

*Filer*

# LOCAL EDUCATION COMMISSION

## of Atlanta and Fulton County, Georgia

CHAIRMAN  
WALLACE STEWART  
892-2800

VICE-CHAIRMAN  
DR. R. H. BRISBANE  
523-5071

SECRETARY-TREASURER  
W. KENNETH STRINGER  
892-0353

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### MINUTES

#### LOCAL EDUCATION COMMISSION MEETING

January 28, 1969

The Local Education Commission met at the Instructional Services Center at 11:30 a.m. on January 28, 1969 with the following in attendance:

#### Voting Members

Mr. Walter Allen  
Mr. J. H. Cawthon  
Mr. Walt Davis  
Mr. Dick Lane  
Mr. Devereaux McClatchey  
Mr. A. B. Padgett  
Mr. Marthame Sanders  
Mr. Wallace Stewart, Chairman  
Mr. Kenneth Stringer  
Mr. William Teems, III  
Mr. H. B. Watson  
Dr. Asa Yancey

#### Ex-Officio Members

Miss Eleanor Burgess

Dr. John Letson  
Mrs. Helen McGinty  
Mrs. Lucille Perrino  
Mrs. Anna Pearl Scott

#### Guests

Mr. Dave Clark  
Mr. John Ferguson  
Mr. John Grindle  
Mrs. Dorothy Guy  
Mr. Nick Powers  
Mr. Jerry Wootan

#### Staff

Curtis Henson

Mr. Wallace Stewart stated that there were two primary purposes for the meeting: one, to receive the various reports and two, to decide what to do with them.

Before receiving the report from Mr. John Ferguson, Mr. A. B. Padgett reviewed the authorization granted by the commission to his committee to secure professional assistance in studying the legal structure required to merge the two school systems. He then introduced Mr. Ferguson who gave the report. Comments and questions concerning the report follow.

A question for further consideration was that maybe the Board should be

composed of enough members at large to match those elected from the respective districts plus one additional member at large so that there would be an odd number. This would give both the representation from the people plus other features desirable for a school board.

The statement in Section 12 concerning annual vs. continuing contracts needs to be clarified.

In Section 14 dealing with purchases over \$1,000. should be stated so that it would not be cumbersome or burdensome upon the board chairman who, as it is now stated, would have to sign thousands of purchase requests.

Concerning land and other trust funds, an expression was made that it should be determined if complications or difficulty would arise if an attempt were made to transfer the title of such property to another school system such as the new one being proposed.

Section 20 should be changed to state that the county could not levy taxes on property inside the city limits for school bond purposes.

The trustees for the pension board for the City of Atlanta teachers cannot be abolished since the pension fund covers all city employees including teachers.

It was stated that November, 1970 would be the earliest date to vote on a constitutional amendment, therefore, there did not seem to be any undue haste in presenting recommendations to the local delegation.

The question was asked, what does the Local Education Commission do now with all the material and data gathered and compiled to date?

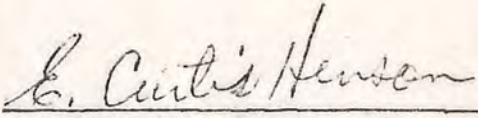
Mr. Dick Lane made the motion that the Local Education Commission, through the executive committee, forward a copy of all materials from the Local Education Commission to the chairman of the Fulton County and DeKalb County delegations for study and appraisal. The motion was seconded by Mr. Walt Davis and passed unanimously. A cover letter from the chairman of the commission is to accompany the report presented.

Mr. Powers then gave his report concerning teacher benefits. He gave an analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of each aspect of teacher benefit programs in both the Atlanta and Fulton County school systems along with suggestions to improve coverage in each system.

Both Mr. Powers and Mr. Ferguson are to make corrections identified during the meeting and send corrected copy to the chairman of the commission.

Meeting adjourned at 3:15 p.m.

Approved By: \_\_\_\_\_  
Chairman

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Recording Secretary

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March 14, 1969

MEMORANDUM

To: Members of the Local Education Commission  
From: Curtis Henson, Recording Secretary  
Re: Corrections in Report Presented January 28, 1969

Attached is a set of replacement pages to be inserted in the report prepared by Towers, Perrin, Forster & Crosby, Inc. These are the corrections identified at the last Local Education Commission meeting and deal only with the retirement plan.

## SECTION IV

### RETIREMENT PLAN

The Retirement Plan for City of Atlanta employees was initially adopted in 1927. The Pension Act for the employees of the Fulton County Board of Education first was passed in 1937. Since both plans were originally adopted they have undergone several changes, the most recent major revision occurring in 1962 for both Plans. The Plans have been contributory since their inception with the policy that the respective Boards match the amounts contributed by the employees. Historically, each increase in benefits has generated a corresponding increase in the rate of employee contributions. Further, in order to receive the higher benefits active employees have had the option of "repaying" contributions they would have paid had the current contribution level existed since the employee was hired.

Since active employees do not have to accept increased benefits (and "make up" back contributions), the present Retirement Plan covers employees at several different benefit levels with different rates of employee contributions. However, since the majority of employees who were active in 1962 have opted to take the increased benefits and all employees hired since 1962 automatically are covered for those benefits, we will discuss the provisions of the Retirement Plan as they currently exist.

Comparison of Plans

The provisions of the Retirement Plans of both Fulton County and the City of Atlanta are almost identical. The following description will point out where differences exist in Plan provisions.

Normal Retirement

Date:

Employees are eligible to retire on full unreduced pension after completing 25 years of service and attaining age 60. Employees may work to age 65 at their option.

Early Retirement

Date:

Employees are eligible to retire early on a reduced pension at any time after completing 25 years of service and attaining age 55. Pension is reduced 1/12th of 2% for each month the employee is less than 60.

Normal Retirement

Benefit:

2% of first \$300 of monthly Earnings, plus 1 1/2% of monthly Earnings in excess of \$300 times years of "creditable" service. Earnings equal average of highest five years of earnings during employment.

Maximum Benefit:

In no event will normal benefit plus Primary Social Security exceed 75% of Earnings on which benefit is determined.

Disability Benefit:

After 10 years service benefit accrued to date is payable.

Pre-Retirement Death Benefit:

If employee is killed in the line of duty during first five years of employment, his beneficiary receives 1/5th of full 25 year service pension; after five years, pro-rata portion of full service pension. (Fulton County's Plan apparently does not contain this provision.)

Post-Retirement Death Benefit:

Certain eligible dependents are entitled to 50% of the benefit being received by the pensioner. If the beneficiary is more than five years younger than the pensioner, such beneficiary's pension is reduced 1/12th of 2% for each month that she is more than five years younger than the pensioner. No reduction if beneficiary is age 60 or over.

Employee Contributions: 5% of Earnings; 6% of Earnings if desire post-retirement death benefits.

Termination of Employment: Return of all employee contributions.

Minimum Benefit: If a pensioner (or pensioner and beneficiary) dies prior to receiving at least the total amount of his contributions, the balance will be payable to the pensioner's estate.

Make-up of "Back" Contributions: All active employees during 1962 could elect the increased benefits by paying "back" contributions. Once determined, such amounts could be paid in a lump sum or in 60 monthly installments. If not elected within six months from Effective Date, 4% interest is charged from Effective Date to the date the employee elects to be covered under the increased benefits.

In addition, both Boards match the amounts of employee current and "back" contributions. The matching of "back" contributions may be amortized over a 20 year period.

### Suggested Plan

An examination of the above provisions demonstrates that both Plans are identical with one minor exception. We do recommend that a combined Plan contain the provision to allow for the payment of benefits if an employee is killed in the line of duty. (The Fulton County Plan apparently does not have this provision.)

We suggest that no changes of a major nature be considered during the period the merger is taken under consideration.

### Comments on Suggested Plan

This paragraph will discuss that area where both present Plans do not have complete identical provisions. We suggest that the provision for payment of benefits in the event an employee is killed in the line of duty be maintained. The probability of such an event is remote, but does exist for school bus drivers and teachers who must travel between employment locations.

### Method of Financing

The Retirement Plan for the Fulton County School personnel is maintained and accounted for separately from the retirement plan for other Fulton County employees. The City of Atlanta maintains one overall Retirement Plan which covers both Board of Education employees and other City



personnel. (Policemen and Firemen are not included.) No separate accounting policy is followed solely for employees of the Board of Education. The financial information and numbers of employees we will be referring to in this subsection were taken from interviews with Miss Lula Carson of Fulton County and Mr. Gus Langford of the City of Atlanta. In addition, the most recently available audit reports of both Funds were used, i. e., December 31, 1967 as certified by H. G. Jackson & Company for the City of Atlanta and June 30, 1968 as certified by Respass and Respass for Fulton County. It is important to note at this point that the City of Atlanta follows a cash accounting system, whereas Fulton County follows an accrual accounting system.

The following financial information is pertinent to this study.

	<u>CITY OF ATLANTA</u>	<u>FULTON COUNTY</u>
<u>Number of Active Members:</u>	Unavailable	2,629
<u>Monthly Employee Contributions:</u>	\$337,070 (School) 99,390 (Non - school)	\$77,543
<u>Number of Retired Members:</u>	2001 (No breakdown available between school and non-school)	279 (plus 54 pre-1952 retirees who receive benefits directly from County)
<u>Monthly Benefit Payments:</u>	\$292,000 (School) 73,000 (Non-school)	\$68,592 (plus \$7,306 from County for pre-1952 retirees).
<u>Fund Assets:</u>	\$12,591,328 (Cash and investments at cost)	\$10,104,979 (Includes \$738,485 due as matching funds)

An examination of the above information clearly shows that the City of Atlanta Retirement Plan is substantially larger than that of Fulton County. Further, the majority of the City of Atlanta Plan's members, contributions and, therefore, liabilities and fund assets are attributed to Board of Education personnel. For this reason, we feel that a combined Board of Education Plan should include the non-school employees of the City of Atlanta. Failure to do so may bring serious financial disadvantage to a plan maintained solely for the City of Atlanta non-school personnel.

Should the Plans merge, the surviving political entity would inherit the responsibility of paying all existing pensioners' benefits and making matching contributions on all future employee contributions. (The obligation for payment of benefits to the 54 pre-1952 retirees in the present Fulton County Plan would in all likelihood remain an obligation of the County.) Further, the contributions from the Teachers' Retirement System of Georgia would continue to be paid to the combined Fund.

As the nature of this report is preliminary, it was deemed inadvisable at this time to perform cost projections or determinations of assets and liabilities of the two present plans. However, should the merger come to fruition, it will be necessary to perform a detailed audit of both plans and, we suggest, an actuarial valuation to determine the relative financial strength of both present plans and the surviving plan. In addition, the exact amount of matching contributions due (both current and "make-up") would have to be determined as of the effective date of the combined plan, and arrangements made with the existing sponsoring political bodies for future payment to the combined fund.

The current funds are invested in U.S. Government Treasury Notes, Bills and Bonds and Certificates of Deposit at most local banks and savings and loan associations. In addition, cash accounts are maintained. In all likelihood this existing arrangement would not be altered.

### Installation Procedure

As stated previously, the actual establishment and installation of a combined plan would prudently be done only after an analysis of the present financial situation of both Plans and the necessary legislative requirements have been completed. Once the new sponsoring political body accepts the financial obligation and liabilities of a combined Plan, the actual "transfer" and combination of people and funds can be accomplished with relative ease through bookkeeping procedures.

It would be necessary to appoint a new combined Pension Board and to establish an administrative team charged with the responsibilities of detailed record keeping, payment of benefits and other administrative requirements.

Further, the combined Plan would require redrafting of the Pension Act and sponsorship in the Legislature.

Should the merger be accomplished, it is vitally important to communicate to employees (especially those nearing retirement) the purpose of the combined arrangement and to assure them that benefits will not be affected.

## SECTION V

### CONCLUSIONS AND SUMMARY

An analysis of all benefits currently provided by both Systems shows that they are quite compatible. The medical plans are different from a conceptual design standpoint, but the benefits provided are similar. From this we conclude that the plans may be merged with relative ease.

The result of combining the plans should reduce the gross overall costs from those of maintaining two separate systems. Assuming that the employee contribution rates currently applicable to the City of Atlanta medical plan (employee pay all except for \$1.00 per month toward major medical) are adopted, the present employees of Fulton County will pay less than they are currently paying for employee coverage but slightly more for dependents coverage. However, benefits will be increased.

#### Next Steps

The responsibility for a decision to continue further rests with the respective School Systems. An ultimate decision will be contingent on many factors, one of which should include an actuarial valuation of both present retirement plans to determine their respective level of funding and financial condition.

*Memo*

DATE

From CHARLES L. DAVIS

To Mr. Earl J. Janning.

