DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 039 311 UD 010 306

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TITLE School Desegregation: "A Free and Open Society"; Policy Statement by Richard Nixon, President of the United States.
INSTITUTION Office of the President, Washington, D.C.
PUB DATE 24 Mar 70
NOTE 31p.

EDRS PRICE EDRS Price MF-$0.25 HC-$1.65
DESCRIPTORS *Administrative Policy, *Administrator Responsibility, Board of Education Role, Bus Transportation, *Court Role, De Facto Segregation, De Jure Segregation, Educational Facilities, Educational Finance, Elementary Schools, Integration Effects, Racial Balance, Racial Segregation, Resource Allocations, *School Segregation, Secondary Schools, *Supreme Co rt Litigation, Teacher Integration

ABSTRACT

President Nixon's "purpose in this statement is to set forth in detail this Administration's policies on the subject of desegregation of America's elementary and secondary schools." Specific objectives of his statement are noted as follows: to reaffirm his personal belief that the 1954 Brown decision was right in both Constitutional and human terms; to assess progress in the years since that decision; to clarify the present state of the law and the Administration policies guided by it; to discuss difficulties encountered and explore approaches toward compliance with the Brown decision; and, to place the question of the desegregation of schools in its larger context--achievement of a free and open society. Discussing the President's own responsibility, the decisions arrived at by the Supreme and lower Courts, de jure segregation, and de facto segregation, the Chief Executive repeatedly emphasizes his stringent opposition to "massive busing programs" and his desire to allow "school boards, acting in good faith, to formulate plans which best suit the needs of their own localities" in the implementation of the process of desegregation. The principles of enforcement stated are held to encompass elimination of deliberate racial segregation of pupils and teachers and of discrimination with respect to school facilities, institution of the neighborhood school as the most appropriate base, and avoidance of interference in de facto racial imbalance. (RJ)

ED039311

SCHOOL DESEGREGATION:
"A Free and Open Society"

Policy Statement

By

Richard Nixon

President of the United States

March 24, 1970

UD010306

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
OFFICE OF EDUCATION

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SCHOOL DESEGREGATION:
"A Free and Open Society"

My purpose in this statement is to set forth in detail this Administration's policies on the subject of desegregation of America's elementary and secondary schools.

Few public issues are so emotionally charged as that of school desegregation, few so wrapped in confusion and clouded with misunderstanding. None is more important to our national unity and progress.

This issue is not partisan. It is not sectional. It is an American issue, of direct and immediate concern to every citizen.

I hope that this statement will reduce the prevailing confusion and will help place public discussion of the issue on a more rational and realistic level in all parts of the nation. It is time to strip away the hypocrisy, the prejudice and the ignorance that too long have characterized discussion of this issue.

My specific objectives in this statement are:

To reaffirm my personal belief that the 1954 decision of the Supreme Court in **Brown** v. **Board of Education** was right in both Constitutional and human terms.

To assess our progress in the 16 years since **Brown** and to point the way to continuing progress.

To clarify the present state of the law, as developed by the courts and the Congress, and the Administration policies guided by it.

To discuss some of the difficulties encountered by courts and communities as desegregation has accelerated in recent years, and to suggest approaches that can mitigate such problems as we complete the process of compliance with **Brown.**

To place the question of school desegregation in its larger context, as part of America's historic commitment to the achievement of a free and open society.

Anxiety over this issue has been fed by many sources.

On the one hand, some have interpreted various Administration statements and actions as a backing away from the principle of **Brown**—and have therefore feared that the painstaking work of a decade and a half might be undermined. We are not backing away. The Constitutional mandate will be enforced.

On the other hand, several recent decisions by lower courts have raised widespread fears that the nation might face a massive disruption of public education: that wholesale compulsory busing may be ordered and the neighborhood school virtually doomed. A comprehensive review of school desegregation cases indicates that these latter are untypical decisions, and that the prevailing trend of judicial opinion is by no means so extreme.

Certain changes are needed in the nation's approach to school desegregation. It would be remarkable if sixteen years of hard, often tempestuous experience had not taught us something about how better to manage the task with a decent regard for the legitimate interests of all concerned—and especially the children. Drawing on this experience, I am confident the remaining problems can be overcome.

WHAT THE LAW REQUIRES

In order to determine what ought to be done, it is important first to be as clear as possible about what **must** be done.

We are dealing fundamentally with inalienable human rights, some of them constitutionally protected. The final arbiter of Constitutional questions is the United States Supreme Court.

The President's Responsibility

There are a number of questions involved in the school controversy on which the Supreme Court has not yet spoken definitively. Where it has spoken, its decrees are the law. Where it has not spoken, where Congress has not acted, and where differing lower courts have left the issue in doubt, my responsibilities as Chief Executive make it necessary that I determine, on the basis of my best judgment, what must be done.

