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Members of the Consolidated Board of Education and the Superintendent of the Mecklenburg County Schools are shown in the cover photograph. Members are: Front row (from left to right): Mr. Henderson Belk, Dr. E. H. Garinger (Superintendent), Dr. Herbert Spaugb (Chairman), Mr. David W. Harris (Vice-Chairman), Mr. J. Mason Smith. Standing (from left to right): Mr. Richard H. Brown, Mr. Ben F. Huntley, Mr. Ben S. Horack, Mr. Fred A. Cochrane, Mr. Frank Dowd, Jr., Mr. Thomas R. Payne, Mr. R. Lacy Ranson. Absent when this picture was taken was Jones Y. Pharr, Jr.

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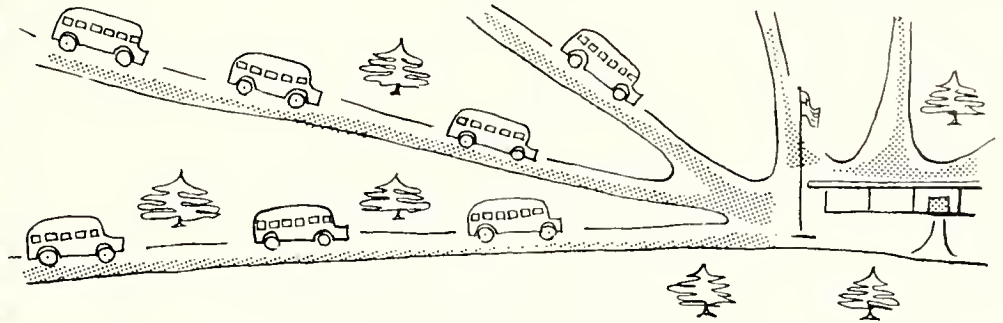
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SCHOOL ADMINISTRATIVE UNIT CONSOLIDATION IN NORTH CAROLINA



There have been three major developments in local school administration in the 120 years since the establishment of the first free public schools in North Carolina. First, the shift of local administrative authority from the township or district to the county; second, the increase in the number of local school districts until around 1905 and their decrease in number since that time; and, third, the development of city or special charter schools independent of the county school systems.

The shift of administrative responsibility from the school district to the county and the decline in the number of school districts were in line with a generally acknowledged feeling that the districts were too small to provide good administration or proper educational opportunities. The city special charter schools developed because urban residents wished to tax themselves to provide better schools than those available in the county school systems.

A fourth development, the merger of small administrative units, particularly city systems with their county school units, has been urged and predicted for years, but so far has had only indifferent success.

This article discusses briefly the first three developments, and then discusses school administrative unit consolidation at some length, particularly the consolidation of the Charlotte and Mecklenburg schools; the attempted consolidation of the Durham city and county schools; the present movement to consolidate the Winston-Salem and Forsyth County schools; the New Hanover consolidated schools; and the consolidation of the Enfield with the Halifax County schools.

Shift of Administrative Powers From District to County

While the county has always been a unit of administration for operation of the North Carolina school system,

it has not always had the importance that it now has. Under the earlier school laws much more local administrative power than at present was vested in the school districts within the county, and it was not until after the turn of the century that the district finally gave up most of its administrative duties to the county school administration.

In North Carolina's pre-Civil War common schools, most local administrative authority was vested in the district school committee. The responsibilities of the county school board, or "county superintendents of public instruction" as they were called, were limited to dividing the county into school districts, selecting a board of teacher examiners, and handling the division of school funds among the various districts according to a statutory formula.¹

Under the first post-Civil War school law,² the township school committee was the basic local governing body for schools and there was no provision at all for a county school board. In 1872,³ the county commissioners of each county were made a county school board and given limited control over the schools, primarily the duty of seeing that State school law provisions were enforced.

The county school board's power was increased in 1877⁴ when it was directed to appoint district school committees to replace the elected township committees, and lay off the county into school districts. The appointed committees retained essentially the same powers as those held by the township school committees, but the fact that they were appointed lessened their importance as independent administrative bodies.