*Information on Local  
Education Comm.*

*Organ - has been  
expanded and life  
extended.*

*Will present to O & H  
and suggest City Janning*

File  
Local Education  
Commission

*File*

N O T I C E

THE NEXT MEETING OF THE LOCAL EDUCATION COMMISSION WILL BE  
HELD AT 12:00 NOON ON THURSDAY, JULY 25, AT THE INSTRUCTIONAL  
SERVICE CENTER OF THE ATLANTA SCHOOL SYSTEM, 2930 FORREST HILLS  
DRIVE, S. W.



*File  
School Study*

METROPOLITAN SCHOOL DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL

To: Earl Landers

From: Curtis Henson, Recording Secretary

The enclosed proposed plan of study was distributed and discussed at the July 31 meeting of the Local Education Commission of Atlanta and Fulton County.

ECH/dh

August 3, 1964

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METROPOLITAN SCHOOL DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL

*City of Atlanta and Fulton County Boards of Education*

2930 Forrest Hill Drive, S.W.

Atlanta, Georgia 30315

September 7, 1966

TO: Members of the Local Education Commission

FROM: Curtis Henson, Recording Secretary

The next meeting of the Local Education Commission will be held in the Conference Room of the Atlanta Public Schools' Administration Building, 224 Central Avenue, at 10 a.m. on Thursday, September 22, 1966. The primary purpose of this meeting is to review the plan of action developed by Dr. Pierce. A copy is enclosed.

CH:cw  
enclosure

ATLANTA-FULTON COUNTY EDUCATION COMMISSION

PROVISIONS FOR CREATING AN ATLANTA-FULTON  
COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT

The General Assembly of Georgia at the request of its representatives from Fulton and DeKalb counties created a Local Education Commission in 1964 and charged the Commission with responsibility:

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.

The Commission was appointed and conducted the requested study, releasing its report in February, 1966. The report recommended the dissolution of the Atlanta and Fulton County School Districts and the creation of a new district in their stead. A plan for creating the proposed new district was included in the report which outlined the steps necessary for carrying out this recommendation.

The report of the Commission was accepted by the legislative delegation representing Fulton and DeKalb counties. After due deliberation of the recommendations, the legislative group secured approval for continuation of the Commission and requested it to carry out the steps which it had defined as being necessary for dissolving the present school districts and creating the proposed new district.

This memorandum outlines the tasks involved in creating the proposed new district and suggests how these steps may be executed. Five distinct but related tasks are essential in carrying out this latest charge to the Commission. They are:

1. Legal work which is necessary in order to dissolve the two present districts and to create the proposed new district.
2. Educational planning necessary to assure orderly and effective transition from the present two districts to the proposed single district.
3. Suggestion on the initial role of the new board of education.
4. A program for developing public understanding of the proposed new district and the reasons which support its creation.
5. Allocations of responsibility for getting done the necessary tasks.

Each of the five steps is outlined briefly in the following pages. The assumption is made that the plans for the proposed district and the characteristics of the district included in the 1966 report of the Commission are acceptable. They are, therefore, reported in this document where appropriate.

#### LEGAL WORK

Substantial legal tasks must be undertaken and completed in order to establish the proposed new school district. It is not possible to define with certainty all of these tasks at present because there is no existing overview of legislation and court decisions affecting the present Fulton County and Atlanta School Districts although major task areas can be defined. These follow:

1. Compile and analyze the legislation and court decisions which currently affect the Atlanta and Fulton County School Districts. Since this has never been done, there is no way of knowing at present the precise dimensions of this task.
2. Prepare the legislation which must be adopted in order to abolish the Atlanta and Fulton County School Districts. Until the necessary

research has been completed, there is no way of knowing just what this step involves. Whether a single piece of legislation general in nature will suffice or whether specific measures repealing separate laws relating to such subjects as taxation, bonding capacity, and so forth, are required remains to be seen.

3. Provide for meeting present and future unfulfilled legal and moral commitments of the Atlanta and Fulton County School Districts. Indebtedness, outstanding bonds, retirement provisions and tenure rights are examples of such commitments. Current welfare provisions for personnel may be continued or provisions can be made in new legislation to protect earned rights of present personnel through incorporation in any new welfare provisions which might be created for the school district. Establishing eligibility of the new school district for state funds is an illustration of another type of protection, as is assurance that current salary levels will not suffer in the transition.
4. Arrange for the transfer of properties of present school districts to the proposed new district.
5. Prepare a constitutional amendment for creating the new school district. This is an essential step under Georgia law. The amendment should be expressed in general terms insofar as feasible, leaving as many of the specific provisions concerning the district as possible to be taken care of outside the framework of constitutional mandates.

The amendment would necessarily specify the boundaries of the district, define its basic structure, and outline its powers. Such would be done within the limitations of other constitutional provisions affecting schools and school districts. For example, the

amendment would have to be consistent with the constitutional definition of the State's responsibility for public schools.

Legal provisions to be made either by constitutional amendment or statutory acts include creation of a board of education of seven members elected at large for terms of six years, one from each of seven subdivisions of the district of approximately the same number of persons. The amendment or enabling legislation should prescribe how the subdivisions are to be formed and how they are to be redivided as population changes dictate. Provisions should be made for the initial board to be elected as follows: three members to serve the full six-year term, two members to serve four-year terms, and two members to serve two-year terms. Thereafter, the board members would be elected as existing terms of members expire. Vacancies should be filled by appointment of the board until the next election at which time unexpired terms will be filled by the voters.

It will also be necessary to make provisions for a referendum to determine whether or not the amendment is to be approved (approval of voters of both districts is thought to be necessary).

Provisions should be made in the event the constitutional amendment is approved for the board members of the Atlanta and Fulton County Districts to serve as the board of education for the new district until the new board is elected and can take office. A schedule should be worked out, if needed, for shifting to the seven-man board elected as herein prescribed.

Board members should serve without compensation, receiving pay only for necessary expenses incurred in carrying out their duties as members of the Board of Education

The proposed new district should consist of the present Atlanta District, including the part which is in DeKalb County, and the present Fulton County District.

A fundamental task is providing for a sound fiscal base for the proposed school district. Establishing eligibility for State funds, establishing eligibility for Federal funds, and providing for sound local support are necessary considerations. The school board should be authorized to determine the property tax for supporting the school system, as the Atlanta School Board does at present. Furthermore, a uniform property assessment plan for the entire district should be adopted and homestead exemptions eliminated. Sources of local school support in addition to the property tax should be found.

6. If the proposed new school district is approved by the voters, a transition committee should be established immediately to work out the many plans and details essential to an orderly transition from two districts to one. The transition committee should include the two superintendents of schools, the chairman of each board of education, the fiscal officer of each school system, the assistant superintendent for instruction of each school system, and such other individuals as may seem appropriate. This committee should be responsible for the detailed transition plan to be approved by each board of education.
7. If the single school district is approved, the two present school systems should continue as at present for the balance of the school

year in which approval occurs and an additional full year in order to allow time for completion of needed transition plans.

8. The board of education for the new district should be elected as soon as possible after the approval of the constitutional amendment and should formally organize itself without delay and proceed at once with the selection of a superintendent. A superintendent should be employed and he should begin his work as far in advance of the creation of the new school district as is possible.
9. Execute any other legal assignments which are appropriate in the light of the analysis of pertinent legislation and court decisions and necessary provisions to assure creation of a school district conforming to recommendations of the Commission in its 1966 report.

#### EDUCATIONAL PLANNING

An enormous volume of work must be completed before the proposed school district can go into operation. Many policies must be decided upon and much specific and detailed planning completed in order to assure the proper functioning of the new district. Major categories of policy development and needed provisions for operational guides under each are listed below. As is true of legal aspects described above, a precise definition of all of the steps necessary in this stage of planning is not possible presently and must await further exploration of current policies and practices of the two school systems.

#### Finance

1. Develop guides and procedures for making the annual school budget.
2. Develop plans and procedures for purchasing.



3. Develop plans for necessary and appropriate financial accounting.
4. Develop a budget for the new school district.

#### Personnel

1. Develop a system of personnel records for professional and other school personnel.
2. Develop salary schedules for professional and other personnel.
3. Develop a retirement system or systems.
4. Develop policies concerning employment practices for both professional and non-professional personnel.
5. Develop policies regarding tenure, sick leave, vacations, leaves of absence for professional growth, and others as needed.
6. Propose a method of combining the two central office staffs.

#### Pupils

1. Develop a system of records for pupil accounting.
2. Make recommendations concerning the visiting teacher program.

#### Administrative Structures and Regulations

1. Develop a plan for the internal organization and administration of the new school district including appropriate policies and definitions of responsibility.
2. Reach decisions on administrative and supervisory services to be provided.
3. Develop policies regarding the size of schools.
4. Develop general school regulations such as length of the school day, number of days in the school year, and designate holidays.

5. Develop a school calendar for the first year of the new system.
6. Recommend the future of the Metropolitan School Development Council.

### Curriculum

1. Determine the curricula to be offered.
2. Develop plans for kindergartens in schools now in the Fulton County District.
3. Develop policies for selection and distribution of instructional materials.
4. Determine the special professional personnel to be provided such as librarians, school psychologists, counselors, and reading specialists.
5. Ascertain the curriculum adjustments which are necessary in the transition period and suggest how they are to be made.
6. Recommend policies regarding expansion of school programs with special reference to junior colleges, vocational and technical education, and adult education.
7. Make recommendations concerning teacher loads, including pupil-teacher ratios.

### Services

1. Reach decisions on services to be provided by the school districts such as transportation, food, and health services and how they should be provided.
2. Determine the non-professional personnel to be provided such as

lunchroom workers, custodians, and secretaries.

3. Recommend plans for storing and handling textbooks and other instructional supplies.

#### Maintenance and Operation

1. Develop policies regarding kinds, numbers, types, and levels of competence needed by personnel in Maintenance and Operation.
2. Develop policies and procedures on the maintenance and operation programs.
3. Develop policies and procedures concerning work assignments and responsibilities of personnel.

#### Other

1. Make recommendations concerning organizations which should exist in the new school districts such as Parent-Teacher Associations, local teachers associations, and the various student organizations.

#### INITIAL ROLE OF THE PROPOSED NEW BOARD OF EDUCATION

Just how specific a blueprint for transition should be is to a considerable extent a matter of definition. At one extreme is a plan which provides only the basic legal provisions necessary for bringing the new district into being. At the other extreme is a plan which includes the multitude of basic policies, operational procedures and allocations of responsibility essential to the effective functioning of a school district.

The plan presented in this document embraces the first extreme and also the second to the extent that the Commission accepts responsibility for the essential educational planning which must precede the operational phase of a

new district. As already indicated, this planning consists largely of developing recommended policies and procedures consistent with the basic charter of the proposed new district as outlined above and decisions of the Commission with respect to the nature and quality of programs and services it thinks the new district should provide. However, only that which is mandated by law will be binding on the new Board of Education.

In a sense, the Commission is acting in these matters as an agent of a school district which is yet to be created and what it proposes in the realm of educational planning is for study and action by the new Board of Education unless areas are involved where decisions have been made already.

#### PUBLIC UNDERSTANDING OF THE PROPOSED NEW DISTRICT

Since public schools are the business of the public, every opportunity should be seized upon to help the public keep as fully informed as possible on school problems, issues, needs, and the nature of good schools. A well informed public is essential to successful decision making on educational policies and plans.

Therefore, a major task in considering the proposed basic shift in the educational structure of Atlanta and Fulton County is developing and distributing among all citizens adequate information on the proposed change and the reasons which lead to the proposal. The report of the Commission with its treatment of both sides of the issue of a single school district should be made available to all citizens and its contents should be widely publicized. Therefore, if the proposed constitutional amendment is adopted and a referendum is held, the referendum should be preceded by a systematic and well organized public information program.

Mass media of communication should be employed to develop interest and public understanding. Newspaper coverage should be stressed. Both radio and television should be used extensively. The pros and cons of the proposed district reorganization plan should be presented through all three media. In addition, presentations to civic clubs, Parent-Teachers Associations, and other formal groups should be stimulated. Many informed citizens should be used in this program. Among such citizens should be leaders from all walks of life, especially school leaders, including Board of Education members. By the time the election is held, all citizens should be fully informed on the issues at stake. In no other way is it possible to reach an adequate decision on the school organization issue.

#### GETTING THE JOB DONE

It is the responsibility of the coordinator appointed by the Commission to prepare and submit to the Commission the transition plan as outlined above. An adequate plan requires bringing into play an array of specialized competence beyond the ken of any single individual; therefore, extensive use should be made of carefully selected consultants.

The legal work should be entrusted to Mr. Pete Latimer, Attorney for the Atlanta Board of Education, and Mr. James Groton, Attorney for the Fulton County Board of Education.

Dr. R. L. Johns, University of Florida, or some one of comparable stature in school finance, should be secured as a consultant on all planning involving finance, purchasing, and accounting.

Dr. Willard Elsbree, Emeritus Professor of Education, Teachers College, Columbia University, or some other authority in personnel, should be secured

as a consultant on policies and procedures concerning all categories of personnel. This assignment would include proposed salary schedules and welfare provisions.