In reaching that determination, I have sought to ascertain the prevailing judicial view as developed in decisions by the Supreme Court and the various Circuit Courts of Appeals. In this statement I list a number of principles derived from that prevailing judicial view. I accept those principles and shall be guided by them. The Departments and agencies of the Government will adhere to them.

A few recent cases in the lower courts have gone beyond those generally accepted principles. Unless affirmed by the Supreme Court, I will not consider them as precedents to guide Administration policy elsewhere.

What the Supreme Court Has Said

To determine the present state of the law, we must first remind ourselves of the recent history of Supreme Court rulings in this area.

This begins with the **Brown** case in 1954, when the Court laid down the principle that deliberate segregation of students by race in the public schools was unconstitutional. In that historic ruling, the court gave legal sanction to two fundamental truths—that separation by law establishes schools that are inherently unequal, and that a promise of equality before the law cannot be squared with use of the law to establish two classes of people, one black and one white.

The Court requested further argument, however, and propounded the following questions, among others:

> "Assuming it is decided that segregation in public schools violates the Fourteenth Amendment
>
> "a. would decree necessarily follow providing that, within the limits set by normal geographic school districting, Negro children should forthwith be admitted to schools of their choice, or
>
> "b. may this Court, in the exercise of its equity powers, permit an effective gradual adjustment to be brought about from existing segregated systems to a system not based on color distinctions?"

In its second **Brown** decision the following year, the Court addressed itself to these questions of manner and timing of compliance. Its ruling included these principles:

> Local school problems vary: school authorities have the primary responsibility for solving these problems; courts must consider whether these authorities are acting in good faith.
>
> The courts should be guided by principles of equity, which traditionally are "characterized by a practical flexibility in shaping its remedies and by a facility for adjusting and reconciling public and private needs."
>
> Compliance must be achieved "with all deliberate speed," including "a prompt and reasonable start"

toward achieving full compliance "at the earliest practicable date."

In 1964, the Supreme Court spoke again: "The time for mere 'deliberate speed' has run out, and that phrase can no longer justify denying these . . . children their constitutional rights."

At the same time, Congress also added to the impetus of desegregation by passing the Civil Rights Act of 1964, an Act that as a private citizen I endorsed and supported.

Although the Supreme Court in the **Brown** cases concerned itself primarily, if not exclusively, with pupil assignments, its decree applied also to teacher assignments and school facilities as a whole.

In 1968, the Supreme Court reiterated the principle enunciated in prior decisions, that teacher assignments are an important aspect of the basic task of achieving a public school system wholly freed from racial discrimination. During that same year, in another group of Supreme Court decisions, a significant and new set of principles also emerged:

That a school board must establish "that its proposed plan promises meaningful and immediate progress toward disestablishing State-imposed segregation," and that the plan must "have real prospects for dismantling the State-imposed dual system 'at the earliest practicable date.' "

That one test of whether a school board has met its "affirmative duty to take whatever steps might be necessary to convert to a unitary system in which racial discrimination wouuld be eliminated root and branch" is the extent to which racial separation persists under its plan.

That the argument that effective desegregation might cause white families to flee the neighborhood

In the 1964 Civil Rights Act, the Congress stated, ". . . nothing herein shall empower any official or court of the United States to issue any order seeking to achieve a racial balance in any school by requiring the transportation of pupils or students from one school to another or one school district to another in order to achieve such racial balance, or otherwise enlarge the existing power of the court to insure compliance with constitutional standards."

In the 1966 amendments to the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, the Congress further stated, ". . . nothing contained in this Act shall . . . require the assignment or transportation of students or teachers in order to overcome racial imbalance."

I am advised that these provisions cannot constitutionally be applied to **de jure** segregation. However, not all segregation as it exists today is **de jure.**

I have consistently expressed my opposition to any compulsory busing of pupils beyond normal geographic school zones for the purpose of achieving racial balance.

What the Lower Courts Have Said

In the absence of definitive Supreme Court rulings, these and other "basic practical problems" have been left for case-by-case determination in the lower courts—and both real and apparent contradictions among some of these lower court rulings have generated considerable public confusion about what the law really requires.

In an often-cited case in 1955 (**Briggs** v. **Elliott**), a District court held that "the Constitution . . . does not require integration. . . . It merely forbids the use of governmental powers to enforce segregation."

But in 1966 another court took issue with this doctrine, pointing out that it had been used as justifying "techniques for perpetuating school segregation," and declaring that:

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But in 1966 another court took issue with this doctrine, pointing out that it had been used as justifying "techniques for perpetuating school segregation," and declaring that:

> ". . . the only adequate redress for a previously overt system-wide policy of segregation directed against Negroes as a collective entity is a system-wide policy of integration."