1. Revised Code, 1855, c. 66.

2. Public Laws, 1868-69, c. 184.

3. Public Laws, 1871-72, c. 189.

4. Public Laws, 1876-77, c. 162.



by
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The position of county superintendent of schools, the first county-wide school administrator, was created in 1881.⁵ The school law had previously provided for a county teacher examiner or board of examiners with some administrative powers, but the 1881 act was the first to give a county official more than incidental administrative powers.

In 1885, a separate county school board composed of three persons selected by the county commissioners and the justices of the peace of the county was created with the same powers that had been granted to the county commissioners as the county school board.⁶ Also in 1885 the district school committees lost their unrestricted power to hire teachers, and teachers selected had to have the approval of the county superintendent and county school board.⁷

During the political upheavals which occurred in the State as a result of the Populist-Republican victory in 1895 and its aftermath, there was a great deal of experiment and change in the school system. After a period which saw the abolition of the county school board and county superintendency,⁸ the creation of township school committees in lieu of district committees⁹ which were in turn replaced by a dual committee system which had both township and district committees,¹⁰ and the creation of a "board of school directors" and "county supervisor" for each county,¹¹ the county school organization, finally, in 1901, became essentially as it is today.¹²

The county board of education was re-established and received primary control and authority over local schools. Among other powers, the county board of education received power to fix the opening and closing times of the schools, fix the methods of conducting the schools so as to provide "the most advantageous methods of education," and make all just and needful rules and regulations governing the conduct of teachers and pupils as to attendance, discipline, tardiness, and the general government of the schools. They also had all powers concerning the schools not expressly granted to some other body, and were charged with carrying out the State school law in their particular county.

The 1901 act also abolished the dual committee system and the county

school board was given the option of appointing township school committees or district committees; but, in either case, the powers of the committees were limited to oversight of the school property, hiring of teachers, and expenditure of up to \$25.00 per year for school supplies. The committees no longer received title to school property though no provision was made for the transfer to the county board of property already held by the committees.¹³ In 1903, the district committees lost all power over the construction of school buildings, and this power was placed in the county school boards.¹⁴

The 1923 school law¹⁵ repealed the provision allowing the county school board to establish either township or district school committees and required that a school committee composed of three persons appointed for staggered three-year terms be selected by the county board of education for each school district. The committees' power remained the same except that the \$25.00 limitation on supplies was removed. The act also transferred ownership of all school property in the county from the district committees to the county board of education.

The composition of the district committee was changed to between three and five members selected for two-year terms in 1935,¹⁶ and, in 1939,¹⁷ county boards of education were given the option of appointing the school committee members for two-year terms or of appointing one-third of the members each year for three-year terms. In 1935, power to make purchases of school supplies for individual schools was transferred from the district committee to the county board of education.¹⁸ Also in 1935, the county board was authorized to appoint, in addition to the district committees, advisory committees for each schoolhouse.¹⁹

Present Division of Powers Between the District Committee and County Board of Education

Today, the shift of administrative power from the district committee to the county school board is practically complete, and the division of responsibility between the two bodies seems to have become stabilized, though there is a feeling in some quarters that the district committee's power over the selection of school personnel should be further curtailed.

Except in special tax districts where

the district committee has some power over the expenditure of district tax funds,²⁰ the only present legal duties of the district committee, other than the selection of local school personnel with the approval of the county superintendent and school board, is the care and custody of school property. The school law does give them authority to petition the county board of education for an election on the question of whether the district will become a special taxing district, and they also serve, as a matter of fact though not as a matter of legal duty, as the means of conveying the local community's feelings on school matters to the county board of education.²¹

The county board of education²² presently has general control and supervision of all matters pertaining to the schools in the administrative unit, subject to the paramount powers of the State Board of Education and certain other authorized agencies. In addition to the powers granted in 1901, the board has also received other powers, such as the power to regulate extra-curricular activities, fix school bus routes, and operate lunch rooms.²³

The board must also see that a budget for the schools is prepared and presented to the county commissioners, and has supervision over the financial affairs of the schools once the budget is approved by the county commissioners.²⁴

Number of County School Districts

The 1839 school law contemplated school districts of a definite uniform geographical area about six miles square. There would have been about 1,250 districts of this size in the State. This system, however, was found not to be practicable and generally as soon as a smaller unit had sufficient children to justify a teacher, it asked to be formed into a separate district. Under such pressures the number of school districts had grown to approximately 3,700 in 1860.