Curriculum authorities should be consulted as needed.

A committee of leading citizens should be appointed and given responsibility for conducting an adequate public information program. The Commission should appoint this committee upon recommendation of personnel by the Atlanta and Fulton County school superintendents and approval by the two boards of education. Appropriate professional personnel should be available to the committee.

Appropriate personnel from the two school systems should be involved in the development of proposed policies and procedures, especially in information and evaluation roles.

TMP:jp  
8/12/66

MINUTES  
LOCAL EDUCATION COMMISSION MEETING  
September 22, 1966

The Local Education Commission met in the Conference Room of the Administration Building of the Atlanta Public Schools at 10:00 a.m., September 22, 1966, with the following in attendance:

Commission Members

Mr. P. L. Bardin  
Mr. J. H. Cawthon  
Dr. Rufus E. Clement  
Mr. Ed S. Cook, Sr.  
Mr. Alan Kiepper  
Dr. John W. Letson  
Mr. Thomas Miller  
Mrs. Alan Ritter  
Mr. W. L. Robinson

Mr. William M. Teem, III  
Mr. Fred J. Turner  
Dr. Paul D. West

Consultants and Staff

Dr. Truman Pierce  
Mr. James Groton  
Mr. A. C. Latimer  
Dr. Curtis Henson

Minutes of the April 27, 1966 meeting were unanimously approved.

The Executive Committee recommended Mr. Marthame Sanders to fill the unexpired term of Mr. James White. Mr. J. H. Cawthon made the motion that Mr. Marthame Sanders be appointed to the Commission. The motion was seconded by Mr. Fred Turner and passed unanimously.

A letter of resignation was read from Dr. James L. Miller, Jr. The motion made by Mr. Tom Miller that the resignation be accepted was seconded by Mr. W. L. Robinson and passed unanimously.

Dr. Pierce reported on the proposed plan of work entitled "Provisions for Creating an Atlanta-Fulton County School District". He stated that the section dealing with the legal work had been discussed in some detail with Mr. James Groton and that the steps as outlined seemed to be adequate at this time.

Following Dr. Pierce's presentation, Mr. Robinson made the motion that the report be received. It passed unanimously.

Mr. Robinson stated that the method of electing school board members for the new district should be clearly defined. He made the motion that the report state that board members are to be elected on a school district-wide basis by the qualified voters in a special, non-partisan election. The motion was seconded by Dr. Clement and passed unanimously.

Dr. Clement made the motion that the proposed new Board of Education consist of nine members - one member from each of nine subdivisions of approximately the same population - all elected by the total electorate. The motion was seconded by Mr. Ed Cook, Sr. and passed unanimously.

Dr. Clement made the motion that the wording in the plan of work be changed to read, Board Members will be compensated at the rate of \$300

per month with the chairman being paid an additional \$50 per month. The motion was seconded by Mr. Robinson and passed unanimously.

It was suggested that the report contain the statement that any seat on the Board of Education vacated for any reason will be filled by appointment by the Board until the seat can be filled by a regular school board election which will be held every two years.

How the length of office for the initial Board will be determined was discussed. Mr. Robinson made the motion that a committee of five members be appointed to make a recommendation to the full Commission on how the length of term for each Board Member of the initial Board will be determined. Mr. Bardin, Dr. Pierce, and three other members appointed by Mr. Bardin are to serve on this Committee. The motion was seconded by Mr. Tom Miller and passed unanimously.

Mr. Fred Turner made the motion that the plan of action as amended be adopted by the Commission. The motion was seconded by Mrs. Alan Ritter and passed unanimously.

Mr. Cawthon made the motion that Dr. Lyle Johns, University of Florida, be employed to make the necessary study in the area of finance. The motion was seconded by Mr. Tom Miller and passed unanimously.

Mr. Tom Miller made the motion that Dr. Willard Elsbree, Emeritus Professor of Education, Teachers College, Columbia University be employed to conduct the necessary study in the area of personnel and that if he is not available, the Executive Committee have the authority to select a substitute. The motion was seconded by Mr. Fred Turner and passed unanimously.

In all cases, the rate of remuneration for each person who works for the Commission and the tasks to be accomplished will be approved in advance by the Executive Committee.

It was agreed that a copy of the amended Plan of Action be sent to each member of the two school boards.

Mr. Groton and Mr. Latimer outlined the work to be accomplished in the legal area. The Commission agreed that the lawyers be given the authority to start work as outlined in the following three areas:

1. General Powers
2. Revenue from sources other than Local School Tax
3. Power to Increase Bonded Debt and Assumption of Bonded Debt

The lawyers are to keep the Commission informed about progress, costs, and proposed next steps. The Commission will select and approve each additional item to be studied before action is taken by the lawyers.

It was suggested that Dr. Pierce and the lawyers proceed as expeditiously as possible and that the Commission meet again in approximately 30 days to hear progress reports. At the October meeting, plans for an interim report will be discussed.

The meeting was adjourned at 12:45 p.m.

Approved By: \_\_\_\_\_  
Chairman

\_\_\_\_\_  
Recording Secretary



## MINUTES

### LOCAL EDUCATION COMMISSION MEETING

September 22, 1966

The Local Education Commission met in the Conference Room of the Administration Building of the Atlanta Public Schools at 10:00 a.m., September 22, 1966, with the following in attendance:

#### Commission Members

Mr. P. L. Bardin  
Mr. J. H. Cawthon  
Dr. Rufus E. Clement  
Mr. Ed S. Cook, Sr.  
Mr. Alan Kiepper  
Dr. John W. Letson  
Mr. Thomas Miller  
Mrs. Alan Ritter  
Mr. W. L. Robinson

Mr. William M. Teem, III  
Mr. Fred J. Turner  
Dr. Paul D. West

#### Consultants and Staff

Dr. Truman Pierce  
Mr. James Groton  
Mr. A. C. Latimer  
Dr. Curtis Henson

Minutes of the April 27, 1966 meeting were unanimously approved.

The Executive Committee recommended Mr. Marthame Sanders to fill the unexpired term of Mr. James White. Mr. J. H. Cawthon made the motion that Mr. Marthame Sanders be appointed to the Commission. The motion was seconded by Mr. Fred Turner and passed unanimously.

A letter of resignation was read from Dr. James L. Miller, Jr. The motion made by Mr. Tom Miller that the resignation be accepted was seconded by Mr. W. L. Robinson and passed unanimously.

Dr. Pierce reported on the proposed plan of work entitled "Provisions for Creating an Atlanta-Fulton County School District". He stated that the section dealing with the legal work had been discussed in some detail with Mr. James Groton and that the steps as outlined seemed to be adequate at this time.

Following Dr. Pierce's presentation, Mr. Robinson made the motion that the report be received. It passed unanimously.

Mr. Robinson stated that the method of electing school board members for the new district should be clearly defined. He made the motion that the report state that board members are to be elected on a school district-wide basis by the qualified voters in a special, non-partisan election. The motion was seconded by Dr. Clement and passed unanimously.

Dr. Clement made the motion that the proposed new Board of Education consist of nine members - one member from each of nine subdivisions of approximately the same population - all elected by the total electorate. The motion was seconded by Mr. Ed Cook, Sr. and passed unanimously.

Dr. Clement made the motion that the wording in the plan of work be changed to read, Board Members will be compensated at the rate of \$300

per month with the chairman being paid an additional \$50 per month. The motion was seconded by Mr. Robinson and passed unanimously.

It was suggested that the report contain the statement that any seat on the Board of Education vacated for any reason will be filled by appointment by the Board until the seat can be filled by a regular school board election which will be held every two years.

How the length of office for the initial Board will be determined was discussed. Mr. Robinson made the motion that a committee of five members be appointed to make a recommendation to the full Commission on how the length of term for each Board Member of the initial Board will be determined. Mr. Bardin, Dr. Pierce, and three other members appointed by Mr. Bardin are to serve on this Committee. The motion was seconded by Mr. Tom Miller and passed unanimously.

Mr. Fred Turner made the motion that the plan of action as amended be adopted by the Commission. The motion was seconded by Mrs. Alan Ritter and passed unanimously.

Mr. Cawthon made the motion that Dr. Lyle Johns, University of Florida, be employed to make the necessary study in the area of finance. The motion was seconded by Mr. Tom Miller and passed unanimously.

Mr. Tom Miller made the motion that Dr. Willard Elsbree, Emeritus Professor of Education, Teachers College, Columbia University be employed to conduct the necessary study in the area of personnel and that if he is not available, the Executive Committee have the authority to select a substitute. The motion was seconded by Mr. Fred Turner and passed unanimously.

In all cases, the rate of remuneration for each person who works for the Commission and the tasks to be accomplished will be approved in advance by the Executive Committee.

It was agreed that a copy of the amended Plan of Action be sent to each member of the two school boards.

Mr. Groton and Mr. Latimer outlined the work to be accomplished in the legal area. The Commission agreed that the lawyers be given the authority to start work as outlined in the following three areas:

1. General Powers
2. Revenue from sources other than Local School Tax
3. Power to Increase Bonded Debt and Assumption of Bonded Debt

The lawyers are to keep the Commission informed about progress, costs, and proposed next steps. The Commission will select and approve each additional item to be studied before action is taken by the lawyers.

It was suggested that Dr. Pierce and the lawyers proceed as expeditiously as possible and that the Commission meet again in approximately 30 days to hear progress reports. At the October meeting, plans for an interim report will be discussed.

The meeting was adjourned at 12:45 p.m.

Approved By: \_\_\_\_\_  
Chairman

\_\_\_\_\_  
Recording Secretary

*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

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October 14, 1966

R E M I N D E R

TO: Members of the Local Education Commission  
FROM: Curtis Henson, Recording Secretary

This is to remind you that the next meeting of the Local Education Commission will be held at 10:00 a.m., October 24, 1966, in the Conference Room of the Atlanta Public Schools' Administration Building, 224 Central Avenue, S.W.

CH:cw

*File*



LOCAL EDUCATION COMMISSION  
OF  
ATLANTA AND FULTON COUNTY

PROVISIONS FOR CREATING AN ATLANTA-FULTON  
COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT

Approved September 22, 1966

ATLANTA--FULTON COUNTY EDUCATION COMMISSION

PROVISIONS FOR CREATING AN ATLANTA--FULTON

COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT

The General Assembly of Georgia at the request of its representatives from Fulton and DeKalb counties created a Local Education Commission in 1964 and charged the Commission with responsibility:

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.

The Commission was appointed and conducted the requested study, releasing its report in February, 1966. The report recommended the dissolution of the Atlanta and Fulton County School Districts and the creation of a new district in their stead. A plan for creating the proposed new district was included in the report which outlined the steps necessary for carrying out this recommendation.

The report of the Commission was accepted by the legislative delegation representing Fulton and DeKalb counties. After due deliberation of the recommendations, the legislative group secured approval for continuation of the Commission and requested it to carry out the steps which it had defined as being necessary for dissolving the present school districts and creating the proposed new district.

This memorandum outlines the tasks involved in creating the proposed new district and suggests how these steps may be executed. Five distinct but related tasks are essential in carrying out this latest charge to the Commission. They are:

1. Legal work which is necessary in order to dissolve the two present districts and to create the proposed new district.
2. Educational planning necessary to assure orderly and effective transition from the present two districts to the proposed single district.
3. Suggestion on the initial role of the new board of education.
4. A program for developing public understanding of the proposed new district and the reasons which support its creation.
5. Allocations of responsibility for getting done the necessary tasks.

Each of the five steps is outlined briefly in the following pages. The assumption is made that the plans for the proposed district and the characteristics of the district included in the 1966 report of the Commission are acceptable. They are, therefore, reported in this document where appropriate.

#### LEGAL WORK

Substantial legal tasks must be undertaken and completed in order to establish the proposed new school district. It is not possible to define with certainty all of these tasks at present because there is no existing overview of legislation and court decisions affecting the present Fulton County and Atlanta School Districts although major task areas can be defined.

These follow:

1. Compile and analyze the legislation and court decisions which currently affect the Atlanta and Fulton County School Districts. Since this has never been done, there is no way of knowing at present the precise dimensions of this task.
2. Prepare the legislation which must be adopted in order to abolish the Atlanta and Fulton County School Districts. Until the necessary

research has been completed, there is no way of knowing just what this step involves. Whether a single piece of legislation general in nature will suffice or whether specific measures repealing separate laws relating to such subjects as taxation, bonding capacity, and so forth, are required remains to be seen.

3. Provide for meeting present and future unfulfilled legal and moral commitments of the Atlanta and Fulton County School Districts. Indebtedness, outstanding bonds, retirement provisions and tenure rights are examples of such commitments. Current welfare provisions for personnel may be continued or provisions can be made in new legislation to protect earned rights of present personnel through incorporation in any new welfare provisions which might be created for the school district. Establishing eligibility of the new school district for state funds is an illustration of another type of protection, as is assurance that current salary levels will not suffer in the transition.
4. Arrange for the transfer of properties of present school districts to the proposed new district.
5. Prepare a constitutional amendment for creating the new school district. This is an essential step under Georgia law. The amendment should be expressed in general terms insofar as feasible, leaving as many of the specific provisions concerning the district as possible to be taken care of outside the framework of constitutional mandates.