In 1969, the 4th Circuit Court of Appeals declared:

> "The famous **Briggs** v. **Elliott** dictum—adhered to by this court for many years—that the Constitution forbids segregation but does not require integration . . . is now dead."

Cases in two circuit courts have held that the continued existence of some all-black schools in a formerly segregated district did **not** demonstrate unconstitutionality, with one noting that there is "no duty to balance the races in the school system in conformity with some mathematical formula."

Another circuit court decision declared that even though a district's geographic zones were based on objective, non-racial criteria, the fact that they failed to produce any significant degree of integration meant that they **were** unconstitutional.

Two very recent Federal court decisions continue to illustrate the range of opinion: a plan of a southern school district has been upheld even though three schools would remain all-black, but a northern school system has been ordered by another Federal court to integrate all of its schools completely "by the revising of boundary lines for attendance purposes as well as busing so as to achieve maximum racial integration."

This range of differences demonstrates that lawyers and judges have honest disagreements about what the law requires. There have been some rulings that would divert such huge sums of money to non-educational purposes, and would create such severe dislocations of public school systems, as to impair the primary function

of providing a good education. In one, for example—probably the most extreme judicial decree so far—a California State court recently ordered the Los Angeles School Board to establish a virtually uniform racial balance throughout its 711 square mile district, with its 775,000 children in 561 schools. Local leaders anticipate that this decree would impose an expenditure of $40,000,000 over the next school year to lease 1,600 buses, to acquire site locations to house them, to hire drivers, and to defray operating costs. Subsequent costs would approximate $20,000,000 annually. Some recent rulings by federal district courts applicable to other school districts appear to be no less severe.

I am dedicated to continued progress toward a truly desegregated public school system. But, considering the always heavy demands for more school operating funds, I believe it is preferable, when we have to make the choice, to use limited financial resources for the improvement of education—for better teaching facilities, better methods, and advanced educational materials—and for the upgrading of the disadvantaged areas in the community rather than buying buses, tires and gasoline to transport young children miles away from their neighborhood schools.

What Most of the Courts Agree On

Despite the obvious confusion, a careful survey of rulings both by the Supreme Court and by the Circuit Courts of Appeals suggests that the basic judicial approach may be more reasonable than some have feared. Whatever a few lower courts might have held to the contrary, the prevailing trend of judicial opinion appears to be summed up in these principles:

> There is a fundamental distinction between so-called **"de jure"** and **"de facto"** segregation: **de jure** segregation arises by law or by the delib-

erate act of school officials and is unconstitutional; **de facto** segregation results from residential housing patterns and does not violate the Constitution. (The clearest example of **de jure** segregation is the dual school system as it existed in the South prior to the decision in **Brown**—two schools, one Negro and one White, comprised of the same grades and serving the same geographical area. This is the system with which most of the decisions, and the Supreme Court cases up until now, have been concerned.)

Where school boards have demonstrated a good-faith effort to comply with court rulings, the courts have generally allowed substantial latitude as to method—often making the explicit point that administrative choices should, wherever possible, be made by the local school authorities themselves.

In devising particular plans, questions of cost, capacity, and convenience for pupils and parents are relevant considerations.

Whatever the racial composition of student bodies, faculties and staff must be assigned in a way that does not contribute to identifying a given school as "Negro" or "White."

In school districts that previously operated dual systems, affirmative steps toward integration are a key element in disestablishing the dual system. This positive integration, however, does not necessarily have to result in "racial balance" throughout the system. When there is racial separation in housing, the Constitutional requirement has been held satisfied even though some schools remained all-black.

While the dual school system is the most obvious example, **de jure** segregation is also found in more subtle forms. Where authorities have deliberately

drawn attendance zones or chosen school locations for the express purpose of creating and maintaining racially separate schools, **de jure** segregation is held to exist. In such a case the school board has a positive duty to remedy it. This is so even though the board ostensibly operates a unitary system.

In determining whether school authorities are responsible for existing racial separation—and thus whether they are Constitutionally required to remedy it—the **intent** of their action in locating schools, drawing zones, etc., is a crucial factor.

In the case of genuine **de facto** segregation (i.e., where housing patterns produce substantially all-Negro or all-White schools, and where this racial separation has not been caused by deliberate official action) school authorities are not Constitutionally required to take any positive steps to correct the imbalance.

To summarize: There is a Constitutional mandate that dual school systems and other forms of **de jure** segregation be eliminated totally. But within the framework of that requirement an area of flexibility—a "rule of reason"—exists, in which school boards, acting in good faith, can formulate plans of desegregation which best suit the needs of their own localities.