After the Civil War the same pressures were at work. So long as roads

20. Only about 50 of the more than 1100 school districts in the State are special tax districts.

21. N. C. Gen. Stat. 115-69 to 115-73.

22. Since 1901 most county boards of education have been appointed by the General Assembly, and since 1917 candidates for appointment by the General Assembly have been nominated in party primaries in each county. In a few counties, by special act, the board of education is elected by the voters.

23. N. C. Gen. Stat. 115-18 to 115-53.

24. N. C. Gen. Stat. 115-78 to 115-90. See discussion of school financing on page 3.

5. Public Laws, 1881, c. 200.

6. Public Laws, 1885, c. 174.

7. Ibid.

8. Public Laws, 1895, c. 489.

9. Public Laws, 1897, c. 108.

10. Public Laws, 1899, c. 732.

11. Ibid.

12. Public Laws, 1901, c. 4.

13. Ibid.

14. Public Laws, 1903, c. 435.

15. Public Laws, 1923, c. 136.

16. Public Laws, 1935, c. 455.

17. Public Laws, 1939, c. 358.

18. Public Laws, 1935, c. 455.

19. Ibid.

were poor and all children had to walk to school, it was natural for parents to want small districts with schools near home rather than large districts with schools far away. By 1900 there were a total of 7,910 school districts, 5,422 white and 2,488 Negro, in the State.

J. Y. Joyner, who became State Superintendent of Public Instruction in 1902, launched a campaign to reduce the number of school districts as part of a plan to produce larger and better equipped schoolhouses and combine the one-teacher schools, but he was only partially successful and in 1916-17 there were still 7,815 districts.

The move toward the consolidated "union" school with bus transportation in the 1920's was very successful, but by 1924-25 the number of districts was only down to 6,368 and by 1933 only to 6,167 since many high schools were combining without consolidation of the districts and elementary schools with which they were connected.

The 1933 school law abolished all existing school districts and directed the State School Commission, with the assistance of the county school boards, to redistrict the counties. The State School Commission adopted the technique of establishing one district for each high school in the county and, using this method, divided the counties into only 790 districts. However, a slow growth in the number of districts began in a few years and by 1954 there were 784 white and 398 Negro districts in the State.

Development of City Administrative Units

While the county school system was evolving, another type of basic school unit, the special charter or city school system, was also developing. These special charter districts developed as one town after another in the State decided to provide additional funds for the operation of schools with standards higher than those operated by the county in which it was located. These school units usually coincided with the city boundaries, but not always, sometimes extending for fairly extensive areas outside the city limits,

and sometimes comprising only a part of the territory which was located within the city.

The first special charter city school (so called because special charters were received from the Legislature) was established in Greensboro in 1875, and in ten years others had been established in Charlotte, Durham, Goldsboro, Raleigh, Salisbury and Winston. By 1899 there were special charter schools in 26 cities and towns, by 1921 in 137 cities and towns, but by 1933 only 97 cities and towns had special charter schools. In 1933, as a result of the economic pressures of the depression and in connection with a plan under which the State assumed direct responsibility for practically all school current operating expenses, the Legislature abolished all existing special charter school units. The State School Commission was given the power to re-establish those special charter districts having a pupil population of over one thousand as city administrative units, which would be treated in the same manner as county administrative units by the State.

The School Commission found that the 97 special charter districts had a pupil range of from 53 to 14,940. The Commission felt it desirable, for reasons of school administrative economy, to reduce the number of administrative units to the smallest number possible. The special charter districts which had school populations of less than one thousand were automatically eliminated, and, under the discretionary provisions of the law, the Commission decided to maintain a policy of not classifying any district having a school population of less than fifteen hundred as a city administrative unit. However, eight former special charter districts which had a school population of between a thousand and fifteen hundred, at their request, were made city administrative units so that they could vote a supplementary school tax. These eight and 59 other units which had school populations of more than fifteen hundred made a total of 67 city administrative units established by the Commission.

These 67 city administrative units created by the State School Commission in 1933 grew to 68 in 1935, to 69 in 1936, to 71 in 1939, decreased to 70 in 1941, again increased to 71 in 1945, to 72 in 1947, to 74 in 1953, and decreased to 73 in 1960.