The amendment would necessarily specify the boundaries of the district, define its basic structure, and outline its powers. Such would be done within the limitations of other constitutional provisions affecting schools and school districts. For example, the

amendment would have to be consistent with the constitutional definition of the State's responsibility for public schools.

Legal provisions to be made either by constitutional amendment or statutory acts include creation of a board of education of nine members elected at large by the qualified voters of the district in a non-partisan election for terms of six years, one from each of nine subdivisions of the district of approximately the same number of persons. The amendment or enabling legislation should prescribe how the subdivisions are to be formed and how they are to be redivided as population changes dictate. Provisions should be made for terms of members of the initial board as follows: three members to serve the full-six year term, three members to serve four-year terms, and three members to serve two-year terms. Thereafter, the board members would be elected in regular school board elections as existing terms of members expire. Vacancies for any reason should be filled by appointment of the board until the next regular school board election at which time unexpired terms will be filled by the voters.

It will also be necessary to make provisions for a referendum to determine whether or not the amendment is to be approved (approval of voters of both districts is thought to be necessary).

Provisions should be made in the event the constitutional amendment is approved for the board members of the Atlanta and Fulton County Districts to serve as the board of education for the new district until the new board is elected and can take office. A schedule should be worked out, if needed, for shifting to the nine-man board elected as herein prescribed.



Board members should be paid three hundred dollars per month, with the chairman being paid an additional fifty dollars per month.

The proposed new district should consist of the present Atlanta District, including the part which is in DeKalb County, and the present Fulton County District.

A fundamental task is providing for a sound fiscal base for the proposed school district. Establishing eligibility for State funds, establishing eligibility for Federal funds, and providing for sound local support are necessary considerations. The school board should be authorized to determine the property tax for supporting the school system, as the Atlanta School Board does at present. Furthermore, a uniform property assessment plan for the entire district should be adopted and homestead exemptions eliminated. Sources of local school support in addition to the property tax should be found.

6. If the proposed new school district is approved by the voters, a transition committee should be established immediately to work out the many plans and details essential to an orderly transition from two districts to one. The transition committee should include the two superintendents of schools, the chairman of each board of education, the fiscal officer of each school system, the assistant superintendent for instruction of each school system, and such other individuals as may seem appropriate. This committee should be responsible for the detailed transition plan to be approved by each board of education.
7. If the single school district is approved, the two present school systems should continue as at present for the balance of the school

year in which approval occurs and an additional full year in order to allow time for completion of needed transition plans.

8. The board of education for the new district should be elected as soon as possible after the approval of the constitutional amendment and should formally organize itself without delay and proceed at once with the selection of a superintendent. A superintendent should be employed and he should begin his work as far in advance of the creation of the new school district as is possible.
9. Execute any other legal assignments which are appropriate in the light of the analysis of pertinent legislation and court decisions and necessary provisions to assure creation of a school district conforming to recommendations of the Commission in its 1966 report.

#### EDUCATIONAL PLANNING

An enormous volume of work must be completed before the proposed school district can go into operation. Many policies must be decided upon and much specific and detailed planning completed in order to assure the proper functioning of the new district. Major categories of policy development and needed provisions for operational guides under each are listed below. As is true of legal aspects described above, a precise definition of all of the steps necessary in this stage of planning is not possible presently and must await further exploration of current policies and practices of the two school systems.

#### Finance

1. Develop guides and procedures for making the annual school budget.
2. Develop plans and procedures for purchasing.

3. Develop plans for necessary and appropriate financial accounting.
4. Develop a budget for the new school district.

### Personnel

1. Develop a system of personnel records for professional and other school personnel.
2. Develop salary schedules for professional and other personnel.
3. Develop a retirement system or systems.
4. Develop policies concerning employment practices for both professional and non-professional personnel.
5. Develop policies regarding tenure, sick leave, vacations, leaves of absence for professional growth, and others as needed.
6. Propose a method of combining the two central office staffs.

### Pupils

1. Develop a system of records for pupil accounting.
2. Make recommendations concerning the visiting teacher program.

### Administrative Structures and Regulations

1. Develop a plan for the internal organization and administration of the new school district including appropriate policies and definitions of responsibility.
2. Reach decisions on administrative and supervisory services to be provided.
3. Develop policies regarding the size of schools.
4. Develop general school regulations such as length of the school day, number of days in the school year, and designate holidays.

5. Develop a school calendar for the first year of the new system.
6. Recommend the future of the Metropolitan School Development Council.

### Curriculum

1. Determine the curricula to be offered.
2. Develop plans for kindergartens in schools now in the Fulton County District.
3. Develop policies for selection and distribution of instructional materials.
4. Determine the special professional personnel to be provided such as librarians, school psychologists, counselors, and reading specialists.
5. Ascertain the curriculum adjustments which are necessary in the transition period and suggest how they are to be made.
6. Recommend policies regarding expansion of school programs with special reference to junior colleges, vocational and technical education, and adult education.
7. Make recommendations concerning teacher loads, including pupil-teacher ratios.

### Services

1. Reach decisions on services to be provided by the school districts such as transportation, food, and health services and how they should be provided.
2. Determine the non-professional personnel to be provided such as

lunchroom workers, custodians, and secretaries.

3. Recommend plans for storing and handling textbooks and other instructional supplies.

#### Maintenance and Operation

1. Develop policies regarding kinds, numbers, types, and levels of competence needed by personnel in Maintenance and Operation.
2. Develop policies and procedures on the maintenance and operation problems.
3. Develop policies and procedures concerning work assignments and responsibilities of personnel.

#### Other

1. Make recommendations concerning organizations which should exist in the new school districts such as Parent-Teacher Associations, local teachers associations, and the various student organizations.

#### INITIAL ROLE OF THE PROPOSED NEW BOARD OF EDUCATION

Just how specific a blueprint for transition should be is to a considerable extent a matter of definition. At one extreme is a plan which provides only the basic legal provisions necessary for bringing the new district into being. At the other extreme is a plan which includes the multitude of basic policies, operational procedures and allocations of responsibility essential to the effective functioning of a school district.

The plan presented in this document embraces the first extreme and also the second to the extent that the Commission accepts responsibility for the essential educational planning which must precede the operational phase of a

new district. As already indicated, this planning consists largely of developing recommended policies and procedures consistent with the basic charter of the proposed new district as outlined above and decisions of the Commission with respect to the nature and quality of programs and services it thinks the new district should provide. However, only that which is mandated by law will be binding on the new Board of Education.

In a sense, the Commission is acting in these matters as an agent of a school district which is yet to be created and what it proposes in the realm of educational planning is for study and action by the new Board of Education unless areas are involved where decisions have been made already.

#### PUBLIC UNDERSTANDING OF THE PROPOSED NEW DISTRICT

Since public schools are the business of the public, every opportunity should be seized upon to help the public keep as fully informed as possible on school problems, issues, needs, and the nature of good schools. A well informed public is essential to successful decision making on educational policies and plans.

Therefore, a major task in considering the proposed basic shift in the educational structure of Atlanta and Fulton County is developing and distributing among all citizens adequate information on the proposed change and the reasons which lead to the proposal. The report of the Commission with its treatment of both sides of the issue of a single school district should be made available to all citizens and its contents should be widely publicized. Therefore, if the proposed constitutional amendment is adopted and a referendum is held, the referendum should be preceded by a systematic and well organized public information program.

Mass media of communication should be employed to develop interest and public understanding. Newspaper coverage should be stressed. Both radio and television should be used extensively. The pros and cons of the proposed district reorganization plan should be presented through all three media. In addition, presentations to civic clubs, Parent-Teachers Associations, and other formal groups should be stimulated. Many informed citizens should be used in this program. Among such citizens should be leaders from all walks of life, especially school leaders, including Board of Education members. By the time the election is held, all citizens should be fully informed on the issues at stake. In no other way is it possible to reach an adequate decision on the school organization issue.

#### GETTING THE JOB DONE

It is the responsibility of the coordinator appointed by the Commission to prepare and submit to the Commission the transition plan as outlined above. An adequate plan requires bringing into play an array of specialized competence beyond the ken of any single individual; therefore, extensive use should be made of carefully selected consultants.

The legal work should be entrusted to Mr. Pete Latimer, Attorney for the Atlanta Board of Education, and Mr. James Groton, Attorney for the Fulton County Board of Education.

Dr. R. L. Johns, University of Florida, or some one of comparable stature in school finance, should be secured as a consultant on all planning involving finance, purchasing, and accounting.

Dr. Willard Elsbree, Emeritus Professor of Education, Teachers College, Columbia University, or some other authority in personnel, should be secured

as a consultant on policies and procedures concerning all categories of personnel. This assignment would include proposed salary schedules and welfare provisions.

Curriculum authorities should be consulted as needed.

A committee of leading citizens should be appointed and given responsibility for conducting an adequate public information program. The Commission should appoint this committee upon recommendation of personnel by the Atlanta and Fulton County school superintendents and approval by the two boards of education. Appropriate professional personnel should be available to the committee.

Appropriate personnel from the two school systems should be involved in the development of proposed policies and procedures, especially in information and evaluation roles.

TMP:jp

8/12/66

Amended and approved  
September 22, 1966  
by Local Education Commission



*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

## MINUTES

### LOCAL EDUCATION COMMISSION MEETING

October 24, 1966

The Local Education Commission met at 10:00 a.m. in the Conference Room of the Administration Building of the Atlanta Public Schools with the following in attendance:

Commission Members

Mr. P. L. Bardin  
Mr. Marthame Sanders  
Mr. Leonard Robinson  
Mr. Earl Landers  
Mr. J. H. Cawthon  
Dr. John W. Letson  
Mr. Otis Jackson  
Dr. Rufus Clement  
Mrs. Alan Ritter

Mr. Alan Kiepper (Represented  
Dr. West)  
Mr. Harry West (Represented Mr.  
Alan Kiepper)

Consultants and Staff

Dr. Truman Pierce  
Mr. A. C. Latimer  
Mr. Lee Perry  
Dr. Curtis Henson

Minutes of the September 22, 1966 meeting were unanimously approved.

Mr. Leonard Robinson, chairman of the committee appointed to recommend how the length of term for each board member of the initial board of education for the new school district will be determined, presented the report. The committee recommended that the statement regarding the election of board members specifically state the following:

1. The winner in each sub-district will be the candidate receiving the largest number of votes.
2. In the event of a tie the Grand Jury will be asked to determine the winner.
3. The Grand Jury will be asked to designate the length of term of office of each of the nine successful candidates for the

initial board of education. Three members will be designated to serve two-year terms, three members to serve four-year terms, and three members to serve six year terms.

Mr. Robinson made the motion that the Commission receive the report. The motion was seconded by Dr. Rufus Clement and passed unanimously.

After discussing the recommendations of the Committee, Mr. Robinson made a motion that the report be adopted. The motion was seconded by Mr. J. H. Cawthon and passed unanimously.

Dr. Pierce reported that Dr. Johns had spent two days in Atlanta and was moving along satisfactorily with his assignment.

Mr. Latimer gave a progress report of work of the lawyers to date. It was apparent that the total report would not be completed in time for action of the 1967 legislature.

Mr. Robinson made the motion that a progress report be presented to the legislature on the first day of the 1967 session. This report should include decisions made and work completed to date, an outline of work which is yet to be completed and a time table for completing it, and a request that the life of the Commission be extended for another year. The motion was seconded by Mr. Otis Jackson and passed unanimously.

Mr. Bardin instructed Dr. Pierce and Mr. Latimer to assume the major responsibility for drafting the report.

The next meeting of the Commission will be at 10:00 a.m. on December 5, 1966 for the purpose of receiving and discussing the progress report.

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

Approved By: \_\_\_\_\_  
Chairman

\_\_\_\_\_  
Recording Secretary

*File*



A PROGRESS REPORT  
to the  
LEGISLATIVE DELEGATION FROM DEKALB AND FULTON COUNTIES

by the  
LOCAL EDUCATION COMMISSION OF  
ATLANTA AND FULTON COUNTY

November, 1966

THE LOCAL EDUCATION COMMISSION OF  
ATLANTA AND FULTON COUNTY

Purpose

This document reports progress made by the Atlanta and Fulton County Education Commission in developing detailed plans for creating a new school district to take the place of the Atlanta and Fulton County districts as instructed by the General Assembly of Georgia when it extended the life of the Commission in 1966. The document consists of decisions and plans which the Commission has made for creating a single school district, an outline of remaining tasks of the Commission, provisions which have been made for completion of these tasks, a statement of budget needs, and a time schedule.

Background

Reference to the previous work of the Commission is necessary for the purpose of understanding properly this report. The commission was created by an act of the General Assembly adopted by the 1964 session which gave the Commission responsibility "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."