De facto segregation, which exists in many areas both North and South, is undesirable but is not generally held to violate the Constitution. Thus, residential housing patterns may result in the continued existence of some all-Negro schools even in a system which fully meets Constitutional standards. But in any event, local school officials **may,** if they so choose, take steps beyond the Constitutional minimums to diminish racial separation.

SCHOOL DESEGREGATION TODAY

The Progress

Though it began slowly, the momentum of school desegregation has become dramatic.

Thousands of school districts throughout the South have met the requirements of law.

In the past year alone, the number of black children attending southern schools held to be in compliance has doubled, from less than 600,000 to nearly 1,200,000—representing 40 percent of the Negro student population.

In most cases, this has been peacefully achieved.

However, serious problems are being encountered both by communities and by courts—in part as a consequence of this accelerating pace.

The Problems

In some communities, racially mixed schools have brought the community greater interracial harmony; in others they have heightened racial tension and exacerbated racial frictions. Integration is no longer seen automatically and necessarily as an unmixed blessing for the Negro, Puerto Rican or Mexican-American child. "Racial balance" has been discovered to be neither a static nor a finite condition; in many cases it has turned out to be only a way station on the road to resegregation. Whites have deserted the public schools, often for grossly inadequate private schools. They have left the now re-segregated public schools foundering for lack of support. And when whites flee the central city in pursuit of all- or predominately-white schools in the suburbs, it is not only the central city schools that become racially isolated, but the central city itself.

These are not theoretical problems, but actual problems. They exist not just in the realm of law, but in the

realm of human attitudes and human behavior. They are part of the real world, and we have to take account of them.

The Complexities

Courts are confronted with problems of equity, and administrators with problems of policy. For example: To what extent does desegregation of dual systems require positive steps to achieve integration? How are the rights of individual children and their parents to be guarded in the process of enforcement? What are the educational impacts of the various means of desegregation—and where they appear to conflict, how should the claims of education be balanced against those of integration? To what extent should desegregation plans attempt to anticipate the problem of resegregation–

These questions suggest the complexity of the problems. These problems confront us in the North as well as the South, and in rural communities, suburbs and central cities.

The troubles in our schools have many sources. They stem in part from deeply rooted racial attitudes; in part from differences in social, economic and behavioral patterns; in part from weaknesses and inequities in the educational system itself; in part from the fact that by making schools the primary focus of efforts to remedy long-standing social ills, in some cases greater pressure has been brought to bear on the schools than they could withstand.

The Context

Progress toward school desegregation is part of two larger processes, each equally essential:

The improvement of educational opportunities for all of America's children.

The lowering of artificial racial barriers in all aspects of American life.

Only if we keep each of these considerations clearly in mind—and only if we recognize their separate natures—can we approach the question of school desegregation realistically.

It may be helpful to step back for a moment, and to consider the problem of school desegregation in its larger context.

The school stands in a unique relationship to the community, to the family, and to the individual student. It is a focal point of community life. It has a powerful impact on the future of all who attend. It is a place not only of learning, but also of living—where a child's friendships center, where he learns to measure himself against others, to share, to compete, to cooperate—and it is the one institution above all others with which the parent shares his child.

Thus it is natural that whatever affects the schools stirs deep feelings among parents, and in the community at large.

Whatever threatens the schools, parents perceive—rightly—as a threat to their children.

Whatever makes the schools more distant from the family undermines one of the important supports of learning.

Quite understandably, the prospect of any abrupt change in the schools is seen as a threat.

As we look back over these sixteen years, we find that many changes that stirred fears when they first were ordered have turned out well. In many Southern communities, black and white children now learn together—and both the schools and the communities are better where the essential changes have been accomplished in a peaceful way.

But we also have seen situations in which the changes have not worked well. These have tended to command the headlines, thus increasing the anxieties of those still facing change.

Overburdening the Schools

One of the mistakes of past policy has been to demand too much of our schools: They have been expected not only to educate, but also to accomplish a social transformation. Children in many instances have not been served, but used—in what all too often has proved a tragically futile effort to achieve in the schools the kind of a multiracial society which the adult community has failed to achieve for itself.

If we are to be realists, we must recognize that in a free society there are limits to the amount of government coercion that can reasonably be used; that in achieving desegregation we must proceed with the least possible disruption of the education of the nation's children; and that our children are highly sensitive to conflict, and highly vulnerable to lasting psychic injury.

Failing to recognize these factors, past policies have placed on the schools and the children too great a share of the burden of eliminating racial disparities throughout our society. A major part of this task falls to the schools. But they cannot do it all or even most of it by themselves. Other institutions can share the burden of breaking down racial barriers, but only the schools can perform the task of education itself. If our schools fail to educate, then whatever they may achieve in integrating the races will turn out to be only a pyrrhic victory.

