of considerable money. Quantity buying requires storage and a distribution system. The educational services building and the distribution system established in connection with it greatly facilitates quantity purchasing.

Business Administration of the School Lunch Program. The board provides some central supervision for the school lunch program but it does not provide for central accounting and purchasing for school lunch rooms. Central accounting and central purchasing usually result in considerable savings for the

school lunch program. However as pointed out above, distribution is a problem in Fulton County because of the remoteness of many schools from a central warehouse.

The educational services building is not equipped for food storage but this deficiency could be remedied. It is believed that considerable money could be saved by central accounting and purchasing for school lunch rooms. However, these services could not be provided without expanding the business management staff.

Approximately 61 percent of the pupils enrolled participate in the school lunch program. All schools either receive federal aid in the form of cash and commodities or commodities only.

Insurance and Bonding. All employees are under a blanket position fidelity bond. Principals are also under a name bond. The board pays the cost of all bonds.

The board carries fire and extended coverage insurance under the Public and Institutional Property Plan. Under this form of insurance (available only to public institutions) the board insures a building and its contents for replacement cost rather than appraised cost. This gives the board rather complete coverage but it is a fairly expensive type of insurance. The board pays \$50,755.66 annually for carrying fire and extended coverage insurance on buildings and equipment insured at a replacement value of \$32,773,199.92. This may appear rather expensive when compared with the insurance costs of the Atlanta City system. However, insurance rates are greatly affected by the fire protection available and the City of Atlanta has far better fire protection than is available in most sections of Fulton County.

Income Management and Depository Security. The board has been able to carry a sufficient working balance to be able to pay its current obligations on time without having to resort to tax anticipation loans. This is good policy. The board has operated on a balanced budget and has carried over a reasonable working balance from one fiscal year to another.

The board wisely follows the policy of investing idle funds in United States Government securities. It realized \$199,640.39 in interest from this source during the 1965-66 fiscal year.

The board does not follow standard procedures for protecting its funds in depositories. The standard procedure is to require the board's depository bank to protect the board's deposits by escrowing in another bank, government securities in an amount equal to the maximum balance carried by the board. In lieu of this policy the Fulton County board of education keeps its funds in 10 bank accounts and attempts to invest funds not needed during a given month as quickly as possible. During the period of heavy tax collections, the board may receive as much as \$2,000,000 in a single remittance. While these funds are invested in United States Government obligations promptly, nevertheless the board should have some protection for its funds in depositories in the form of escrowed collateral.

Fringe Benefits for Employees. The board provides the following fringe benefits for all of its employees both certificated and non-certificated: retirement, sick leave, medical and hospitalization insurance and a limited amount of life insurance. The employer and the employee share in financing the costs of most of these benefits. These are the same types of benefits provided by the Atlanta City board of education for its employees.

Summary

The business administration policies of the Atlanta City school system and the Fulton County school system are both basically sound. The available evidence indicates that no great amount of money could be saved by consolidating the business administration operations of the two systems. Few if any business administration personnel could be eliminated by the consolidation of the two systems. It might be necessary and desirable to change a few titles and to do some reorganization but the services of all of the present employees would be needed.

Both educational services buildings would still be needed because of the shortage of warehousing and storage space. The consolidation of the two systems would not eliminate the great distances between schools which cause distribution problems.

If the two systems were consolidated and public transportation provided for qualifying pupils who now live in the city of Atlanta, different arrangements for the maintenance and operation of school buses would have to be made. Those arrangements would probably involve the construction of two school bus repair shops, one located in the northern half of the reorganized district and the other in the southern half.

From the standpoint of business administration, the chief saving in consolidating the two school districts would be the elimination of the cost of one data processing system. The newly installed data processing system for the Atlanta City schools has sufficient capacity to serve both school systems.

All other business administration savings would have to be obtained

from increases in efficiency derived from economy of scale. For example, consolidation of the two systems would result in increasing the volume of specific items submitted for bid. The increased volume might result in lower unit costs for some items.

Some financial savings could probably be obtained by eliminating certain duplicating educational programs or the provision for better coordination of existing educational programs if the two districts were consolidated. Since this section of this report is concerned only with business administration policies, no attempt is made to estimate the amount of savings on the operation of educational programs that could be obtained through consolidation.

REPORT OF THE CONSULTANTS
on
CERTAIN PERSONNEL PROBLEMS
RELATING TO THE PROPOSED MERGER
of the
FULTON COUNTY - ATLANTA SCHOOL SYSTEMS

JUNE 19, 1967

WILLARD S. ELSBREE
and
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CONSULTANTS

Report of the Consultants on Certain Personnel Problems
Relating to the Proposed Merger of the Fulton County -
Atlanta School Systems, June 19, 1967

This report deals with the implications of merging the certificated and non-certificated personnel of the two current school systems - Fulton County and Atlanta. The question of the soundness of the merger itself was deemed to be outside the province of this study. The consultants have proceeded on the assumption that a merger is contemplated; that if effected, it is essential to unify personnel policies and practices, and that specific procedures for dealing with the employee groups in the two school systems should be spelled out.

Perhaps the two most important personnel problems that must be resolved if a merger is to be effected are the establishment of equitable salary and wage policies and the determination of how present and future pension and retirement provisions are to be administered.

Certain other policies and practices must also be unified if the merger is to deal fairly with the employed personnel. Sick leave, insurance provisions, and tenure regulations must somehow be brought into harmony - otherwise morale will suffer and the objectives of the merger will not be fully realized.

In order to obtain the data and information needed to arrive at recommended procedures the consultants assembled, with the help of the Coordinator of the Metropolitan School Development Council, pertinent published materials from each of the school systems involved and they interviewed executives responsible for the administration and supervision of the personnel policies. Included in the list of those interviewed were:

the Executive Secretary-Treasurer of the Teachers Retirement System of Georgia,

the Deputy Executive Secretary-Treasurer of the Teachers Retirement System of Georgia,

the Director of Finance for Fulton County Board of Education,

the Assistant Director of Finance for Fulton County Board of Education,

the Controller of the Atlanta School System,

the Assistant Controller of the Atlanta School System,

the Superintendent of Schools in each system,

the Assistant Superintendent for Personnel in Atlanta,

the Coordinator of the Metropolitan School Development Council,

the Director of Non-certificated Personnel in Atlanta,

the Secretary for the Atlanta General Pension Fund,

the Administrative Assistant to the Superintendent of Schools, Atlanta.

Many official reports were examined together with policy statements in an effort to learn the basis for existing practices. The fact that salary policies were undergoing major revisions has been noted and the proposals contained in this report take full account of these changes.

It should be pointed out that many personnel policies are subject to revision almost annually. Salary levels in particular are very unstable and inflation has forced boards of education and public boards generally to boost salaries and wages more frequently than was true a few years ago. Because of this instability any calculations of future costs are bound to be unreliable. The best that can be done is to make what appears to be

reasonable assumptions and show their implications.