The tasks assigned to the Commission turned out to be difficult and complex requiring studies involving law, economics, public finance, school costs, population analysis, school personnel, welfare provisions, school district structure, educational needs, existing educational programs, and curriculum development. These studies analyze current status and project probable future developments. The studies provided the information required by the Commission to execute its assignment.

The first report of the Commission; an interim one, was released in January of 1965. It briefly reviewed the substantial history of local concern for how education should be organized in the Atlanta-Fulton County area as reported in various studies, some essentially educational in nature while others dealt broadly with problems and issues faced by the growing Atlanta metropolitan area. The major contribution of this report was the careful identification, description, and analysis of advantages and disadvantages of a single school district in place of the Atlanta and Fulton County districts. The report pointed out the difficulties to be overcome in creating a single district. It also described the proposed single district and suggested a tentative budget for completing the assignment of the Commission.

In February of 1966, the Commission released a report entitled, "District Reorganization for Better Schools in Atlanta and Fulton County." Building on the interim report summarized above, this document inquired into the effect on educational programs of transition to a single district, the effects on financing education and listed a number of important questions concerning the proposed district for which answers were provided. With the background thus developed, the

Commission was in position to reach a decision on whether or not it should recommend a single school district.

The decision of the Commission was that a single district should be created to take the place of the present Atlanta and Fulton County districts. It found that the consolidation of the Atlanta and Fulton County districts was less desirable than dissolving them and creating a new district in their stead inasmuch as the disadvantages of neither district would need to be perpetuated, while the advantages of each could be retained. The report included seventeen other recommendations which defined required legal steps to be taken in creating a single district, described how the new district should be organized, and suggested financial provisions. The report then defined twenty-nine transition tasks to be undertaken concerning primarily school programs of the present districts. A Public Information Services Program was suggested to help achieve broad public understanding of the proposed new district. The report ended with an analysis of recent developments of significance to the school district reorganization issue.

The report was presented to the Legislative Delegation of DeKalb and Fulton counties before it was released. The Delegation accepted the report and requested additional information on current and projected school revenues for the Atlanta and Fulton County School districts, a further analysis and comparison of expenditure patterns of the two districts, a projection of school revenue and expenditure patterns for the two districts, and comparisons of projected revenue patterns and expenditure patterns of the two districts with the proposed single district. Requested also was a comparison of current

educational programs of the two districts and the comparison of these programs with those projected for the new district. Finally, the Delegation asked that the necessary steps for establishing and placing in operation the proposed district be spelled out in a definite pattern which would serve as a blueprint for transition.

A report issued in January of 1966 provided the requested information except for the actual transition blueprint. The latter is the major concern of this report.

The first phase of the work of the Commission for the present year consisted of defining and outlining as specifically as possible the various tasks which should be undertaken and completed in establishing the proposed district. Responsibilities for completing these tasks were allocated and necessary authorizations were made accordingly. Using this outline as a guide, the Commission has reached important decisions and made substantial plans for creating the proposed new school district. These decisions and plans are presented in the remaining pages of this report.

#### Decisions and Plans

Once the Commission decided to recommend a single district, it then turned its attention to the tasks which would have to be completed in carrying out this recommendation. These tasks may be categorized as follows:

1. The legal work required to dissolve the present districts and to create the proposed new district.

2. The educational planning necessary in order to assure effective transition from the present districts to the proposed new district.
3. Suggestions on the election, terms of office of board members, and initial role of the Board of Education for the new district.
4. A program for developing adequate public understanding of the proposed new district and the reasons which support its creation.
5. Allocations of responsibilities for getting done the necessary tasks.

#### Legal Work

Mr. A. C. Latimer, Attorney for the Atlanta Board of Education, and Mr. James P. Groton, Attorney for the Fulton County Board of Education, have been retained by the Commission to be responsible for the necessary legal work. The logic of this decision is obvious since their experience and present responsibilities will serve them well in this undertaking.

Extensive research for the purpose of identifying, analyzing, and clarifying a voluminous body of legislation of both general and local dimensions regarding education in the Atlanta and Fulton County school districts is underway. Relevant court decisions are being subjected to the same type of study. There is no other way to ascertain the requirements for dissolving the two present districts. When this has been done, legislation will be prepared for dissolving the districts.



Then, new legislation essential to establishing and maintaining the proposed district will be prepared along with required constitutional provisions.

Attorneys Latimer and Groton have prepared a detailed outline of work which must be done before the new constitutional provisions and legislation can be drafted. This outline consists of fourteen different subjects which are being considered separately. The study of each subject involves:

1. identifying and analyzing existing laws and regulations pertaining to the Atlanta and Fulton County school systems which will have to be considered, amended, or repealed;
2. determining the legal problems which require special attention, and
3. establishing the end results to be accomplished by the new legislation.

The fourteen subjects and a brief paragraph on progress achieved follow:

1. General powers.--Present statutes, regulations, and court decisions to be considered, amended, or repealed have been identified as have problem areas to be considered. The new legislation is to cover powers generally appropriate to school systems under the Georgia Constitution and such other powers as are required to borrow, to contract with other governmental bodies, to sue and be sued, to operate school buses, to accept donations, bequests, and so forth, to operate educational programs from kindergarten through college, including vocational schools, relationships with adjoining school systems, and

to establish a new district that is a political subdivision of the State.

2. Local taxation for schools.--Present statutes, regulations, and court decisions to be considered, amended, or repealed have been identified as have problem areas to be considered. The new legislation is to cover uniform property tax assessments throughout the district, provide for elimination of homestead exemptions, establishment of annual millage, tax levies, tax collections, and tax sources other than the property tax.

3. Revenues from sources other than local school tax.--Present statutes, regulations, and court decisions to be considered, amended, or repealed have been identified as well as problem areas to be considered. The new legislation is to cover authorization of appropriations from city and county governments, intangible taxes, transportation funds, and escheats.

4. Power to increase bonded debt and assumption of bonded debt.--Present statutes, regulations, and court decisions to be considered, amended, or repealed have been identified. Problem areas which have to be dealt with have been defined. New legislation is to cover power to levy property tax, millage limitation, restrictions on retirement of debt, assumption of county school debts, and assumption of city school debts.

5. Repealer.--Present statutes, regulations, and court decisions to be considered, amended, or repealed have been identified. Problem areas to be considered have been defined. The new legislation is to repeal or amend the Fulton County one and one-half mill constitutional amendment and Fulton County constitutional amendments on millage limitation, bonded debt limitation, and pensions.

6. Method of adoption.--Questions to be considered include whether or not a single constitutional amendment will suffice or if multiple amendments will be required; provision for courses of action if multiple amendments are required and some are adopted while others are not; whether the amendment(s) is to be general or local, what vote is required, who is eligible to vote, and how the ballot should be worded.

7. Succession to school property and contract rights.--Present statutes, regulations, and court decisions to be considered, amended, or repealed have been identified. Problem areas to be considered have been defined. New legislation is to cover the transfer of county school properties to the new district and the transfer of city properties to the new district.

8. Assumption of liabilities and contract obligations. --Present statutes, regulations, and court decisions to be considered, amended, or repealed have been identified. It has been ascertained that no notable problem areas exist under this subject. New legislation to be passed is to cover debts other than bonds, obligations, liabilities, and State School Building Authority lease payments.

9. Personnel.--Present statutes, regulations, and court decisions to be considered, amended, or repealed have been identified. It has been determined that no notable problem areas exist under this subject. New legislation is to cover contracts, pay scales, tenure, and fringe benefits.

10. Boundaries of the new district.--Present statutes, regulations, and court decisions to be considered, amended, or repealed have been identified. It has been ascertained that no notable problem areas exist under this subject. The new legislation is to provide that all of Fulton County and the part of Atlanta which is in DeKalb County are to be included in the new district. Provision for the addition of new territory and other schools is to be included.

11. Board of Education.--The present statutes, regulations, and court decisions to be considered, amended, or repealed have been identified. Problem areas to be considered have been defined. The new legislation is to cover composition of the Board, eligibility for Board membership, term of office, election districts, powers, duties, responsibilities, compensation, and changes in composition and size of election districts. Provision is to be made for terms of office of initial board members.

12. Superintendent of schools.--Present statutes, regulations, and court decisions to be considered, amended, or repealed have been identified. It has been established that no notable problem areas exist under this subject. New legislation is to cover criteria of eligibility, provide for appointment by the Board, determine the term of office, and enumerate powers, duties, and responsibilities.

13. Transition provisions.--New legislation is to provide for an interim board of education to consist of the Atlanta and Fulton County boards, interim administration provisions, and an effective date for the new district to become operative. The legislation is to prescribe a schedule of steps to be taken if the constitutional amendment(s) is adopted.

14. Pensions.--Present statutes, regulations, and court decisions to be considered, amended, or repealed have been identified. Problem areas which must be considered have been defined. New legislation is to prescribe for either a new pension system or membership in the State teachers' retirement system, merging of the county school pension system into the new system, transition of city school employees from the city general pension system, and authority to receive contributions for pension funds from city and county governments.

Educational Planning Necessary to Assure  
Orderly and Effective Transition from  
the Present Two Districts to the  
Proposed Single District

The transition from two districts to one is to be as orderly and systematic as is possible without interruption or dislocation of educational programs and personnel (student, professional, and other). To achieve this purpose requires a great amount of planning involving the development and approval of new policies and procedures. Major areas of decision and policy development have been defined as outlined below. It should be noted that much of this planning is to be expressed in the legal framework of the proposed new district, some of which is

reflected in the legal work as reported above. Certain other aspects of planning and policy are not necessary for the legal framework, some of which appropriately wait until a decision is reached on whether or not the proposed district is to be established. If voters reject the new district, this planning will not be necessary; if they approve, there will be time to complete such planning before the new district becomes operative. The areas for policy and procedure development and achievements under each area are listed below. Minor repetition occurs because of the need to give direction to the legal work already described.

District organization and administration.--The new district is to include all of Fulton County and that part of Atlanta which lies in DeKalb County. The district is to have a board of education of nine members elected at large by the qualified voters of the district in a non-partisan election for terms of six years, one from each of nine subdivisions of the district of approximately the same number of persons. The legislation is to prescribe how the subdivisions are to be formed and how they are to be re-divided as population changes require. Three members of the initial board shall serve full six-year terms, three members shall serve four-year terms, and three members shall serve two-year terms as determined by the Fulton County Grand Jury. Thereafter, board members are to be elected for six-year terms in regular school board elections as existing terms of members expire. Vacancies in board membership are to be filled by appointment of the board until the next regular school board election at which time unexpired terms will be filled by the voters.

In the event the constitutional amendment(s) is approved, the Atlanta and Fulton County School District board members are to serve as the board of education for the new district until the new board is elected and can take office.

Board members are to be paid \$300 per month with the chairman being paid an additional \$50 per month.

Provision for transition.---If the proposed new district is approved by the electorate, a transition committee is to be established immediately by the Atlanta and Fulton County School District boards acting as a single board upon the joint recommendation of the superintendents of the two districts. This committee is to be responsible for the many plans and procedures concerned with education programs which a smooth transition will require. The committee is to include the two superintendents of schools, the chairman of each board of education, the fiscal officers of each school system, the assistant superintendent for instruction of each school system and such other individuals as may seem appropriate. The transition plans worked out by this committee are to be approved by the boards of education.

If the single school district is approved, the two school systems are to continue as at present for the balance of the school year in which approval occurs and an additional calendar year in order to allow time for completion of needed transition plans.

The board of education for the new district, if approved, is to be elected as soon as possible after approval and should formally organize itself without delay and proceed at once with the selection of a superintendent of schools. The superintendent is to be employed and is to

begin his work as far in advance of the creation of the new school district as is possible.

The superintendent of schools.--The superintendent is to be appointed by the board of education and given such powers as are necessary to act as the chief executive officer of the school district. His term of office, compensation, and other benefits shall be established by the board of education.

Financial provisions.--The proposed new district is to be fiscally independent. While major local support is to come from the property tax, provision is to be made for local support from other forms of taxation.

Bonding capacity of the new school district is to be 10 per cent of the assessed valuation of taxable property.

The homestead exemption in Fulton County is to be abolished.

Assessments of property for school tax purposes is to be uniform and in accordance with legal provisions.

Legal provisions and policies of the new school district are to permit full utilization of financial support from state, federal, and other sources.

Dr. R. L. Johns of the University of Florida has been employed to recommend provisions for financing the proposed new school district and to develop guides and procedures for purchasing and financial accounting and for preparation of the annual school budget. Dr. Johns is now working on this assignment.



Personnel.--Dr. Willard S. Elsbree, Teachers College, Columbia University, has been employed to develop salary schedules for professional and other personnel of the proposed school district, a retirement system or systems, policies regarding tenure, sick leave, vacation, leaves of absence for professional growth and others as needed, develop a system of personnel records for professional and other personnel, and propose a method of combining the two central office staffs. Dr. Elsbree is working on this assignment.