With housing patterns what they are in many places in the nation, the sheer numbers of pupils and the distances between schools make full and prompt school integration in every such community impractical—even if there were

a sufficient desire on the part of the community to achieve it. In Los Angeles, 78 percent of all Negro pupils attend schools that are 95 percent or more black. In Chicago the figure is 85 percent—the same as in Mobile, Alabama. Many smaller cities have the same patterns. Nationwide, 61 percent of all Negro students attend schools which are 95 percent or more black.

Demands that an arbitrary "racial balance" be established as a matter of right misinterpret the law and misstate the priorities.

As a matter of educational policy, some school boards have chosen to arrange their school systems in such a way as to provide a greater measure of racial integration. The important point to bear in mind is that where the existing racial separation has not been caused by official action, this increased integration is and should remain a matter for local determination.

Pupil assignments involve problems which do not arise in the case of the assignment of teachers. If school administrators were truly color blind and teacher assignments did not reflect the color of the teacher's skin, the law of averages would eventually dictate an approximate racial balance of teachers in each school within a system.

Not Just a Matter of Race

Available data on the educational effects of integration are neither definitive nor comprehensive. But such data as we have suggest strongly that, under the appropriate conditions, racial integration in the classroom can be a significant factor in improving the quality of education for the disadvantaged. At the same time, the data lead us into several more of the complexities that surround the desegregation issue.

For one thing, they serve as a reminder that, from an educational standpoint, to approach school questions solely in terms of race is to go astray. The data tell us that

in educational terms, the significant factor is not race but rather the educational environment in the home—and indeed, that the single most important educational factor in a school is the kind of home environment its pupils come from. As a general rule, children from families whose home environment encourages learning—whatever their race—are higher achievers; those from homes offering little encouragement are lower achievers.

Which affect the home environment has depends on such things as whether books and magazines are available, whether the family subscribes to a newspaper, the educational level of the parents, and their attitude toward the child's education.

The data strongly suggest, also, that in order for the positive benefits of integration to be achieved, the school must have a majority of children from environments that encourage learning—recognizing, again, that the key factor is not race but the kind of home the child comes from. The greater concentration of pupils whose homes encourage learning—of whatever race—the higher the achievement levels not only of those pupils, but also of others in the same school. Students learn from students. The reverse is also true: the greater concentration of pupils from homes that discourage learning, the lower the achievement levels of all.

We should bear very carefully in mind, therefore, the distinction between educational difficulty as a result of race, and educational difficulty as a result of social or economic levels, of family background, of cultural patterns, or simply of bad schools. Providing better education for the disadvantaged requires a more sophisticated approach than mere racial mathematics.

In this same connection, we should recognize that a smug paternalism has characterized the attitudes of many white Americans toward school questions. There has been an implicit assumption that blacks or others of

minority races would be improved by association with whites. The notion that an all-black or predominantly-black school is automatically inferior to one which is all or predominantly-white—even though not a product of a dual system—inescapably carries racist overtones. And, of course, we know of hypocrisy: not a few of those in the North most stridently demanding racial integration of public schools in the South at the same time send their children to private schools to avoid the assumed inferiority of mixed public schools.

It is unquestionably true that most black schools—though by no means all—are in fact inferior to most white schools. This is due in part to past neglect or shortchanging of the black schools; and in part to long-term patterns of racial discrimination which caused a greater proportion of Negroes to be left behind educationally, left out culturally, and trapped in low paying jobs. It is not really because they serve black children that most of these schools are inferior, but rather because they serve poor children who often lack the home environment that encourages learning.

Innovative Approaches

Most public discussion of overcoming racial isolation centers on such concepts as compulsory "busing"—taking children out of the schools they would normally attend, and forcing them instead to attend others more distant, often in strange or even hostile neighborhoods. Massive "busing" is seen by some as the only alternative to massive racial isolation.

However, a number of new educational ideas are being developed, designed to provide the educational benefits of integration without depriving the student of his own neighborhood school.

For example, rather than attempting dislocation of whole schools, a portion of a child's educational activi-

ties may be shared with children from other schools. Some of his education is in a "home-base" school, but some outside it. This "outside learning" is in settings that are defined neither as black nor white, and sometimes in settings that are not even in traditional school buildings. It may range all the way from intensive work in reading to training in technical skills, and to joint efforts such as drama and athletics.

By bringing the children together on "neutral" territory friction may be dispelled; by limiting it to part-time activities no one would be deprived of his own neighborhood school; and the activities themselves provide the children with better education.

This sort of innovative approach demonstrates that the alternatives are not limited to perpetuating racial isolation on the one hand, and massively disrupting existing school patterns on the other. Without uprooting students, devices of this kind can provide an additional educational experience within an integrated setting. The child gains both ways.