Salaries of Certificated Personnel

With the merger of the Atlanta and Fulton County School systems an immediate concern of the several thousand individuals employed will be - what will be my salary for next year? It is the opinion of the consultants that a basic salary schedule should be developed for the certificated personnel of the merged systems but that such a schedule should be developed only after the merger is consummated. The preparation of a salary schedule that has good possibilities of wide and enthusiastic reception should involve many people in its development. Representatives of organized professional groups, area specialists and supervisory and administrative personnel should have a part in the preparation of the basic salary program. Until the merger occurs, similar professional organizations will continue to exist for both Atlanta and Fulton County. After merger, many organizations will be consolidated and at that time the new organizations may be appropriately represented. The same situation obtains for representatives of area specialists and the supervisory and administrative staff. A salary schedule that could be recommended by consultants prior to the merger of the systems and without the involvement of representatives from the new groups would be premature. Therefore, it is recommended that after merger

a salary study committee composed of representatives of all certificated groups and areas be appointed to consider salary schedules and salary policies for the new system.

With the decision reached that any new salary schedules should be developed only after merger of the systems, the consultants examined the possibilities of what salary provisions might be best for immediate application following the merger and during the transition period. The same treatment, salarywise, of all personnel in the new system is a prerequisite in determining salary policies for the new system.

It was found that the two salary schedules could be merged and after careful review and examination the consultants came to the conclusion that retention of the salary schedules of the Atlanta System and the placement of the Fulton County personnel on the Atlanta schedules is the best solution possible with the merging of the two systems. To make such a transfer from one salary schedule to another it is recommended that the following rules be applied:

1. No employee's salary will be reduced.
2. Teachers and other certificated personnel will be placed on the appropriate 1967-68 Atlanta School System's salary schedule, on the step stipulating a salary that is equal to or next higher in amount to the current salary being paid.

3. Any Fulton County employee whose salary is higher on his present salary schedule than it would be on the same step of the Atlanta salary schedule will be paid this higher salary amount, but when and if eligible in subsequent years he will proceed according to the provisions of the appropriate salary scale.
4. For employees new to the merged system, a maximum of five years' service in other school systems will be accepted on a year by year basis. Such a person, with five years' experience, would enter on step 6 of the salary schedule.
5. Salary scale incentives applicable to the Bachelor's and Master's degree scales will be established following steps 4, 8, and 12. Teachers will be allowed to proceed on these salary scales only after completing six semester hours of approved college or university credit, or its equivalent, in in-service programs approved by the Board of Education.

To make the salary changes by the application of the above rules it was estimated by the Coordinator of Metropolitan School Development Council that the cost increase will be approximately \$

During the transition period there should be established a salary study committee, as indicated earlier in this section, to ascertain the adequacy of the salary schedules and policies in operation and to recommend any changes that promise to produce better salary arrangements. In addition,

a review should be made to ascertain whether or not individual employees have been appropriately classified and given correct placement on the salary schedules.

Wages of Non-certificated Employees

A similar approach is suggested for arriving at appropriate wage policies for the non-certificated workers in the county and the city school systems. Atlanta has recently adopted a classification plan recommended by the Public Administration Service. These schedules have been developed after much study and it appears logical to fit the non-certificated school employees from the county into the basic Atlanta pattern. There are differences in the length of the work year in some categories. This calls for minor adjustments but is not a serious obstacle to unifying the two groups. Bus drivers are employed in the county but are not employed by the Atlanta School System. The current wages paid bus drivers should be continued for the time being and the pay levels assessed when salaries and wages generally are being reviewed.

In the case of custodians it would be necessary to reclassify the Fulton County employees in order to achieve parity. This is not a difficult task and if the merger is voted, temporary classifications could be made in those cases where the job descriptions were not clear and final assignments made after individual cases were reviewed.

According to estimates made by the Coordinator of the Metropolitan School Development Council, the cost of bringing all the non-certificated employees under a single tent if the Atlanta pay scales were applied is \$543,756. This assumes that no consolidation in jobs will be made and the same number of employees are retained.

Retirement Provisions

Both Fulton County and the City of Atlanta maintain local pension and

retirement systems for their employees. This practice is of fairly long standing and, as has been the case in other American cities and counties, it arose because of the obvious need to provide employees with protection against the vicissitudes of advanced age and the local community against the inefficiency which results when workers, past the prime of life, are retained on the job.

Unfortunately the history of local pension plans has not been too favorable. Even when they have maintained a solvent position, which many have not, they have seldom provided the protection to new members that was guaranteed by those established and administered by the State. As a result, they have rapidly diminished in number and state plans have supplanted them. The latter because of larger memberships, the spreading of risks, and greater resources, have supplied the certificated staff with superior protection. Moreover, state employees' retirement systems are increasingly providing coverage for the non-certificated employees in school systems.

The problem confronting Fulton County and Atlanta with respect to pension and retirement is not unlike that found in many other systems. The funds required represent a tremendous investment and the accrued liabilities run into millions of dollars.

The ultimate solution in the minds of the consultants lies in moving the responsibility as quickly as possible from the local system to the State and the abandonment of any local retirement for new certificated personnel. This cannot be achieved quickly nor painlessly. While the proposal to merge the two school systems poses some knotty problems with respect to employee retirement, a reasonable solution can probably be worked out.

With the merger of the two systems, it is recommended that the policies with respect to retirement and pension provisions listed below be adopted by the various boards concerned:

1. All new certificated personnel will secure membership under the Teachers Retirement System of Georgia.
2. All new non-certificated personnel will secure membership in the social security program provided under the Federal Insurance Compensation Act.
3. All certificated personnel who are members of retirements systems operated by either the Atlanta General Employees' Pension Fund Board or by the Fulton County School Pension Board may withdraw their personal contributions to their pension fund if and when they become members of the Teachers Retirement System of Georgia.
4. Members of the retirement system operated by the Atlanta Pension Board who wish to continue to be covered by the provisions of such board may continue their membership, and the Atlanta Pension Board will continue to administer and be responsible for all pension liabilities for such personnel as required by their current commitments. Future changes in pension benefits will be available to such members.
5. The Fulton County Board of Commissioners will assume all obligations, liabilities, and commitments of the Fulton County School Pension Fund Board.
6. Members of the retirement system operated by the Fulton County School Pension Board may at their option transfer their membership to a new Fulton County pension system to be administered by the Fulton County Board of Commissioners or its designate and retain

all of the rights and benefits they held under the system operated by the Fulton County School Pension Board.

7. Commitments for members who have retired under the pension systems operated by either the Atlanta Pension Board or by the Fulton County School Pension Board shall have all such commitments honored by the Atlanta Pension Board or by the Fulton County Board of Commissioners respectively.