Shift from District to County as Local Financing Unit

Along with the shift in emphasis in local administration, there has also been a shift from the district to the county as the basic unit for local

school financing. Under the pre-Civil War school law, tax funds were paid back to the district from which they were collected, so that the district, not the county, was the real unit of local taxation. Under the first post-Civil War school laws, the township was the basic tax levying unit with the taxes collected in each township being apportioned to the districts within the township on a per capita basis.

When the township school organization was abolished in 1877, the county became the basic tax levying unit for school purposes, but school funds were apportioned to the districts on a per capita basis. From 1885 to 1913 most of the county school funds were apportioned to the districts on a per capita basis, but an amount which varied between one-third and one-sixth was reserved by the county school board to be used to equalize the schools in the various districts. The districts at first also had to pay for school building construction out of the per capita or equalizing funds apportioned to them, but about 1900 school construction was made a direct county responsibility and the school board was given power to withhold part of the school fund for building schools wherever they were needed. Finally, in 1913, the county became the basic unit for both school tax collection and school fund distribution, and all county funds could be used, without per capita limitations, to provide uniform schools in all districts in the county.

The method of financing special charter district schools has a somewhat different history. Since these schools were independent of the county school system and provided educational services of a higher standard than those provided by the county schools, they could not be financed under the general county system. These districts practically always levied a special tax to support their schools, but, since the people within these districts also paid county taxes, they were entitled to receive some of the school taxes which the county collected.

The charters of these school units generally provided that they were to be treated as a district of the county system and as such they were entitled to a per capita share of the county school fund. This arrangement was written into the general school law by 1900, and, when the county school board was authorized to create a special building fund, they were directed to pay a per capita share of this fund to the special charter districts.

This per capita distribution of both current expense and capital outlay funds between the county system and



the city administrative units in the county continued until 1937, when the county commissioners were given the responsibility of distributing capital outlay funds between city and county administrative units on a needs, rather than a per capita, basis. Since 1933, the State has paid most of the current operating expenses of both city and county administrative units, but some of these costs are still borne locally, and these local funds are still distributed on a per capita basis between the county administrative unit and any city administrative units in the county.

Since before 1900, city and county school systems have been authorized to vote special school taxes and, except for the years between 1933 and 1939, districts in county systems have had the same power. Today, budgets based upon special school taxes voted in county administrative units and in city administrative units which extend outside the boundaries of the municipality in which they are located must be approved by the county commissioners. In other city administrative units the supplemental budget is approved by the municipal governing body unless it has, by resolution, transferred this power to the county commissioners.

The present current expense and capital outlay distribution arrangement is not always a happy one for county commissioners in counties which have more than one school administrative unit. They are often accused of favoring one system or the other in the distribution of capital outlay funds; they are sometimes caught in the middle when one unit demands an immediate bond issue for school construction, while the other unit says no bond issue is needed; and sometimes zealous school boards demand what amounts to a per capita distribution of building funds regardless of the actual needs involved. The situation in regard to the current expense fund is often just as difficult for the county commissioners. Since the current expense fund is distributed to the different administrative units in the county on a per capita basis, the problem here is to get the different administrative units to submit current expense budgets which ask for somewhere near the same per capita amounts. Often the several budgets' per capita figures vary widely, and the county commissioners must decide which figure or what figure in between will be used.

Because of these problems, county commissioners have been one of the groups most active in urging consolidation of city and county school administrative units.

Present City and County Administrative Units

There is presently a county school administrative unit in each of the one hundred counties of the State. The 73 city school administrative units are located in 51 counties, with 16 counties having two city administrative units, one having three, and one, Robeson, having five.

The enrollment in the city administrative units in 1959 ranged from 570 in Fremont to 31,652 in Charlotte; county administrative unit enrollment ranged from 910 in Chowan County to 25,911 in Mecklenburg County. The city administrative units, on the average, are much smaller than the county units. Twenty-six of the seventy-three city administrative units have less than twenty-five hundred pupils, while only fifteen of one hundred county units are this small. Another thirty-two of the city administrative units have between twenty-five hundred and five thousand pupils, while only twenty-four of the county units are in this range. Twenty-eight county and eight city administrative units had an enrollment of over 9,000 in 1959.