Curriculum.--It is necessary to determine the various curricula to be offered by the proposed school district, develop policies for selection and distribution of instructional materials, recommend policies regarding expansion of school programs with special reference to junior colleges, vocational and technical education, and adult education, determine the special professional personnel to be provided such as school librarians, school psychologists, counselors, and reading specialists, develop plans for kindergartens for schools now in the Fulton County District and make recommendations concerning teacher loads, including pupil-teacher ratio. Work in this area has not gone beyond definition of what is to be undertaken.

Pupils.--A system of records for pupil accounting is to be developed for the proposed district and recommendations concerning the visiting teacher program. These tasks are yet to be undertaken.

Services.--Decisions are to be made on the kinds and amounts of services to be provided by the school district in areas such as transportation, food and health. How these are to be provided is to be

suggested. The number and kinds of nonprofessional personnel to be employed by the new school district such as secretaries, lunchroom workers, and custodians is to be determined. Plans for storing and handling textbooks and other instructional supplies are to be worked out also.

This is another area of planning which, except for definition and direction, can await a decision on the fate of the proposed district.

Maintenance and operation.--Policies are to be developed regarding kinds, numbers, types, and levels of competence needed by personnel in maintenance and operation; policies and procedures concerning maintenance and operation programs; policies and procedures concerning work assignments and responsibilities.

These policies and procedures can await development until the fate of the proposed district has been established.

#### Initial Role of the Proposed New Board of Education

Early responsibilities of the new board of education have been touched on in the section above. The new board is to be elected as soon as possible and is to begin functioning as a board immediately thereafter. As indicated previously, its early major responsibility will be the selection of a school superintendent for the new district. When this has been done, the superintendent is to assume responsibility for recommending the many policies and procedures which must be worked out before the new district becomes operational. The transition committee referred to earlier will have done much preliminary work along

these lines and will undoubtedly recommend to the superintendent many of the needed policies.

Developing Public Understanding  
of the Proposed New District

A well-informed public is essential to reaching a wise decision on the school district issue. Therefore, a systematic, comprehensive, carefully coordinated program to develop and distribute among all citizens adequate information on the district reorganization plan and the reasons which support it is needed. The Commission report which develops the arguments for and against a single school district should be made available to citizens and its contents widely publicized. Mass media of communication are to be employed to assist in developing interest and public understanding. Newspaper coverage is to be widely employed. Both radio and television are to be used extensively. Arguments for and against the proposed district should be presented through these media. Presentations to civic clubs, parent-teacher associations, and other formal groups are to be stimulated. Many informed citizens are to be employed in this program, citizens representing all walks of life. A committee of leaders in community affairs is to be charged with responsibility for organizing and coordinating this program. The committee is to be appointed by the boards of education upon recommendation of the superintendents of schools.

Remaining Tasks

The major unfinished task is completion of the necessary legal work. While a great deal of this has already been done, the needed legislation

remains to be drafted. This cannot be done until the extensive research on existing statutes, regulations, and court decisions has been completed and questions arising therefrom have been answered.

Roughly one year is needed for finishing this task.

The work in finance which Dr. R. L. Johns is doing should be completed within six months.

Retirement provisions, tenure, sick leave, leaves of absence, salary schedules, personnel records, and a plan for combining the two central office staffs being developed by Dr. Willard Elsbree should be completed within six months.

Curriculum studies, developing pupil accounting provisions, deciding on transportation, food, health, and other services to be provided, and provisions for maintenance and operation need not progress much beyond the present planning stages until it is known whether or not the proposed district is to be created. As indicated above, the machinery for discharging these steps has been defined and can be put in motion on short notice.

#### Budget

To be developed.

#### Motivating Assumption of the Commission

The first decision of the Commission was that the sole criterion by which it would determine its recommendation on the issue of school district organization in Atlanta and Fulton County is what will best serve the educational welfare of those to be educated in Atlanta and

Fulton County? Adhering to this fundamental guide has provided a source of confidence to the Commission.

TMP:jp  
December 2, 1966

*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

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MINUTES

LOCAL EDUCATION COMMISSION MEETING

December 5, 1966

The Local Education Commission met at 10:00 a.m. in the Conference Room of the Fulton County Administration Building with the following in attendance:

Commission Members

Mr. P. L. Bardin  
Mr. J. H. Cawthon  
Mr. Earl Landers  
Dr. John W. Letson  
Mrs. Alan Ritter  
Mr. Leonard Robinson  
Mr. Wallace H. Stewart  
Mr. Kenneth Stringer

Mr. Harry West (Represented  
Mr. Alan Kiepper)  
Dr. Paul D. West

Consultants and Staff

Dr. Truman Pierce  
Mr. James Groton  
Dr. Curtis Henson

Minutes of the October 24, 1966 meeting were approved with one correction: Mr. Jerry Wootan, not Mr. Alan Kiepper, represented Dr. Paul West at the last meeting.

Dr. Pierce presented the proposed "Progress Report to the Legislative Delegation from DeKalb and Fulton Counties." As the report was read, various points were discussed and clarified. Mr. James Groton explained the section pertaining to the legal work which is presented on pages 6-10.

It was pointed out that the study should state specifically the procedure to follow in the selection of the new superintendent and the procedures to follow until the official term of office of the two superintendents have been fulfilled. Currently, one superintendent is elected by the electorate for a specific term of office. The other superintendent is appointed for a prescribed number of years.

Mr. Robinson made the motion that the report be received, that Mr. Bardin be authorized to transmit it to the members of the legislature,

and that thanks be extended to Dr. Pierce for his good work. The motion was seconded by Mrs. Alan Ritter and passed unanimously.

Mr. Groton was instructed to draft a bill to extend the life of the Commission for one year. The Commission approved using the same form as the 1966 bill, that the names of the Commission members currently serving be included, that Dr. John Letson be authorized to name a replacement for Dr. James Miller, and that the bill include a section authorizing the Fulton County and Atlanta Boards of Education to pay the cost of the Local Education Commission on a 40-60% ratio, respectively.

The bill from Dr. R. L. Johns in the amount of \$231.18 for consultant services, October 10 and 11, 1966, was approved for payment. The Commission also approved that approval for employment of all consultants and others carried with it authorization for payment for services rendered.

The meeting was adjourned at 12:10 p.m.

APPROVED BY: \_\_\_\_\_  
Chairman

\_\_\_\_\_  
Recording Secretary

*File*

# LOCAL EDUCATION COMMISSION

## of Atlanta and Fulton County, Georgia

**CHAIRMAN**

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1440 BANK OF GEORGIA BUILDING  
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873-3578

---

**MINUTES**

**LOCAL EDUCATION COMMISSION MEETING**

April 19, 1967

The Local Education Commission met in the Board Room of the Fulton County Administration Building at 9:00 a.m. on April 19, 1967 with the following in attendance:

Members

Mrs. Ethel Brooks  
Mr. J. H. Cawthon  
Mrs. Joseph Ford  
Mr. Otis Jackson  
Mr. Alan Kiepper  
Dr. John W. Letson  
Mr. A. B. Padgett  
Mrs. Alan Ritter  
Mr. Kenneth Stringer  
Mr. William M. Teem, III

Dr. Paul D. West

Consultants and Staff

Mr. James Groton  
Mrs. Martha Gaines  
Dr. Curtis Henson  
Mr. A. C. Latimer  
Dr. Truman Pierce

Mr. Otis Jackson served as Chairman and introduced the new members of the Commission.

Recognition was given to the passing of Mr. P. L. Bardin in December. It was announced that a wreath was sent in the name of the Commission. Members of the Commission reimbursed Mr. Kenneth Stringer for the wreath.

The Commission took recognition of the death of Mr. Fred J. Turner who was an invaluable member of the Commission and who had devoted many years of his life in service to the Atlanta Community. It was agreed that a resolution of sympathy be sent from the Commission to Mrs. Turner.

Mr. Latimer gave a brief report of the work of the lawyers and the problems encountered. He proposed that the Commission hire a lawyer and a secretary to spend full-time on the research required for the report, and that office space be rented in the First National Bank Building. The work of the lawyer would be supervised by Mr. Latimer and Mr. Groton who would be responsible for the final draft for the report. The estimated cost will be approximately \$1,300 a month.



Mr. Cawthon made a motion that the Commission approve the plan as outlined and that Mr. Latimer and Mr. Groton proceed as expeditiously as possible in employing the staff members and completing the work outlined. The motion, seconded by Mr. A. B. Padgett, was unanimously approved.

Dr. West read a resolution from the Grand Jury appointing Mr. Otis Jackson to the Fulton County Board of Education. Congratulations were extended to Mr. Jackson.

The Commission unanimously elected Mr. Otis Jackson to continue to serve as Vice-Chairman and Mr. Kenneth Stringer as Secretary-Treasurer of the Commission during 1967. The office of Chairman will be filled at the next meeting.

Dr. Letson was requested to propose a replacement for Mr. Turner.

An expression of gratitude was expressed to Mr. Alan Kiepper for his capable and dedicated services which he has rendered to the County, the School System, and to the Commission. His leaving Atlanta will be a great loss to the total community. The Commission wished for him Godspeed. Mr. Kiepper expressed appreciation for the kind remarks and asked that his name be kept on the mailing list of the Commission.

Dr. Pierce made a brief progress report. He stated that this Commission, unlike previous Commissions, had made the decision that the two school systems should be joined as soon as possible. The Commission had taken the position that this decision and the plan developed would fulfill its obligation. However, the delegation felt that a more complete plan should be presented and instructed the Commission to develop a more comprehensive plan of combining the two systems. Consequently Dr. R. L. Johns was employed to develop the unit on finances and business management and Dr. Willard Elsbree and Dr. John Phay to develop the section on personnel. Both reports are scheduled to be completed by June 1st. A copy of these two reports will be sent to the members of the Commission prior to the next meeting which will be held at 12:30 p.m. Monday June 19, 1967.

Mrs. Martha Gaines was instructed to make the appropriate news releases and to feel free to contact members of the Commission for advice and consultation.

The meeting was adjourned at 10:00 a.m.

Attachments

Approved By: \_\_\_\_\_  
Chairman

\_\_\_\_\_  
Recording Secretary

# LOCAL EDUCATION COMMISSION

## of Atlanta and Fulton County, Georgia

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237-4729

SECRETARY-TREASURER

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

---

May 1, 1967

Mrs. Fred J. Turner  
330 Blackland Road, N. W.  
Atlanta, Georgia 30305

Dear Mrs. Turner:

The members of the Local Education Commission deeply regret the passing of Mr. Fred Turner. All of us feel that we have lost a personal friend as well as a valuable member of the Commission.

A resolution of our sympathy is attached.

Sincerely,

*Curtis Henson*

E. Curtis Henson  
Recording Secretary

ECH:cw  
attachment

# 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**

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ATLANTA, GEORGIA 30309  
873-3578

---

*A RESOLUTION:*

*The members of the Local Education Commission in formal session on April 19, 1967 hereby express to Mrs. Fred Turner and family their deep sorrow at the death of Mr. Fred J. Turner, whose forceful and dedicated service to the Local Education Commission since 1964 has been of immeasurable value.*

*Mr. Turner's insights, dedication to civic responsibilities, wisdom and leadership will be greatly missed by all members of the Commission.*

*The Commission does hereby note in its records the passing from this life of a man who was esteemed by his associates, loved by his friends, and respected by all.*

file

# LOCAL EDUCATION COMMISSION

of Atlanta and Fulton County, Georgia

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ATLANTA, GEORGIA 30309  
873-3578

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April 11, 1967

R E M I N D E R

TO: Members of the Local Education Commission  
FROM: Curtis Henson, Recording Secretary

This is to remind you that the next meeting of the Local Education Commission will be held at 9:00 a.m., April 19, 1967 in the Fulton County Board Room, 165 Central Avenue, S.W.