Insurance

The practice of providing group life and personal accident insurance for employees is commendable and should be continued. It is recommended that:

1. Employees of the Atlanta and Fulton County school systems who have retained their school system sponsored insurance policies and who are retired will have their benefits and vested rights under their policy protected by the Atlanta City Board of Aldermen and the Fulton County Board of Commissioners, respectively, and such boards will manage and make any annual payments due insurance companies that exceeds the amount required of the employees under the provisions of the policy.
2. At the time of the merger, group life and personal accident insurance contracts be cancelled and a new contract agreement be entered into with a commercial company that will provide the best policy at the lowest rate.

Tenure

Job security should not be placed in jeopardy for an employee of the two school systems because of the merger. It is recommended that:

1. Tenure policies for the new system be established for the several classes of personnel employed and that the policies

for each classification be those now extant in either the Atlanta School System or the Fulton County School System that are more generous to the individual employee.

2. Employees holding tenure in either of the two systems concerned at the time of merger be automatically provided tenure in the new system.
3. Any probationary period served in the two systems concerned and prior to the merger of the two systems will be accepted at full value for tenure considerations in the merged system.

Leaves of Absence and Vacations

The emoluments and rights earned under provisions that now exist for the personnel in the Atlanta and Fulton County schools should be protected. It is recommended that the provisions that are most generous to the employees, that now exist in either of the two school systems concerned, be adopted for the new merged system with respect to sick leave, maternity leave, bereavement leave, military leave, professional study leave, emergency leave and vacations.

Records

With the merger of the two systems, it is anticipated that changes will be needed in both accounting and personnel records systems. With modern office equipment and electronic data processing machinery, the work of business, accounting, financial and statistical offices can be handled with dispatch. Moreover, information on personnel can be secured in as many ways as needed in short periods of time. In order for the new system to be able to function efficiently, it is recommended that as soon as the merger is voted, specialists in systems data processing be employed to plan for the merging of data of the two school systems together with programs for fast retrieval of such data.

Combining the Central Office Staff Personnel

A merger nearly always requires some consolidation of central office personnel. Hence, the procedures for determining how the unified system should assign the current central office employees needs to be spelled out.

The two systems as might be expected have several comparable central office positions and in some instances the merger, in the interest of economy, might necessitate the assignment of certain officials to posts outside the central office. This fact together with the need to reassess existing assignments calls for the exercise of both judgment and diplomacy on the part of those charged with the responsibility of building a new central organization.

The consultants believe that the wisest procedure to follow in merging the two central staffs is as follows:

1. The new Board of Education should choose a superintendent of schools for the system and an associate superintendent.
2. The Board of Education should appoint a committee to make recommendations as to the assignment of personnel to the new system central office positions. This committee should be composed of the superintendent of schools, who should act as chairman, the associate superintendent of schools, and two officials currently responsible for the recruitment, selection and assignment of personnel in the two systems being merged.
3. The officials currently responsible for the recruitment, selection and assignment of personnel should make recommendations to the superintendent of schools regarding the assignment of secretaries, clerks and custodial workers needed for service in the central headquarters.

4. In making assignments, consideration should be given to the age, experience and personal fitness of the individual employee for the job to be filled.
5. All central office employees should be housed under one roof and adequate facilities should be provided to facilitate the work.

FINANCING THE PUBLIC SCHOOLS OF
ATLANTA AND FULTON COUNTY

A STUDY CONDUCTED FOR
THE LOCAL EDUCATION COMMISSION

BY

DR. R. L. JOHNS

(Revised by Dr. R. L. Johns - June 21, 1967)

FINANCING THE PUBLIC SCHOOLS OF
ATLANTA AND FULTON COUNTY

A comprehensive approach to a study of the financing of the public schools in Atlanta and Fulton County would involve an appraisal of the future policies of the State of Georgia and the federal government for school financing as well as a study of local school financing. Since such an appraisal is beyond the scope of this study, this section of the report will deal primarily with problems of local school financing in the two districts. However, most authorities on school financing anticipate that in the future there will be further increases in school financial support from the federal government and state governments as well as from local school districts. Although the public schools will no doubt receive increased funds in the future from both state and federal sources, strong local financial support of the public schools will have to be maintained by all districts that desire something better than a mediocre quality level of education for their children.

The following matters are treated in this section of the report: revenue receipts, current expenditures, taxpaying ability and local effort to support education, indebtedness, equalization that would result from consolidation, non-property local taxes and financial arrangements that would need to be made if the two districts were consolidated.

Revenue Receipts

Table I shows the budgeted revenue receipts of the Atlanta and Fulton County school systems. It will be noted from this Table that 55.4 percent of the revenue of the Atlanta City schools is derived from the district property tax as compared with 28.4 percent in Fulton County. However, both of these percentage figures are deceiving.

Just what percent of the revenue receipts of each school system is provided by property taxes levied on property located in each district? It will be noted that the Atlanta City Council paid \$2,835,045 in 1966 for the debt service on bonds the City issued to construct school buildings. This amounts to 5.3 percent of the revenue receipts of the Atlanta City Board of Education. This added to the 55.4 percent derived from the district property tax makes a total of 60.7 percent of the revenue receipts of the Atlanta City schools derived from property taxes in 1966-67.

It will be noted that Fulton County receives \$1,762,892 from the county-wide tax ($1\frac{1}{2}$ mills) and \$780,000 from a direct appropriation from the County Commission and \$720,000 from the County Commission for Teacher Retirement. This makes a total of \$3,262,892 from these two sources. If it is assumed that the appropriation from the County Commission is also derived from property taxes, what part of this total is paid on property located in Fulton County but outside of the City of Atlanta? Since only about 19 percent of the digest of Fulton County lies outside of the City of Atlanta, only approximately 19 percent of this amount, or \$619,949, is paid on the property in Fulton County lying outside the City of Atlanta, and \$2,642,943 on the property in the City of Atlanta. This represents only approximately 3.6 percent of the revenue receipts of the Fulton County Board. It will also be noted that 7.8 percent of the revenue receipts of the Fulton County district is derived from the $5\frac{1}{2}$ mill levy for debt service. These two amounts, that is, 3.6 percent plus 7.8 percent added to 28.4 percent make a total of 39.8 percent of the revenue receipts of the Fulton County Board of Education obtained from property taxes paid on property located in Fulton County outside of the City of Atlanta.