Good Faith and the Courts

Where desegregation proceeds under the mandate of law, the best results require that the plans be carefully adapted to local circumstances.

A sense of compassionate balance is indispensable. The concept of balance is no stranger to our Constitution. Even First Amendment freedoms are not absolute and unlimited; rather the scales of that "balance" have been adjusted with minute care, case by case, and the process continues.

In my discussion of the status of school desegregation law, I indicated that the Supreme Court has left a substantial degree of latitude within which specific desegregation plans can be designed. Many lower courts have left a comparable degree of latitude. This does not mean that the

courts will tolerate or the Administration condone evasions or subterfuges; it does mean that if the essential element of good faith is present, it should ordinarily be possible to achieve legal compliance with a minimum of educational disruption, and through a plan designed to be responsive to the community's own local circumstances.

This matter of good faith is critical.

Thus the far-sighted local leaders who have demonstrated good faith by smoothing the path of compliance in their communities have helped lay the basis for judicial attitudes taking more fully into account the practical problems of compliance.

How the Supreme Court finally rules on the major issues it has not yet determined can have a crucial impact on the future of public education in the United States.

Traditionally, the Court has refrained from deciding Constitutional questions until it became necessary. This period of legal uncertainty has occasioned vigorous controversy over what the thrust of the law should be.

As a nation, we should create a climate in which these questions, when they finally are decided by the Court, can be decided in a framework most conducive to reasonable and realistic interpretation.

We should not provoke any court to push a Constitutional principle beyond its ultimate limit in order to compel compliance with the court's essential, but more modest, mandate. The best way to avoid this is for the nation to demonstrate that it does intend to carry out the full spirit of the Constitutional mandate.

POLICIES OF THIS ADMINISTRATION

It will be the purpose of this Administration to carry out the law fully and fairly. And where problems exist that are beyond the mandate of legal requirements, it will be our purpose to seek solutions that are both realistic and appropriate.

I have instructed the Attorney General, the Secretary of Health, Education and Welfare, and other appropriate officials of the Government to be guided by these basic principles and policies:

Principles of Enforcement

Deliberate racial segregation of pupils by official action is unlawful, wherever it exists. In the words of the Supreme Court, it must be eliminated "root and branch"—and it must be eliminated at once.

Segregation of teachers must be eliminated. To this end, each school system in this nation, North and South, East and West, must move immediately, as the Supreme Court has ruled, toward a goal under which "in each school the ratio of White to Negro faculty members is substantially the same as it is throughout the system."

With respect to school facilities, school administrators throughout the nation, North and South, East and West, must move immediately, also in conformance with the Court's ruling, to assure that schools within individual school districts do not discriminate with respect to the quality of facilities or the quality of education delivered to the children within the district.

In devising local compliance plans, primary weight should be given to the considered judgment of local school boards—provided they act in good faith, and within Constitutional limits.

The neighborhood school will be deemed the most appropriate base for such a system.

Transportation of pupils beyond normal geographical school zones for the purpose of achieving racial balance will not be required.

Federal advice and assistance will be made available on request, but Federal officials should not go beyond the requirements of law in attempting to impose their own judgment on the local school district.

School boards will be encouraged to be flexible and creative in formulating plans that are educationally sound and that result in effective desegregation.

Racial imbalance in a school system may be partly **de jure** in origin, and partly **de facto.** In such a case, it is appropriate to insist on remedy for the **de jure** portion, which is unlawful, without insisting on a remedy for the lawful **de facto** portion.

De facto racial separation, resulting genuinely from housing patterns, exist in the South as well as the North; in neither area should this condition by itself be cause for Federal enforcement actions. **De jure** segregation brought about by deliberate school board gerrymandering exists in the North as the South; in both areas this must be remedied. In all respects, the law should be applied equally, North and South, East and West.

This is one nation. We are one people. I feel strongly that as Americans we must be done, now and for all future time, with the divisive notion that these problems are sectional.

Policies for Progress

In those communities facing desegregation orders, the leaders of the communities will be encouraged to lead—not in defiance, but in smoothing the way of compliance. One clear lesson of experience is that local leadership is a fundamental factor in determining success or failure. Where leadership

has been present, where it has been mobilized, where it has been effective, many districts have found that they could, after all, desegregate their schools successfully. Where local leadership has failed, the community has failed—and the schools and the children have borne the brunt of that failure.

We shall launch a concerted, sustained and honest effort to assemble and evaluate the lessons of experience; to determine what methods of school desegregation have worked, in what situations, and why—and also what has not worked. The Cabinet-level working group I recently appointed will have as one of its principal functions amassing just this sort of information and helping make it available to the communities in need of assistance.

We shall attempt to develop a far greater body of reliable data than now exists on the effects of various integration patterns on the learning process. Our effort must always be to preserve the educational benefit for the children.