CH:cw

ROSTER

LOCAL EDUCATION COMMISSION

of

ATLANTA AND FULTON COUNTY

1967

Dr. R. H. Brisbane - 521-0412  
Morehouse College  
223 Chestnut St., S. W.  
Atlanta, Georgia 30314

J. H. Cawthon - 761-1974 (Home)  
1840 Montrose Drive - 761-8421 (Bus.)  
East Point, Georgia 30044

Dr. Rufus E. Clement - 523-6431  
223 Chestnut St., S. W.  
Atlanta, Georgia 30314

John T. Cunningham - 964-6874  
2910 Stonewall Tell Road  
College Park, Georgia 30022

Otis M. Jackson - 237-4729  
3121 Maple Drive, N. E.  
Atlanta, Georgia 30305

Thomas M. Miller - 762-2311  
General Offices - Delta Air Lines  
Atlanta Municipal Airport 30320

A. B. Padgett - 688-4117  
Candler Building  
Atlanta, Georgia 30303

Mrs. Alan Ritter - 475-5425  
Route 2, Bent Oak Farm  
Alpharetta, Georgia 30201

Wallace H. Stewart - 872-0731  
International Business Machines Corp.  
1439 Peachtree St., N. E. 30309

W. Kenneth Stringer - 873-3578  
1393 Peachtree St., N. E.  
Atlanta, Georgia 30309

William M. Teem, III - 237-8235 (Home)  
825 Loidans Circle, N. E.  
Atlanta, Georgia 30305

Fred J. Turner - 524-7133  
William Oliver Building  
Atlanta, Georgia 30303

Marthame Sanders  
51 LaFayette Drive, N. E.  
Atlanta, Georgia 30309

---

Ex Officio Members:

Dr. John W. Letson, Supt.  
Atlanta Public Schools  
522-3381, Ext. 201

Dr. Paul D. West, Supt.  
Fulton County Schools  
572-2211

W. L. Robinson, President  
Fulton County Board of Education  
Box 169 761-2831  
College Park, Ga. 30022

Ed S. Cook, Sr. - 876-7311  
114 Merritts Ave., N.W. 30313  
President, Atl. Board of Ed.

Earl Landers, Admn. Asst. to Mayor  
City Hall 522-4463  
Atlanta, Georgia 30303

Alan Kiepper, Fulton County Mgr.  
Fulton County Admn. Bldg. 572-2907  
165 Central Avenue, S.W. 30303

Mrs. Ethel J. Brooks - 799-1539  
856 Harwell Road, N. W.  
Atlanta, Georgia 30318

Mrs. Joseph H. Ford - 874-3622  
550 Cresthill Ave., N. E.  
Atlanta, Georgia 30306

---

Co-Ordinator

Dr. Truman Pierce, Dean  
School of Education 36830  
Auburn University, Auburn, Ala.

Recording Secretary

Dr. E. Curtis Henson, Coordinator  
Metropolitan School Dev. Council

Lawyers

Mr. James Groton, Fulton Co. Bd. Ed.  
Mr. A. C. Latimer, Atl. Bd. Ed.

*File*  
*Local Education Comm.*

SCHOOL DISTRICT ORGANIZATION FOR EDUCATIONAL ADVANCEMENT  
IN ATLANTA AND FULTON COUNTY

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
Otis M. Jackson, Vice Chairman	Mrs. A. L. Ritter
W. Kenneth Stringer, Secretary & Treasurer	Wallace H. Stewart
Dr. R. H. Brisbane	William M. Teem, III
J. H. Cawthon	Fred J. Turner
Dr. Rufus E. Clement	James White, Jr.
Dr. James L. Miller, Jr.	

EX-OFFICIO

Dr. John W. Letson  
Dr. Paul D. West  
Oby T. Brewer, Jr.  
W. L. Robinson  
Earl Landers  
Alan Kiepper

STAFF

Dr. Truman Pierce, Coordinator  
Dr. Curtis Henson, Recording Secretary

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SCHOOL DISTRICT ORGANIZATION FOR EDUCATIONAL  
ADVANCEMENT IN THE ATLANTA AND FULTON COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICTS

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 increasingly complex society and a rapidly accelerating accumulation of useful knowledge. 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. No useful role for the uneducated remains and the cost of ignorance is more than society can afford.

Major characteristics of the educational revolution follow: enrolling children in school at an earlier age, extending the upper limits of formal schooling, providing education programs 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, in school use 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 modern school systems include junior colleges, vocational-technical schools, early childhood education programs and adult education programs.

Additions and improvements in schools are increasing greatly 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. Because of population growth and diversity of educational need, metropolitan areas pose difficult educational 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 Atlanta and Fulton County school districts are well aware of these conditions and are giving thought to the future 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 complex and formidable. After considerable study, the Commission adopted a plan which, if followed, would enable the Commission to discharge its responsibilities. This plan was revised from time to time as the study progressed and as modifications which would improve the study were identified. The work of the Commission consisted of completing the steps described below.

1. A review of previous studies which gave attention to the same problems the Commission was asked to study.
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 which would be necessary to create a single school district.
8. Tasks which would have to 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 was to reach the decision that would serve the best interests of those who are to be educated in the Atlanta and Fulton County school districts.

The deliberations of the Commission and the information considered in these deliberations, relevant to the purposes of the study, 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. The report took the position that, ultimately, merger was desirable, but not at that time because of differences in expenditure levels and in 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. The Commission 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. These programs include 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 seek ways to overcome the financial crisis in which the Fulton County Schools found themselves because of a City of Atlanta annexation program. The annexation program was recommended by the Local Government Commission in 1950 and was carried out in the early fifties. As a result of this program, 72 percent of the taxable wealth of the Fulton County School District and nearly 50 per cent of its students were annexed by Atlanta. The report of this Commission also took the position that the school districts should undertake merger when feasible and recommended that steps be taken to determine what would be involved in bringing about a single district.

All studies, since 1950, which have concerned themselves with education in Atlanta and Fulton County have given serious consideration to the creation of a single school district in place of the two existing districts. These studies have taken the position that consolidation should be undertaken when feasible. The two districts, meanwhile, 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. These advantages are concerned with the basic structure for education, adequately financing the schools, equalizing educational opportunities, and improving the quality of education. Actually, all concerns of the study focus on the improvement of the schools. 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 in order to make possible 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

revealed as a satisfactory district. Fulton County meets only one of the six criteria: the number of children to be educated. Atlanta lacks adequate bonding capacity. If the two districts were combined, the resultant district would be more adequate, primarily because of fiscal resource, than is either when considered separately.

### 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. The current nationwide interest in providing more realistic educational programs for children in slum areas is an indication of concern for 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 in a more economical and efficient manner the variety of educational programs which are needed.

The equalization of educational opportunities in Atlanta and Fulton County 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. 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 represent the best economy for each district to provide its own junior colleges. A program to serve the metropolitan area would provide the best means of meeting this growing educational need. The two districts have already found it profitable to cooperate in the provision of vocational and technical education as shown by a new vocational-technical school which is to serve both districts. Plans are in the making for construction of a second institution of this type.

More Adequate Curricula for Special  
Student Groups Can Be Provided

The variety of curricula needed to meet the diverse educational needs referred to above requires special education 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 both the Atlanta and Fulton County districts rather than for each school district to offer its own programs. Furthermore, the educational quality of offerings can be improved more readily 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 are 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 larger district 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 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 as well as the qualitative 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 also must 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.

For the same reasons long-range planning for improvement in the quality of education can be more effective if done for a single district rather than the present separate districts.

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 school 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 sub-units such as 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 schools is equally important. Schools, like the communities 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 Fulton County 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 such as publications, 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 available 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 economy of the two districts. 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 is defined as an actual reduction in expenditures. Any plan for immediate unification of the Atlanta and Fulton County School Districts would cost more than the sum of the current budgets of the two systems because, assuming that the same quality of education is to be provided in the entire district, costs would need to be equalized upward instead of downward. Nevertheless, some financial economies are possible because of the elimination of duplicate programs and services which can be handled better through a single system. 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 earlier. These programs could be provided at higher quality levels and at a lower unit cost on a unified basis than would be possible in dual programs.

However, the greatest economic gain to be derived from 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 is the mere saving of money. One 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 rapidly increasing. It would be more satisfactory to handle these relationships for the Atlanta and Fulton County Schools through a single agency than through two agencies.

### Assumptions

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.

### Conclusion

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; however, 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 the weighing of advantages and disadvantages against each other, no objective way of making a decision was open to the Commission. Major concern 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 are also important and they were studied extensively. 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 is present in metropolitan school districts. Thus, greater variations are required 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 may take the place of local initiative. Thus, bureaucratic controls may grow up which inevitably stress uniformity and discourage the community autonomy which has been one of the major 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 usually too far removed from the local school 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 and the 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.

#### Conclusion

The Atlanta and Fulton County school districts, if combined, would be about eleventh in size among all districts in America. In 1964-65, the

total regular day school enrollment in the two districts was 150,218 plus special schools and adult programs. This is 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 reached already the size of school systems which have suffered from the ills described above. Therefore, if the proper safeguards are observed in the creation and establishment of the new district, combining the school districts would scarcely create problems of bigness beyond those which already exist.

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. 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 currently 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 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), stated that the Commission "may draft a plan or plans for the combining of such school systems."

The decision on whether there will be a single district will be made 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 pro-

posed 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. (It is assumed that voters in each district would be required to approve the single district before it can be created.)

The transition from two school districts 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 merger of the Atlanta and Fulton County school districts 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 total 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. On October 1, 1964, the total school enrollment for the regular day program, including kindergartens, would have been about 142,000 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 two 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 for 1965-66 would have been slightly under 61,500,000 dollars, with expenditures equalized by raising Fulton County School District expenditures up to current Atlanta levels, including the provision for kindergartens. The 1965-66 budget for the Atlanta schools 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 for the 1965-66 school year is \$1,448,147,960 at present assessments. This is 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?

Properties of the two districts 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 for 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, with the exception that 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 has provided 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 and 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 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 or from public transportation which is provided at a student rate were adopted for the new district, no additional cost would be necessary. Adding kindergartens to present Fulton County schools would cost approximately \$400,000 per year. Capital outlay needs would be \$1½ million for the construction of 60 classrooms for kindergartens.

#### How Would the New School

#### District 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 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 both Atlanta and Fulton County. 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 financing schools.

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 Average  
Individual Be More or Less  
Than at Present?

An 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 country 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 as Fulton County's school finance problems currently are more severe than those of Atlanta because of the city annexation program of the last decade. But, that which is Atlanta and that which is Fulton County as defined by existing boundaries is unrealistic. 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. Partly because of the

tax structure, Fulton County schools are in trouble fiscally. 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 same 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. No failures of such mergers 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 because of 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 a single district proposal, the time table defined in the enabling legislation would be set in motion. Much work would 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 exist currently 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 such questions 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 because of swiftly moving cultural changes of profound impact on all areas of civilization. During the course of this study several developments occurred 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 aggravate further 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. This 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 will make it easier for consolidation to be achieved.

A P P E N D I X

TABLE I

ESTIMATED TOTAL SCHOOL ENROLLMENTS IN REGULAR DAY PROGRAMS  
IN THE ATLANTA AND FULTON COUNTY DISTRICTS  
1965-1970

Years	Atlanta	Fulton County	Total
1965-66	119,204	35,020	154,224
1966-67	122,376	36,210	158,586
1967-68	125,548	37,441	162,989
1968-69	128,721	38,714	167,435
1969-70	131,893	40,030	171,923

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

*File*



# ATLANTA PUBLIC SCHOOLS

ADMINISTRATION BUILDING

224 CENTRAL AVE., S.W.

ATLANTA, GEORGIA 30303

OFFICE OF  
SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS

June 6, 1966

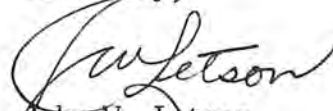
Mr. Earl Landers  
Mayor's Office  
200 City Hall  
Atlanta, Georgia 30303

Dear Mr. Landers:

May I express my appreciation and that of the administrative staff of the Atlanta Public Schools for your willingness to accept the civic responsibility of helping us to provide better education for our children. Certainly your agreement to dedicate your efforts to the work of this Committee speaks well for you and our city, for the success of a democratic society largely depends on genuine personal involvement of citizens in community activities for the common good. The most recent example of civic cooperation was the school bond election. We owe you a debt of gratitude for your efforts to inform our people of specific building needs.

I look forward to the continuation of our work together for the good of Atlanta children.

Sincerely,

  
John W. Letson  
Superintendent

JWL:psh

MINUTES

LOCAL EDUCATION COMMISSION

CONFERENCE ROOM - FULTON COUNTY BOARD OF EDUCATION

FULTON COUNTY ADMINISTRATION BUILDING

JUNE 19, 1964

*File* →

The first regular meeting of the Local Education Commission was held in the Conference Room of the Fulton County Board of Education at 2:00 p.m. Mr. W. L. Robinson, President of the Fulton County Board of Education, presided.

Members present were: P. L. Bardin, Oby T. Brewer, Jr., Dr. R. H. Brisbane, Otis M. Jackson, Allen Kiepper, Earl Landers, Dr. John W. Letson, Dr. James L. Miller, Jr., Thomas M. Miller, W. L. Robinson, Wallace H. Stewart, William M. Teem, III, Fred J. Turner, Dr. Paul D. West and James White, Jr.

The minutes of the organizational meeting of May 20, 1964, were read and unanimously approved.

A report of the May 29th and June 5th Steering Committee meetings was given and the minutes read. It was reported that each proposed officer had agreed to serve if elected. Also, Dean Pierce and Dean Johnson agreed to serve if the Commission requested them to do so.

The point was raised and clarified that the adoption of the minutes would not constitute the election of the people suggested.