The Fulton County Board of Education receives 40.8 percent of its revenue from the state Minimum Foundation Program appropriations as compared with 32.3 percent for the City of Atlanta. The Minimum Foundation Program law was designed

to equalize educational opportunities among school districts that vary greatly in wealth. The $1\frac{1}{2}$ mill county-wide tax levied in all of Fulton County but allocated exclusively to the Fulton County Board also provides for considerable financial equalization at the local level. The equalization of educational opportunity is sound public policy. Later in this report, it is shown that the adjusted gross digest is 32 percent greater per pupil in the City of Atlanta than in Fulton County. Table I shows the revenue receipts of the Atlanta Schools totaled \$530.01 per pupil in 1966-67 as compared with \$571.07 in Fulton County. This means that the State Minimum Foundation Program Law together with the $1\frac{1}{2}$ mill county-wide levy and the direct appropriation from the County Commission have gone a long way toward equalizing the financial support of the two systems. It should not be inferred from this comment, however, that educational opportunities are equal in the two school systems. The Atlanta City school system provides kindergartens which are not provided in the Fulton County system. If Fulton County provided kindergartens, the revenue receipts per pupil in that school system would probably be no more than the revenue receipts per pupil in the Atlanta system.

Both systems will benefit substantially in 1967-68 from increases from the Minimum Foundation Program Appropriation provided by the 1967 Legislature. It is estimated that the City of Atlanta will receive an increase of approximately \$1,863,000 from this source and Fulton County approximately \$1,075,000.

TABLE I - SOURCES OF REVENUE OF ATLANTA AND FULTON COUNTY
SCHOOL SYSTEMS 1966-67 (BUDGETED REVENUES 1966-67,
DATA FURNISHED BY CITY AND COUNTY SCHOOL OFFICIALS)

SOURCE	ATLANTA		FULTON COUNTY	
	Amount	Percent	Amount	Percent
District Property tax for operation	\$29,686,415	55.4	\$ 4,922,451	28.4
County Wide Property Tax			1,762,892	10.2
County Commission (for General Expenses)			780,000	4.5
Intangible Taxes			230,000	1.3
County Commission (for Teacher Retirement)			720,000 #	4.2
State Minimum Foundation Program	17,322,038	32.3	7,074,761	40.8
Other State Funds	425,013	.8	0	--
Vocational Funds	628,449	1.2	58,000	.3
National Defense Education Act	520,781	1.0	65,400	.4
Fulton County School District 5½ mill levy for debt service	--		1,350,000 #	7.8
Federal Impacted Area Funds	802,366	1.5	210,000	1.2
City Council Payments for Debt Service on Sch. Bonds	2,835,045 #	5.3		
Other Income	1,358,747	2.5	159,500	.9
Total Revenue Receipts	\$53,578,854	100.0	\$17,333,004	100.0
Beginning Cash Balance	532,250	--	818,609	--
Sub-Total	54,111,104	--	18,151,613	--
Federal Funds- Elem. & Sec. Act. 1965	2,519,743	--	461,383	--
GRAND TOTAL	\$56,630,847	--	\$18,612,996	--

Not Included in the operating budget.

continued--

TABLE I - (Cont.)

SOURCE	ATLANTA		FULTON COUNTY	
	Amount	Percent	Amount	Percent
Average Daily Attendance Jan. 1, 1967	101,068		30,352	
Revenue Receipts Per Pupil in ADA *	\$530.01		\$571.07	

* Excludes federal funds received under the Elementary and Secondary Act of 1965 which cannot be used for the regular school program.

The federal revenues received from the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 are also shown in Table I. These revenues are shown separately because they are all earmarked for special purposes by the federal government and cannot be expended for the regular school program. Practically all of these revenues must be expended for compensatory education for the children of the disadvantaged.

Current Expenditures

In Table II an analysis of the budgeted current expenditures of the two school systems for 1966-67 is presented. Both systems expend 75 percent or more of total current expenditures for instruction. This is typical practice in large school systems.

Caution should be exercised in comparing the different percentage allocations given to the same expenditure functions in the two systems. These systems differ considerably in their bases of financial support, the spread of population and other factors. For example, Fulton County allocates 2.8 percent of its current expenditures to transportation but Atlanta spends no funds for pupil transportation.

Atlanta expended approximately \$486.07 per pupil for 1966-67 and Fulton County \$517.07 for current operating expenses. The Research Division of the National Education Association estimated that the average current expenditure per pupil in average daily attendance for the 50 states and the District of Columbia was \$564 in 1966-67. Therefore, the current expenditures per pupil in both the Atlanta and Fulton County School systems are very low when compared with the national average.

TABLE II

CURRENT EXPENDITURES OF ATLANTA AND FULTON COUNTY SCHOOL SYSTEMS 1966-67 #
 (BUDGETED EXPENDITURES FOR 1966-67)

ACCOUNT FUNCTION	ATLANTA		FULTON COUNTY	
	Amount	Percent	Amount	Percent
1. Administration	\$1,796,920	3.7	\$ 309,784	2.0
2. Instruction	36,977,443	75.3	12,149,333	77.4
3. Operation of Plant	4,224,543	8.6	1,228,200	7.8
4. Maintenance of Plant	2,810,500	5.7	663,550	4.2
5. Health Services	96,368	.2	0	--
6. Food Services	41,209	.1	9,300	.1
7. Transportation	0	--	444,160	2.8
8. Fixed Charges	2,417,800	4.9	889,368**	5.7
9. Other	754,819*	1.5	0	--
TOTAL	49,119,602	100.0	15,693,695	100.0
Average Daily Attendance January 1967	101,068		30,352	
Current Expenditures Per Pupil in ADA	\$486.07		\$517.06	

#Data furnished by county and city school officials. Expenditure accounts do not include expenditures from federal funds received from the Elementary and Secondary Act of 1965.

*This account consists principally of undistributed expenditures made from federal funds received under the National Defense Education Act.

**Includes \$720,000 employees' contribution to teachers' retirement paid by the County Commission.

Financial Ability

The best measure of the relative local taxpaying ability of the Atlanta and Fulton County school systems is the gross property digest per pupil in average daily attendance computed on the basis of 100 percent valuation. This is due to the fact that most local school revenue is derived from property taxes.

Following is the adjusted 100 percent gross digest for 1966 of the Atlanta City School district estimated by the State Revenue Department:

Atlanta City in Fulton County	\$4,141,663,000
Atlanta City in DeKalb County	<u>173,149,000</u>
Total	\$4,314,812,000

The average daily attendance of the Atlanta City schools was 101,068 in January, 1967. Therefore, the gross digest of the Atlanta City school district adjusted on a 100 percent basis was \$42,692 per pupil.

The 1966 gross digest of the Fulton County school district adjusted on a 100 percent basis was \$982,348,000 according to data furnished by the State Revenue Department. The gross digest includes the valuation of homesteads even though homesteads up to a valuation of \$2,000 are exempted from County operating levies for schools. It is necessary to include the valuation of homesteads in order to compute an accurate measure of the relative wealth of the two districts. The ADA of the Fulton County schools in January was 30,352. The gross digest per pupil in ADA was \$32,365. Therefore, the Atlanta City school system has a gross digest approximately 32 percent greater than the Fulton County school system. However, each of these school systems has considerably more wealth per pupil than the average school district in the United States.

Local Financial Effort to Support Education

A valid measure of local tax effort to support schools can be obtained by dividing the taxes paid on the property located in each school district by the adjusted 100 percent gross digest of that district.