We shall explore ways of sharing more broadly the burdens of social transition that have been laid disproportionately on the schools—ways, that is, of shifting to other public institutions a greater share of the task of undoing the effects of racial isolation.

We shall seek to develop and test a varied set of approaches to the problems associated with "**de facto**" segregation, North as well as South.

We shall intensify our efforts to ensure that the gifted child—the potential leader—is not stifled intellectually merely because he is black or brown or lives in a slum.

While raising the quality of education in all schools, we shall concentrate especially on racially-

impacted schools, and particularly on equalizing those schools that are furthest behind.

Words often ring empty without deeds. In government, words can ring even emptier without dollars.

In order to give substance to these commitments, I shall ask Congress to divert $500 million from my previous budget requests for other domestic programs for Fiscal 1971, to be put instead into programs for improving education in racially-impacted areas. North and South, and for assisting school districts in meeting special problems incident to court-ordered desegregation. For Fiscal 1972, I have ordered that $1 billion be budgeted for the same purposes.

I am not content simply to see this money spent, and then to count the spending as the measure of accomplishment. For much too long, national "commitments" have been measured by the number of Federal dollars spent rather than by more valid measures such as the quality of imagination displayed, the amount of private energy enlisted or, even more to the point, the results achieved.

If this $1.5 billion accomplishes nothing, then the commitment will mean nothing.

If it enables us to break significant new ground, then the commitment will mean everything.

This I deeply believe.

Communities desegregating their schools face special needs—for classrooms, facilities, teachers, teacher training—and the nation should help meet those needs.

The nation also has a vital and special stake in upgrading education where de facto segregation persists—and where extra efforts are needed if the schools are to do their job. These schools, too, need extra money for teachers and facilities.

Beyond this, we need to press forward with innovative new ways of overcoming the effects of racial isolation

and of making up for environmental deficiencies among the poor.

I have asked the Vice President's Cabinet Committee on School Desegregation, together with the Secretary of Health, Education and Welfare, to consult with experts in and out of government and prepare a set of recommended criteria for the allocation of these funds.

I have specified that these criteria should give special weight to four categories of need:

The special needs of desegregating (or recently desegregated) districts for additional facilities, personnel and training required to get the new, unitary system successfully started.

The special needs of racially-impacted schools where **de facto** segregation persists—and where immediate infusions of money can make a real difference in terms of educational effectiveness.

The special needs of those districts that have the furtherest to go to catch up educationally with the rest of the nation.

The financing of innovative techniques for providing educationally sound inter-racial experiences for children in racially isolated schools.

This money—the $500 million next year, and $1 billion in Fiscal 1972—must come from other programs. Inevitably, it represents a further reordering of priorities on the domestic scene. It represents a heightened priority for making school desegregation work, and for helping the victims of racial isolation learn.

Nothing is more vital to the future of our nation than the education of its children; and at the heart of equal opportunity is equal educational opportunity. These funds will be an investment in both the quality and the equality of that opportunity.

This money is mean to provide help **now**, where help is needed now.

As we look to the longer-term future, it is vital that we concentrate more effort on understanding the process of learning—and improving the process of teaching. The educational needs we face cannot be met simply with more books, more classrooms and more teachers—however urgently these are needed now in schools that face shortages. We need more effective methods of teaching, and especially of teaching those children who are hardest to reach and most lacking in a home environment that encourages learning.

In my message on education reform earlier this month, I proposed creation of a National Institute of Education to conduct and to sponsor basic and applied educational research—with special emphasis on compensatory education for the disadvantaged, on the Right to Read, on experimental schools and on the use of television for educational purposes.

I repeat that proposal—and I ask that the Congress consider it a matter of high priority.

A FREE AND OPEN SOCIETY

The goal of this Administration is a free and open society. In saying this, I use the words "free" and "open" quite precisely.

Freedom has two essential elements: the **right** to choose, and the **ability** to choose. The right to move out of a mid-city slum, for example, means little without the means of doing so. The right to apply for a good job means little without access to the skills that make it attainable. By the same token, those skills are of little use if arbitrary policies exclude the person who has them because of race or other distinction.

Similarly, an "open" society is one of open choices—and one in which the individual has the mobility to take advantage of those choices.

In speaking of "desegregation" or "integration," we often lose sight of what these mean within the context of a free, open, pluralistic society. We cannot be free, and at the same time be required to fit our lives into prescribed places on a racial grid—whether segregated or integrated, and whether by some mathematical formula or by automatic assignment. Neither can we be free, and at the same time be denied—because of race—the right to associate with our fellow citizens on a basis of human equality.