After looking at the size of administrative units in North Carolina, it is interesting to examine the feelings of school men as to the optimum minimum size of school units. It seems to be the practically unanimous opinion of professional educators that where economic, geographic, and social conditions permit, the school administrative unit should have at least 10,000 to 12,000 pupils.²⁵ A unit of this size can provide a basic educational program and the whole range of supplementary services, such as guidance counseling, remedial reading courses, elementary school physical education programs, and so on, which are now

25. Grieder, Calvin, and Rosenstengel, William E., *Public School Administration*. The Ronald Press Co., New York, N. Y. (1954), p. 22.

Hagman, Harlan S., *The Administration of American Public Schools*, McGraw-Hill Book Co., Inc., New York, N. Y. (1951), p. 83-4.

National Commission on School District Re-organization, *Your School District*, National Education Association, Washington, D. C. (1948).

Pittenger, Benjamin F., *Local Public School Administration*, McGraw-Hill Book Co., Inc., New York, N. Y. (1951), p. 25.

Cushman, M. L., "The Ideal School District," *The Phi Delta Kappan*, XXXII (March 1951), p. 313-316.

The State Education Commission, *Education in North Carolina Today and Tomorrow*, The United Forces for Education, Raleigh, N. C. (1948), p. 400. (Desirable minimum of 9,000 to 10,000).

recognized as necessary to a good school program, at a reasonable per pupil cost. It has been estimated that to provide the whole range of supplemental services there should be a central staff of at least 40 people, and the school unit should be large enough to make employment of this number feasible.

While the 10,000 to 12,000 pupil figure is necessary for economical provision of the desirable supplemental services, educators also state that a school administrative unit can provide a good basic educational program at a reasonable expense per pupil if it has 3,000 or more pupils.²⁶

If these figures are accepted as essentially correct, many of the administrative units in North Carolina would seem to be too small to provide at a reasonable cost the supplemental services which are necessary to a top-notch school system. Further, some of them, particularly the smaller city administrative units, may be too small to provide even a basic educational program at a reasonable cost.