It is difficult to compute exactly the local tax effort of the Atlanta City District because a part of that district is in DeKalb County. However, the following is a fairly close approximation for 1966-67.

1. District property tax	\$29,686,415
2. Payments of City Council for debt service on school bonds	2,835,045
3. The portion of the $1\frac{1}{2}$ mill county-wide tax and the portion of the appropriations made by the County Commission which was paid on property located in the City	<u>2,642,943</u>
TOTAL LOCAL PROPERTY TAXES FOR SCHOOLS	\$35,164,403

The 100 percent gross digest of the Atlanta school district for 1966 was \$4,314,812,000. The total local taxes for schools divided by the gross digest equals .00815 or approximately 8.2 mills on the adjusted 100 percent gross digest or true value of property.

The local taxes for schools in the Fulton County school district in 1966-67 were as follows:

1. District property tax	\$ 4,922,451
2. The portion of the $1\frac{1}{2}$ mill county-wide tax and the appropriation made by the County Commission which was paid on property located in the county district	619,949
3. Fulton County district levy of $5\frac{1}{2}$ mills for debt service	<u>1,350,000</u>
TOTAL LOCAL PROPERTY TAXES FOR SCHOOLS	\$ 6,892,400

The 1966 gross digest of the County school system on 100 percent basis was \$982,348,000. The total local taxes for schools divided by the gross digest equals .007016 or approximately 7 mills on the gross digest on true valuation of property.

It is evident that the Atlanta City school district made a greater local tax effort in proportion to its ability to support schools than Fulton County. If the Fulton County school district had made as great a tax effort in proportion to its ability as the Atlanta school district in 1966-67, it would have raised .001134 times \$982,348,000 or \$1,113,983 in additional local revenue in 1966-67.

Special attention is directed to the fact that Fulton County could not legally have made this extra local effort in 1966-67. The District levied 25 mills of operating taxes which was the legal limit it could levy. Furthermore, property was assessed at less than 25 percent of true value. However, the limitations on the taxing power of the Fulton County Board of Education will be eased somewhat in the future because of the ruling of the court in the McLennon vs State Revenue Commission case. The court ruled that all property must be assessed at a uniform percent of true value regardless of the class of property or where it was located. Upon the ruling, the Revenue Commissioner ordered that all county digests be based on assessing all property at 40 percent of true value. This will make it possible to increase considerably the local revenues of the Fulton County school district beginning with the 1967-68 fiscal year.

There are no legal limits on the amount of mills which the Atlanta City Board of Education may levy for the operation of the public schools of the city. Therefore, there are no legal barriers to increasing local school support for schools in Atlanta.

Actually the local taxes for schools are extremely low both in Atlanta and Fulton County when compared with the school taxes levied in other sections of the nation. Recently one of the members of the staff making this survey

participated in a study of school financing in all school districts of 20,000 population or more in Illinois. It was found that the average school district in Illinois levied local property taxes for schools equivalent to 12 mills on the 100 percent true valuation of property. This is almost fifty percent greater local effort than the City of Atlanta and 71 percent greater local tax effort for schools than in the Fulton County school district.

Indebtedness

The bonded indebtedness of the Atlanta City Council for schools totaled \$52,905,000 in 1967. This was less than 3.8 percent of the unadjusted gross digest.

The bonded indebtedness of the Fulton County school district was \$22,661,000 in 1967. This was 9.1 percent of the unadjusted gross digest of the county school district. This is close to the 10 percent constitutional limit on school indebtedness for the Fulton County district. However, the bonded indebtedness margin of Fulton County will be greatly increased when the property digest is raised from an estimated 25 percent of true value to 40 percent. The unadjusted 1966 gross digest for the Fulton County district was approximately \$248,000,000. Assuming that the 1966 digest was at 25 percent of true value, the 1967 digest at 40 percent of true value should be approximately \$400,000,000 allowing for a reasonable amount of growth. The present county school indebtedness would be less than 5.7 percent of the gross digest at a 40 percent valuation.

Another way of looking at the indebtedness of the two districts is to compute the percent that the school indebtedness of each district is of the adjusted gross digest of each district at 100 percent of true value. In 1966 this figure for the Atlanta city district was 1.23 percent and for Fulton County 2.31 percent. If the two districts were consolidated, it is assumed that the territory that originally issued the bonds would continue to be responsible for the debt service

on the bonds that it had issued. It does not appear that this would work any great hardship on either district because the indebtedness of neither district is excessive.

Non-Property Local Taxes

Some school districts in the United States have obtained legal authority to levy non-property local taxes for schools. There are arguments both for and against this practice. Following are some arguments against the levy of local non-property taxes for schools:

1. Usually only urban or metropolitan school districts are able to derive substantial funds from this source.

2. The state can collect most types of local non-property taxes more efficiently than local units of government

3. Local non-property taxes for schools place cities in competition with each other for industries.

4. If the larger urban districts are able to levy local non-property taxes for schools, they may not support a state financing program which helps the less fortunate school districts.

5. Some types of local non-property taxes make it possible for wealthy districts to shift a part of the incidence of their taxes on the residents of less wealthy districts.

Some arguments for the levy of local non-property taxes for schools are as follows:

1. The property tax is a regressive tax and public resistance to it is growing. If we maintain the vigor of local school support, many believe that a source of local revenue more nearly related to ability to pay than the property tax must be found.

2. The more progressive areas of a state desire a better quality program than the legislature is usually willing to provide from non-property state taxes.

Those areas should be given the authority to provide this higher quality program from some local source other than the property tax.

3. It is possible to select types of local non-property taxes the burden of which cannot be shifted to the taxpayers of less wealthy areas.

4. The cost of administering local non-property taxes can be held to a reasonable level by using the state's tax collection machinery or by levying local non-property taxes by metropolitan areas rather than by individual school districts.

5. The taxpayer should be given the choice of what type or types of local taxes he will levy for schools in order to broaden the base of local taxation.

As has been pointed out above, local property taxes for schools are very low both in Atlanta and in Fulton County. There is considerable leeway in both districts for increasing local property taxes for schools without those taxes becoming burdensome. Therefore, there is no immediate urgency for the consideration of obtaining the authority to levy local non-property taxes for schools.

If the Atlanta and Fulton County school authorities decide to study the possibility of levying local non-property taxes, it is recommended that consideration be given to the following:

1. That any local non-property taxes that are levied for schools in the Atlanta area be levied over the entire metropolitan area of Atlanta including all school districts in the following counties: Fulton, DeKalb, Clayton, Cobb, and Gwinnett.

2. That a metropolitan school taxing authority be established with the sole responsibility for collecting any local non-property taxes for schools authorized by law and for apportioning such taxes among the several school districts in the five counties named above in proportion to the average daily attendance of pupils.