It was pointed out that Dean Johnson is a member of both the General Assembly and the faculty of the Emory Law School and, therefore, may not have time to direct the legal research required by the Education Commission. The nature of the work desired may require services of a law firm. It was stated that Mr. G. Stanley Joslin had been considered but that the Steering Committee thought Dean Johnson might bring a fresh approach to the study. The suggestion was made that the Commission employ a project coordinator to develop a program of action and identify resources needed before obtaining legal services. Attorneys for the Atlanta and Fulton County School Boards should be asked to advise in the matter of selecting a law firm or a lawyer to conduct the necessary research.

Mr. Teem made the motion that the minutes of the Steering Committee be approved as read. The motion carried.

Mr. Turner made the motion that Mr. P. L. Bardin be elected as Chairman of the Local Education Commission; Mr. Otis M. Jackson be elected as Vice-Chairman; and Mr. W. Kenneth Stringer be elected as Secretary-Treasurer. Mr. White seconded the motion which carried unanimously.

The motion was made by Mr. Turner that Dr. Truman Pierce, Dean of School of Education, Auburn, University, be employed as coordinator of the study and that he be paid a fee not to exceed \$3,000 for services rendered from the present time until the beginning of the next regular session of the General Assembly. Mr. White seconded the motion. The question was asked if the \$3,000 fee covered only the period of time from the present until shortly after the first of January--about six months. It was pointed out that this was the intent of the motion and that fees beyond the meeting date of the General Assembly would have to be negotiated with Dean Pierce. The motion carried unanimously.

Mr. White moved that the officers be authorized to explore the matter of the legal assistance needed for this study and that they consult with members of the Commission to get their views on the persons or firms to be retained and report their findings to the Commission for further action. The motion was seconded by Mr. Cawthon and carried.

Mr. Brewer stated that the Commission should consider the amount of money appropriated and the amount spent to date. He said that the legal counsel may cost \$25,000 or more. The Commission should have an accurate estimate of the total cost of the study and the amount of money which may be obtained from various sources.

Mr. Teem moved that the Steering Committee and officers be directed to investigate the financial assistance needed by the Commission to accomplish its purpose and also the financial sources available to satisfy this assistance. The motion was seconded by Mr. Stewart and carried.

Mr. Robinson then relinquished the chair to Mr. P. L. Bardin, the newly elected Chairman.

Mr. White made the motion that the Commission thank the Steering Committee for getting the Commission off to such a fine start and on

the right track. Dr. Brisbane seconded the motion which carried unanimously.

Mr. Bardin stated that he had been requested to appear on a WAGA-TV program next week to discuss the work of the Commission. He asked if anyone knew of any reason why he should not appear. Mr. Brewer stated that the Commission needs as much publicity as possible concerning the work it is doing, the problems involved and the need for the study. It was pointed out that although no answers were available at this time, the problems involved should be explained to the public. Also, the public should know that the Commission has been formed and is off to a good start.

It was agreed that for the next few weeks the Commission should meet only when called. But, after the committees have been appointed and their work designated, the Commission should meet on a regular schedule.

It was emphasized that the work of the Commission should get started as soon and as rapidly as possible. Dean Pierce should attend the next meeting and present an over-all plan and time schedule for the study. In the meantime, Dean Pierce should consult with the Steering Committee and officers of the Commission concerning adequate legal services and finances.

Mr. Teem asked if the Tax Study Commission appointed by the City would overlap with the work of the Education Commission. Mr. Landers stated that he thought the Study Commission would add to the strength of the Education Commission and that the two Commissions should keep abreast of each other but that they should work independently. It was pointed out that the Local Education Commission had not appointed a committee to make a fiscal study and that this committee should not be appointed until Dean Pierce presents a plan of action and legal assistance is available.

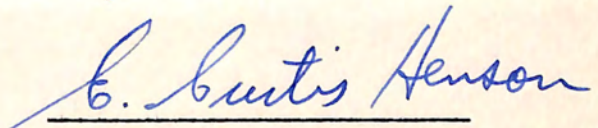
Mr. Jackson made the motion that the Commission accept the recommendation that Dr. Curtis Henson serve as secretary. Mr. White seconded the motion which carried unanimously.

Mr. Brewer stated that to prevent misunderstanding the voting



members and the ex officio members of the Commission should be identified. Each member of the Commission has a copy of the House Resolution which clearly identifies members in each category. By calling this matter to the attention of the members of the Commission in a regular meeting, misunderstanding should not develop either within the Commission or between the Commission and other organizations.

The meeting was adjourned at 3:20 p.m. subject to the call of the Chairman.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "E. Curtis Henson". The signature is written in a cursive style and is positioned above a horizontal line.

Secretary

ECH/dh

June 26, 1964

Approved: \_\_\_\_\_

Chairman

MINUTES

LOCAL EDUCATION COMMISSION  
CONFERENCE ROOM OF THE  
FULTON COUNTY BOARD OF EDUCATION  
FULTON COUNTY ADMINISTRATION BUILDING

JULY 31, 1964

The Local Education Commission met at 2:00 p.m., in the Conference Room of the Fulton County Board of Education for the primary purpose of reviewing the proposed plan of study developed by Dr. Truman Pierce.

Members present were:

P. L. Bardin, Chairman	Fred J. Turner
Otis M. Jackson	James White, Jr.
Dr. James L. Miller, Jr.	Alan Kiepper, Ex Officio
Mrs. Alan Ritter	Dr. John Letson, Ex Officio
W. Kenneth Stringer	Dr. Paul West, Ex Officio

The minutes of the June 19 meeting were approved. The minutes of the July 2 meeting of the Steering Committee were read and approved as amended.

Prior to making a detailed presentation of the proposed study plan, Dr. Pierce stated that the plan had been developed with the assistance of Superintendents Letson and West and Dr. Martin and Dr. Henson. He also stated that the proposed study outline was intended to reflect an understanding and awareness of past studies, current conditions and projected developments of the metropolitan area. (A copy of the plan was distributed to Commission members present and mailed to members absent).

It was emphasized that the proposed plan is intended as a starting point and that changes may be made at any time as the study progresses.

Mr. White stated that the question before the Commission is: Should the two schools be combined? This question needs to be answered as soon as possible and members of the Commission should be in a position to answer questions and points favorable and/or unfavorable to combining the schools so that they can inform the public and receive reactions.

It was pointed out that although the last Local Education Commission did not specifically recommend consolidation at the time, it did outline a ten

Local Education Commission, continued  
July 31, 1964

year improvement program designed to bring the Atlanta and Fulton County Schools closer together and leading ultimately to a single school district. Many of these cooperative and uniformed programs have been realized. Based on these studies and other information the Commission should now assume that it will proceed upon the premise that combining the two systems is desirable.

There was agreement that the next step is to prepare a brief which states: (a) findings, conclusions and recommendations of previous studies, (b) advantages and disadvantages of consolidation and (c) data to prove or support the position to consolidate or not to consolidate. This brief will serve as common information to all Commission members and as a review of previous studies. Dr. Pierce will develop the brief and include Items I and V of the proposed plan of study in it. He will present the first draft of this brief to the Commission in September.

The motion was made that since all previous studies have pointed toward the desirability of combining the two school systems, the present Commission accepts the tentative position that combining the two school systems will be recommended and that attention be focused upon implementing the steps outlined in the proposed plan of study presented by Dr. Pierce, however, the Commission has the right to change this decision at any point during the study. The motion was unanimously approved.

It was pointed out that the laws should be examined and provisions made so that the two systems could combine without loss of revenue, services, benefits, etc., for either system and/or for the employees.

Mr. Turner made the motion that within the limits of finances available at the present time or in the future, the officers of the Commission be authorized to employ legal counsel and other needed services. The motion was seconded by Mr. White and carried unanimously.

The meeting was adjourned at 3:30 p.m.

ECH/dh

August 4, 1964

Approved by: \_\_\_\_\_

Chairman



Recording Secretary

Tentative

PROPOSED PLAN OF STUDY FOR THE LOCAL EDUCATION COMMISSION  
OF ATLANTA AND FULTON COUNTY

Purposes of the Study: "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." (Taken from H.R. 505-1246, as passed by House and Senate.)

The legislation creating the local Education Commission of Atlanta and Fulton County clearly defines two specific and closely related major tasks and assigns these tasks to the Commission. The two tasks are:

1. To recommend whether or not a single school district would be better for Atlanta and Fulton County than the present separate districts of Atlanta and Fulton County.
2. To draw up a plan or plans for creating a single school district to take the place of the present Atlanta and Fulton County districts.

The work of the Commission would be simplified if it could first determine the answer to the question of the desirability and feasibility of a single school system. Should the answer be negative, the Commission might logically consider it unnecessary to propose a plan or plans for creating a single school system. On the other hand, the most practical answer to the first question is necessarily based on the results of an inquiry into the various factors which would be involved in the dissolution of the two existing school districts and in creating in their stead a single district.

Obviously, the consideration of feasibility demands the identification and careful analysis of the requirements for establishing a satisfactory single school district.

Therefore, the proposed outline is based on the assumption that a thorough exploration of what the creation of a new school district means is desirable if the most satisfactory answer to each of the two questions is to be achieved. The steps which are listed and discussed below are based on this assumption.

I. Describe the new school district which might be created.

What would this district look like? What would it include?

This description should include an identification of the geographical area the new district would include, the total population of this area, the school age population and the actual school enrollment. The number of teachers and other professional personnel, and the number of other employees would be listed. The number, size, types and distribution of schools, a general description of the educational program as contemplated, an analysis of available facilities, instructional materials, transportation, and other supporting services would be included. Wealth, sources of wealth, and the nature of the economy of the district would be a part of the description.

A general overview of the organization and government of the district and relationships to other units of government would be included. This statement would stress the fact that the new district would be made up of schools now in existence located on their present sites and functioning essentially as they do now and with the same personnel.

II. Identify and describe the legal steps which would be necessary in order to create a single school district in place of the two existing districts.

What would be required to dissolve the present districts of Atlanta and Fulton County? How would the new district be created?

A complete listing and the precise definition of the various legal actions necessary in order to discontinue the present school districts are essential. For example, what would be done with the debts of these districts would have to be spelled out. The laws necessary for creating a new district would be set forth. The required constitutional amendment would be drafted.

Plans for the organization and administration of the district would be stated with provisions for creating a board of education, specifying the number of members, eligibility for membership, type of representation (district-wide or by areas), term of office, method of selection, powers, duties, and responsibilities. In addition, a plan for organizing and administering the school district should be set forth, including provisions for a chief administrative official, and the spelling out of his powers, duties, and responsibilities.

The necessary legal steps would also require the setting forth of a tax plan for financial support of the district, the kinds of school taxes to be levied, provisions for tax leeway, and provisions for debt and debt services. The statement on legal requirements would take into account the impact of the proposed new State Constitution on creation of the new district and relationships of the district to other units of government. Some attention should be given to the broad general problem of metropolitan government in the Atlanta metropolitan area.

III. Decisions, recommendations, policies, regulations, and operational procedures which would be essential to creating the new district and getting it into operation. (Not necessarily an inclusive list.)

What are the specific steps required to bring the new district into being? to set it into operation? to assure satisfactory operation?

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. As the study advances, additions to this list are likely to be necessary.

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.

IV. A proposed budget for the new district.

What would it cost to finance the new school district in order to maintain the level of present school programs?

A budget should show the total amount of revenue needed and the allocation of funds to the various areas of the educational program. A comparison should be made of the cost of education in the two present districts and the new district calling attention to any differences in cost and giving explanations for the differences. The budget should also

show the sources of revenue and the amounts from each source. The budget would necessarily take into account revenues to be received from the State. How these revenues compare with those presently received from the State by the two separate districts should be shown.

- V. Identify and describe the advantages and disadvantages of a single school system in comparison to the advantages and disadvantages of the two present school systems.

What facts and conditions support creation of a new district? What facts and conditions support retaining the two existing districts. What is the proper recommendation?

The steps which have been outlined above would provide a sound basis for answering these questions. A decision on the single district issue would also involve bringing up-to-date those aspects of previous studies which deal with the present questions and the identification of changes made since these studies were completed, legal and otherwise, which have a bearing on the problem. This statement should take account of the problems and issues which would have to be faced in undertaking to develop a single school district.

- VI. Propose a plan for creating and putting into operation the new school district, if it is to be created.

This step is essentially the development of a blueprint for action to be taken in the event a new district is desired, including a time table for such action. A statement of specific steps to be undertaken in creating the new school district would be drawn up. Special attention would need to be given to required legislation. A sequential schedule

of steps should be included and assignments made of responsibilities for carrying out each step. A time schedule should be suggested.

VII. Design a Public Information Services Program.

Acceptance of any proposals of the Commission will depend largely on public knowledge and understanding of such proposals. Therefore, a wide variety of opportunities should be provided for citizens to become acquainted with the proposals and to understand their impact on education in the metropolitan area. Hence, appropriate use of television, radio, and newspapers will be in order. Individual and small group conferences with selected persons is an extremely important step in this program. Provision for adequate public discussions is another important step.

TMD:JP  
July 28, 1964