An open society does not have to be homogeneous, or even fully integrated. There is room within it for many communities. Especially in a nation like America, it is natural that people with a common heritage retain special ties; it is natural and right that we have Italian or Irish or Negro or Norwegian neighborhoods; it is natural and right that members of those communities feel a sense of group identity and group pride. In terms of an open society, what matters is mobility: the right and the ability of each person to decide for himself where and how he wants to live, whether as part of the ethnic enclave or as part of the larger society—or, as many do, share the life of both.

We are richer for our cultural diversity; mobility is what allows us to enjoy it.

Economic, educational, social mobility—all these, too, are essential elements of the open society. When we speak of equal opportunity we mean just that: that each person should have an equal chance at the starting line, and an equal chance to go just as high and as far as his talents and energies will take him.

This Administration's programs for helping the poor, for equal opportunity, for expanded opportunity, all have

taken a significantly changed direction from those of previous years—and those principles of a free and open society are the keys to the new direction.

Instead of making a man's decisions for him, we aim to give him both the **right** and **ability** to choose for himself—and the mobility to move upward. Instead of creating at permanent welfare class catered to by a permanent welfare bureaucracy, for example, my welfare reform proposal provides job training and a job requirement for all those able to work—and also a regular Family Assistance payment instead of the demeaning welfare handout.

By pressing hard for the "Philadelphia Plan," we have sought to crack the color bar in the construction unions—and thus to give black and other minority Americans both the right and the ability to choose jobs in the construction trades, among the highest paid in the nation.

We have inaugurated new Minority Business Enterprise programs—not only to help minority members get started in business themselves, but also, by developing more black and brown entrepreneurs, to demonstrate to young blacks, Mexican-Americans and others that they, too, can aspire to this same sort of upward economic mobility.

In our education programs, we have stressed the need for far greater diversity in offerings to match the diversity of individual needs—including more and better vocational and technical training, and a greater development of 2-year community colleges.

Such approaches have been based essentially on faith in the individual—knowing that he sometimes needs help, but believing that in the long run he usually knows what is best for himself. Through them also runs a belief that education is the key that opens the door to personal progress.

As we strive to make our schools places of equal edu-

cational opportunity, we should keep our eye fixed on this goal: To achieve a set of conditions in which neither the laws nor the institutions supported by law any longer draw an invidious distinction based on race; and going one step further, we must seek to repair the human damage wrought by past segregation. We must give the minority child, that equal place at the starting line that his parents were denied—and the pride, the dignity, the self-respect, that are the birthright of a free American.

We can do no less and still be true to our conscience and our Constitution. I believe that most Americans today, whether North or South, accept this as their duty.

The issues involved in desegregating schools, reducing racial isolation and providing equal educational opportunity are not simple. Many of the questions are profound, the factors complex, the legitimate considerations in conflict, and the answers elusive. Our continuing search, therefore, must be not for the perfect set of answers, but for the most nearly perfect and the most constructive.

I am aware that there are many sincere Americans who believe deeply in instant solutions and who will say that my approach does not go far enough fast enough. They feel that the only way to bring about social justice is to integrate all schools now, everywhere, no matter what the cost in the disruption of education.

I am aware, too, that there are many equally sincere citizens—North and South, black and white—who believe that racial separation is right, and wish the clock of progress would stop or be turned back to 1953. They will be disappointed, too.

But the call for equal educational opportunity today is in the American tradition. From the outset of the nation, one of the great struggles in America has been to transform the system of education into one that truly provided equal opportunity for all. At first, the focus was on eco-

nomic discrimination. The system of "fee schools" and "pauper schools" persisted well into the 19th century.

Heated debates preceded the establishment of universal free public education—and even in such States as New York, New Jersey and Connecticut, the system is barely a century old.

Even today, inequities persist. Children in poor areas often are served by poor schools—and unlike the children of the wealthy, they cannot escape to private schools. But we have been narrowing the gap—providing more and better education in more of the public schools, and making higher education more widely available through free tuition, scholarships and loans.

In other areas, too, there were long struggles to eliminate discrimination that had nothing to do with race. Property and even religious qualifications for voting persisted well into the 19th century—and not until 1920 were women finally guaranteed the right to vote.

Now the focus is on race—and on the dismantling of all racial bars to equality of opportunity in the schools. As with the lowering of economic barriers, the pull of conscience and the pull of national self interest both are in the same direction. A system that leaves any segment of its people poorly educated serves the nation badly; a system that educates all of its people well serves the nation well.

We have overcome many problems in our 190 years as a nation. We can overcome this problem. We have managed to extend opportunity in other areas. We can extend it in this area. Just as other rights have been secured, so too can these rights be secured—and once again the nation will be better for having done so.

I am confident that we can preserve and improve our schools, carry out the mandate of our Constitution, and be true to our national conscience.