3. That only those types of non-property local taxes be levied, the burden of which cannot be shifted to taxpayers residing outside of the Atlanta metropolitan area.

Financing Education in a Reorganized District

A number of reports have been presented to the people of the Fulton County and Atlanta school districts in which arguments for and against the consolidation of the two districts have been set forth. It is not the purpose of this report to review those arguments. Therefore, the discussions of school finance presented in this study have been focused primarily on the financing of schools in each district rather than on the financing of schools in a consolidated district. Certain suggestions particularly concerning the level of school financing have already been presented. Those suggestions are as applicable to the financing of education in Atlanta and Fulton County as separate school districts as they would be applicable to the financing of education in a consolidated district.

It would no doubt be possible to provide reasonably adequate school financing in each of the two districts operating as separate districts. However, if the two districts were consolidated, it would be possible to establish a more equitable and more efficient financing plan. It has already been pointed out that the 1966 gross digest adjusted at 100 percent in the City of Atlanta was \$42,692 per pupil in ADA and in the Fulton County district \$32,365. If the two districts were consolidated, the gross digest at 100 percent valuation for the consolidated district would be \$40,307 per pupil. It has also been pointed out that the taxpayers in the Fulton County school district are making a lower tax effort to support schools in proportion to ability than the taxpayers in the Atlanta City district. Therefore, consolidation of the two districts would equalize the wealth back of each child and it would also equalize the tax effort to support schools in the Atlanta-Fulton County consolidated district. Consolidation would also simplify local financing because there would no longer be a need for the special $1\frac{1}{2}$ mill county

equalizing levy or direct appropriations from the County Commission.

It has been suggested in other studies presented to the Local Education Commission of Atlanta and Fulton County that the consolidation of the two districts might result in the loss of some state school funds under present methods of state apportionment. If there is anything in present state laws that would place a penalty on desirable reorganization of school districts, the laws should be amended and the penalties eliminated. This should not be a difficult undertaking.

As has already been pointed out, improvements in school financing should be made in the Atlanta and Fulton County school districts regardless of whether they are consolidated. If the two districts are consolidated, consideration should be given to the following financial recommendations:

1. The Board of the consolidated district should be given the same power for levying taxes for school operation as that now possessed by the Atlanta City Board of Education and it should be fiscally independent of any other local body.

2. The Board should be given the power to issue bonds for capital outlay purposes up to a reasonable percent of the gross digest. The Board should also be given the power to obtain tax anticipation loans to be repaid within the fiscal year.

3. Homestead exemption from school taxes should be abolished in the reorganized district.

4. Present outstanding bonds should be retired in accordance with the commitments made at the time of issuance but all new bonds should be issued on a district-wide basis and retired from taxes levied throughout the consolidated district.

Estimated Local Tax Levy Needed for Financing Schools in the Reorganized District

It is difficult to make an accurate estimate of the local tax levy needed for financing schools in the reorganized district for a number of reasons. The local tax levy for schools in the combined Atlanta-Fulton County School District will depend upon a number of factors including the following: the per cent of true value at which property is assessed, the quality and quantity of education provided, the economic growth rate of Atlanta and Fulton County and the additional amounts of revenue to be received in the future from state and federal sources. Assumptions must be made with respect to all of these items in order to estimate the probable tax levy in the combined district.

In Table III, the estimates of the gross digest of the combined Atlanta and Fulton County School District for the years 1966-69 are presented. It will be noted that estimates at 100 per cent of true value and at 40 per cent of true value are both presented.

YEAR	GROSS DIGEST AT 100 PER CENT TRUE VALUE	GROSS DIGEST AT 40 PER CENT TRUE VALUE
1966*	\$5,297,160,000	\$2,118,864,000
1967	5,519,641,000	2,207,856,000
1968	5,751,466,000	2,300,586,000
1969	5,993,027,000	2,397,211,000

*Actual data reported by the State Revenue Department

The 40 per cent estimate is used for computing the estimated tax levy because of the order of the Revenue Commissioner that property be assessed uniformly throughout the state at 40 per cent of true value. It was

estimated that the gross digest would increase at the rate of 4.2 per cent annually. That was the approximate growth rate used in the estimates presented on p. 15 of District Reorganization For Better Schools in Atlanta and Fulton County Report of the Local Education Commission of Atlanta and Fulton County, Georgia, February 1966.

In Table IV, estimates are presented of anticipated revenues of the reorganized district from non-local sources, estimated budget requirements, estimated local tax revenue needed and estimated local school tax levy needed for school operation. These estimates are for operation only and do not include revenues and expenditures needed for capital outlay and debt service. The methods used in making the estimates are set forth in the footnotes to Table IV. It will be noted that the average estimated tax rate for the two districts operating as separate districts in 1967-68 is 18.3 mills but that the estimated tax rate for the first year of operation as a combined district is 21.4 mills. This is due to the fact that it will take a considerable increase in school revenue to provide kindergartens for the Fulton County children and to increase the general level of educational opportunity provided in the reorganized system. It will also be observed that the estimated local tax levy for 1969-70 is 23.2 mills. This is probably an over estimate because it is based on the assumption that the 1969 State Legislature will not make any increase in the Foundation Program allotment per teacher. If the 1969 legislature would make the same proportionate increase in the per teacher allotment in the Foundation Program that it made in 1967, the estimated local tax levy for schools in the reorganized district would be only approximately 22.0 mills.

Attention is particularly directed to the fact that these estimated tax levies are based on a tax digest at 40 per cent of true value. A tax levy of 23.2 mills on a tax digest at 40 per cent of true value is equivalent to a tax levy of only 9.28 mills on a tax digest at 100 per cent true value. This is not a high local tax levy for schools when compared with school taxes levied in leading school systems in other sections of the country.

TABLE IV

ESTIMATED OPERATING REVENUES FOR
ATLANTA AND FULTON COUNTY DISTRICTS
COMBINED AND ESTIMATED LOCAL OPERATING TAX LEVY
NEEDED FOR SCHOOLS BASED ON A GROSS DIGEST AT 40 PER CENT
OF TRUE VALUE 1967-1969

SOURCE OF REVENUE	1967-68 (Estimated as separate dis- tricts)	1968-69 (Estimated as combined district)	1969-70 (Estimated as combined district)
STATE FUNDS	\$27,759,812	\$28,509,327	\$29,279,079
Vocational Funds	704,983	724,018	743,566
National Defense Education Act	602,008	618,262	634,955
Federal Impacted Area Funds	1,039,700	1,067,772	1,096,602
Other Income	1,559,240	1,601,339	1,644,575
Estimated income excluding income from local taxes#	31,665,743	32,520,718	33,398,777
Estimated Operating Budget Requirements*	72,110,626	81,832,188	89,111,499
Estimated Local Tax Funds Needed	40,444,883	49,311,470	55,712,722
Gross Digest Estimated at 40 per cent true value	2,207,856,000	2,300,586,000	2,397,211,000
Estimated Tax Levy for Schools Opera- tion in mills	18.3	21.4	23.2

#State funds for 1967-68 were estimated by adding \$2,938,000 to the state funds received by the two systems for 1966-67. This is the estimated additional state revenue provided for the two systems by the 1967 Legislature. The estimated state funds for subsequent years was increased 2.7 per cent annually which is about the estimated annual increase in attendance of the combined systems. The estimates for other non-local sources of revenue were also increased 2.7 per cent annually for the same reason. This method may overestimate some sources and underestimate other sources.

*Data taken from P. 21 of District Reorganization for Better Schools in Atlanta and Fulton County. Report of the Local Education Commission of Atlanta and Fulton County, Georgia, February 1966.

assistance, including but not limited to attorneys, accountants, actuaries, and educational consultants, as may be necessary to assemble the required data and information, to analyze the same and draft the report and the plan or plans for submission to the General Assembly as hereinafter provided. The Commission is authorized to enter into a contract with persons or agencies for providing any or all of the data and information required in carrying out the purposes of the Commission. The Commission shall reimburse the individual members of the Commission for their actual out-of-pocket expenses incurred by authority of and while on business for the Commission.

SECTION 5

The official plan or plans, when signed by a majority of said Commission shall be filed by said Commission with the Representatives of Fulton and DeKalb Counties and the Senators of the 34th, 35th, 36th, 37th, 38th, 40th, 41st, 42nd, and 43rd Districts in the General Assembly of Georgia and with the Clerks of the Superior Courts having jurisdiction in Fulton and DeKalb Counties and with the City Clerk of the City of Atlanta on the first day of the next session of the General Assembly following January 1, 1968. At least 60 days prior to filing any of the aforesaid plans, the Commission shall submit a draft copy thereof to each of the aforesaid Boards of Education, for comments and suggested revisions. The Commission shall provide for the publication and distribution of a reasonable number of copies of its plan or plans and by supporting reports prepared by the Commission or previous Commission. When its final plan or plans have been filed as hereinabove provided, the Commission shall thereby be discharged.

SECTION 6

The Board of Education of the City of Atlanta is hereby authorized and directed to allocate the sum of \$6,000.00 and the Board of Education of Fulton County is hereby authorized and directed to allocate the sum of \$4,000.00, for the purpose of carrying out the purposes of this Act, which are declared to be educational functions of said Boards of Education. Requisitions for sums up to the total amounts hereby directed to be allocated shall be signed by the Chairman and Secretary-Treasurer of said Commission and shall be paid by the official in charge of the funds thus allocated. Said Boards of Education are further authorized to allocate and expend such additional funds as in their discretion they may determine to be necessary to carry out the purposes of this Act, provided that such additional allocations and expenditures shall be shared

by said Boards on a ratio of 60% from the Atlanta Board of Education and 40% from the Fulton County Board of Education.

SECTION 7

The Commission is authorized to accept donations in any form from any source and use the same in any way the Commission may deem advisable to effectuate the aims and purposes of the Commission.

SECTION 8

It is hereby found, determined and declared that the re-establishment of the Commission and the carrying out of its purpose is in all respects for the benefit of the people of the City of Atlanta and Fulton County and is a public purpose and that the Commission will be performing an essential educational function in the exercise of the power conferred upon it by this Act.

SECTION 9

This Act, being for the welfare of the citizens of Atlanta and of Fulton County, shall be liberally construed to effect the purposes thereof.

SECTION 10

The provisions of this Act are severable and if any of its provisions shall be held unconstitutional by any court of competent jurisdiction, the decision of such court shall not affect or impair any of the remaining provisions.

SECTION 11

A copy of notice of intention to apply for this local legislation and affidavits showing the publication of such notice as required by law are attached hereto and made a part of this bill, and it is hereby declared that all of the requirements of the Constitution of the State of Georgia of 1945, relating to publication of notice of intention to apply for the passage of this local legislation, have been complied with for the enactment of this law.

SECTION 12

All laws and parts of laws in conflict with this Act are hereby repealed.

New Era Publishing Company Inc.

525 MARSHALL STREET
P. O. BOX 411
DECATUR, GEORGIA 30030

BRITT FAYSSOUX
EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT
EDITOR

J. R. BOATRIGHT
VICE PRESIDENT
BUSINESS MANAGER

THE DEKALB NEW ERA-RECORD
THE LITHONIA OBSERVER
PUBLISHING
PRINTING

GEORGIA, DeKalb County

COPY OF NOTICE

NOTICE OF INTENTION TO INTRODUCE LOCAL LEGISLATION
Notice is hereby given of intention to introduce the January, 1967 session of the General Assembly of Georgia, a bill to re-establish a Local Education Commission in Atlanta and Fulton County to continue a study of the desirability and feasibility of combining the school systems of Fulton County and of the City of Atlanta, including the portion thereof lying in DeKalb County, to provide for the organization and functioning of said commission, and for other purposes.
This December 27, 1966.
A. C. Lattimer
Attorney, City of Atlanta Board of Education
James P. Groton
Attorney, Fulton County Board of Education

1-5-3T

Personally appeared before the undersigned officer authorized by law to administer oaths, BRITT FAYSSOUX, who, being duly sworn, deposes and states on oath that he is General Manager of the New Era Publishing Company, Inc., a Georgia corporation, and is authorized to make this affidavit on its behalf. Deponent avers that the New Era Publishing Company, Inc. is the publisher of the DeKalb New Era, a newspaper published in the City of Decatur, being of general circulation and being the legal organ for the county of DeKalb, and further avers that legal notice, a true copy of which is hereto attached, Notice of Intent to Introduce Local Legislation was duly published once a week for 3 weeks as required by law, the dates of publication being January 5, January 12, and January 19, 1967

Britt Fayssoux
BRITT FAYSSOUX

Sworn to and subscribed before me this

1 day of March, 1967.

s/ Carol E. Wheeler
Carol E. Wheeler

Notary Public
My Commission Expires Feb. 21, 1971

(SEAL) H. B. No. 623

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PUBLISHER'S AFFIDAVIT.

STATE OF GEORGIA,—County of Fulton.

Before me, the undersigned, a..... Notary Public... .., this day personally came Frank Kempton....., who, being first duly sworn, according to law, says that he is the... President.....of the Daily Report Company, publishers of the Fulton County Daily Report, official newspaper published at Atlanta, in said county and State, and that the publication, of which the annexed is a true copy, was published in said paper on the29th..... days of ...December....., 19.66., and on the ...6, 13, 20th... days of January....., 1967.. As provided by law.

Frank Kempton
s/ Frank Kempton

NOTICE OF INTENTION TO INTRODUCE LOCAL LEGISLATION

Notice is hereby given of intention to introduce into the January, 1967 session of the General Assembly of Georgia, a Bill to re-establish a Local Education Commission in Atlanta and Fulton County to continue a study of the desirability and feasibility of combining the school systems of Fulton County and of the City of Atlanta, including the portion thereof lying in DeKalb County; to provide for the organization and functioning of said commission; and for other purposes.

This December 27, 1966.
A. C. Lattimer
Attorney, City of Atlanta Board of Education
James P. Groton
Attorney, Fulton County Board of Education

Dec 29, 1966, Jan 6 13 20, 1967

Subscribed and sworn to before me

this30th... day of

January....., 19.67.

Mildred N. Lazenby
s/ Mildred N. Lazenby

(SEAL)

H.B. No. 623

(As Passed House & Senate)

APR 7 1967

By: Messrs. Walling, Harris, Farrar and Levitas of the 118th, Higginbotham, Westlake and Davis of the 119th, Winkles of the 120th, Longino of the 122nd, Cook of the 123rd, Adams of the 125th, Cox of the 127th, Dillon of the 128th, Carnes of the 129th, Lambros of the 130th, Sims of the 131st, Grier of the 132nd, Alexander of the 133rd, Daugherty of the 134th, Brown of the 135th, Bond of the 136th, Hamilton of the 137th, McClatchey of the 138th, Townsend of the 140th, and Egan of the 141st.

A BILL

To be entitled an Act To Re-establish a Local Education Commission in Atlanta and Fulton County to continue the study of the desirability and feasibility of combining the school systems of Fulton County and of the City of Atlanta, including the portion thereof lying in DeKalb County; to provide that said Commission shall draft a plan or plans, together with proposed Constitutional amendments and legislation, for the combining of such school systems and submit same to members of the General Assembly from Fulton and DeKalb Counties; to provide for the organization of said Commission; to provide for the publication of said plan or plans; to provide for allocation of funds by the Boards of Education of Atlanta and Fulton County for the operation of the Commission; to provide for authority to accept donations; and for other purposes.

Whereas, by Resolution approved March 18, 1964 (Ga. L. 1964, p. 3171) there was created in Atlanta and Fulton County a Local Education Commission to study the desirability and feasibility of combining the school system of Fulton County and of the City of Atlanta; and

Whereas, said Commission filed its report, recommending that said school systems be combined; and

Whereas, by Resolution approved March 15, 1966 (Ga. L. 1966 p. 3413) said Commission was re-established for the purpose of drafting a plan or plans, together with proposed Constitutional amendments and legislation, for the combining of such school systems, for consideration by the members of the General Assembly; and

Whereas, said Commission has presented its interim progress report, which indicates that additional time will be required to complete the work of the Commission; and

Whereas, it is desirable to re-establish said Commission for the purpose of completing the work of the Commission;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF GEORGIA and it is hereby enacted by the authority of the same:

SECTION 1

There is hereby re-established in Fulton County and the City of Atlanta a Commission to continue the study of the desirability and feasibility of combining the school systems of Fulton County and the City of Atlanta, including the portion thereof lying in DeKalb County. Said Commission shall be known as the Local Education Commission, of said county, hereinafter referred to as the "Commission". Said Commission shall be composed of twenty-one (21) members, classified into the following positions: (a) Two ex-officio positions, to be filled by the Superintendent of the Atlanta Public Schools and the Superintendent of the Fulton County Public Schools; (b) six ex-officio representative positions, which shall be filled originally by Ed S. Cook representing the Board of Education of the City of Atlanta; W. L. Robinson, representing the Board of Education of Fulton County; Earl Landers, representing the City of Atlanta government; Alan Kiepper, representing the Fulton County Commissioners; Mrs. Ethel Brocks, representing the classroom teachers of the City of Atlanta; and Mrs. Nona K. Ford, representing the classroom teachers of the Fulton County Public Schools and; (c) the following voting members of said Commission: Dr. R. H. Brisbane, J. H. Cawthon, Dr. Rufus E. Clement, John T. Cunningham, Otis M. Jackson, Thomas M. Miller, A. B. Padgett, Mrs. A. L. Riter, Martham Sanders, Wallace H. Stewart, W. Kenneth Stringer, William M. Teem III and Fred J. Turner.

SECTION 2

Each individual herein named to the Commission shall serve thereon until the Commission is discharged as hereinafter provided, unless he shall refuse to serve or shall die or resign. Whenever a vacancy on the Commission results from the fact that a member refuses to serve or dies or resigns, the vacancy shall be filled by majority vote of the remaining members of the Commission as follows: If the vacancy is in a representative position, it shall be filled by a person who is then a member of the class represented; if the vacancy is in one of the voting positions, it shall be filled by a citizen then residing in the City of Atlanta or in Fulton County outside the City of Atlanta. Notwithstanding anything else herein stated, if a vacancy takes place in a representative or voting position originally filled by a citizen residing in the City of Atlanta, such vacancy shall be filled by a citizen then residing in the City of Atlanta and in the county wherein the person originally filling said position resided; and if a vacancy takes place in a position originally filled by a citizen residing in Fulton County outside the City of Atlanta, such vacancy shall be filled by a citizen then residing in Fulton County outside of the City of Atlanta. A

majority of the persons serving as members of the Commission shall constitute a quorum to do business but a less number may adjourn from time to time. The Commission shall elect a Chairman, a Vice-Chairman and a Secretary-Treasurer from its membership. The Commission shall adopt, from time to time, such rules, regulations and modes of procedure as it deems expedient for the orderly dispatch of its business. The Commission shall keep minutes and records of its meetings. A monthly statement of all disbursements of the funds hereinafter provided, properly vouched for, shall be furnished to the Boards of Education of Fulton County and of the City of Atlanta. The first meeting of the Commission shall be held within 30 days after the approval of this Act by the Governor, at a place and time mutually agreed upon by the members thereof representing the Boards of Education of Fulton County and of the City of Atlanta. Said Boards of Education, or either of them, upon application by the Commission, shall provide suitable office space and meeting rooms for the Commission.

SECTION 3

It shall be the function and duty of said Commission to continue the study of the educational systems of Fulton County and of the City of Atlanta, including the portion thereof lying in DeKalb County, for the purpose of considering the desirability and feasibility of combining said school systems, and to submit to the General Assembly of the State of Georgia as hereinafter provided a plan or plans, together with proposed Constitutional amendments and legislation, for the combining of such school systems, and such plan or plans shall include any changes in political and administrative and fiscal structure of either or both of said systems which the Commission deems desirable and feasible.

SECTION 4

The said Commission shall have the power and authority to hold public hearings and any judge of the superior court upon application signed by the Chairman and Secretary-Treasurer of the Commission shall issue a subpoena for the attendance of any witness or the production of any books, papers or records. In making such study the Commission is authorized to call upon the State of Georgia or any of its agencies or institutions for any aid or assistance which can be rendered it, and to call upon the various departments of the county and municipalities, including the law departments, for such assistance. Said commission may employ such special, technical and clerical