State School Leadership and Consolidation

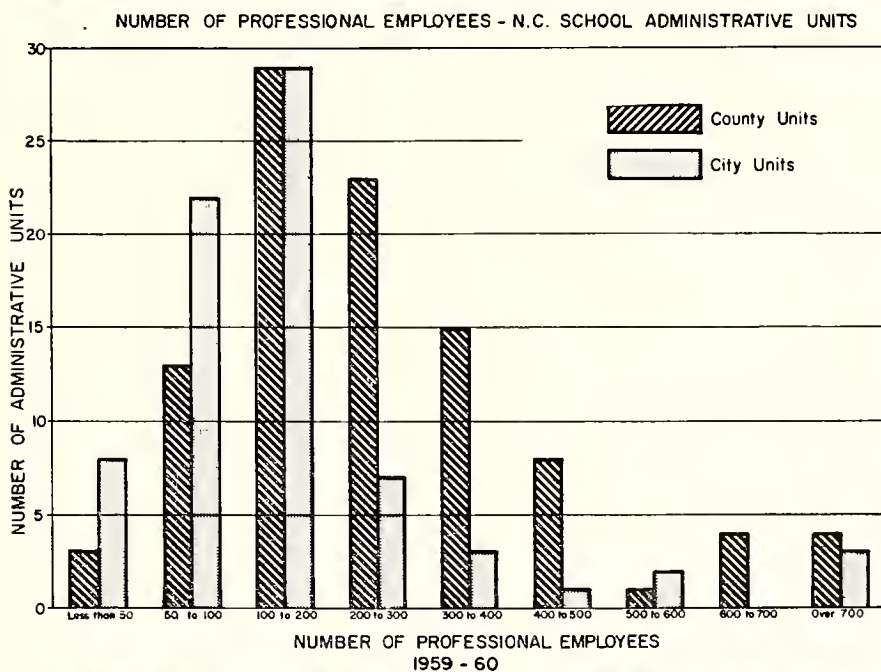
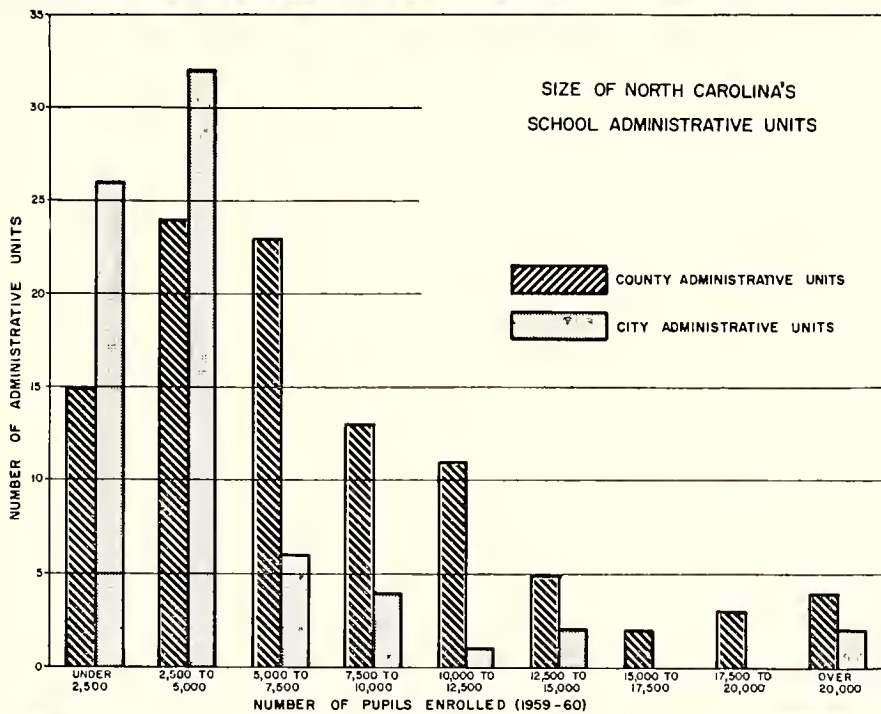
The fight of educators for school units large enough to provide excellent instruction at a reasonable cost has been a continuing one ever since the first years of the twentieth century when J. Y. Joyner, State Superintendent of Public Instruction, urged consolidation of the many small school districts in the state. Until the 1930's this effort was directed primarily toward the consolidation of individual schools and not toward elimination of small city or county units.

However, with the adoption of the State School Law of 1933, consolidation efforts were turned not only toward the individual schools and the small school district within school administrative units, but also toward small administrative units themselves, and in that year 30 small city charter units were abolished. While there has been a slight increase in the number of city administrative units since 1933, State school leaders have continued to stress the advantages of consolidation of small administrative units.

In connection with the slow increase in the number of city administrative units, the Governor's Commission on Education of 1938 had the following to say:

The commission deplores the multiplying of school administrative units by special legislative enactment. Realizing that the pressure for such units comes almost ex-

26. Grieder and Rosenstengel, *op. cit.*



clusively from the desire of local units to have the right to vote a supplementary school tax to maintain a ninth month or otherwise to supplement state minimum provisions for education, the commission recommends that the school law be changed as to permit one or more local districts as now constituted under the county-wide organization program to exercise the right to local participation in the support of schools by voting in the usual manner.

Pursuant to this recommendation, the General Assembly in 1939 adopted a provision permitting districts within

a county unit to adopt a special school tax by a vote of the people.

State School Facts, a publication of the State Department of Public Instruction, in December, 1954, published a study of the per capita administrative expenses paid from State funds for the various administrative units in the State which indicated that the cost per pupil increased rapidly as the administrative unit decreased in size. The cost of administration per pupil in city administrative units ranged from \$10.18 in the Pinehurst unit to \$0.68 in the Charlotte unit, and in county

administrative units from \$10.28 in Chowan County to \$1.03 in Guilford County.

In an editorial comment on these figures, the State Department of Public Instruction had the following to say:

The figures presented, as the reader will note, clearly show the desirability from the point of view of administrative costs for fewer school administrative units. Certainly, these facts show that more state funds are being allotted to the smaller units, when measured in terms of pupils, than to the larger units—the range being from \$10.28 to only 68 cents. These facts further indicate that it is more economical to administer large school units than small units. They imply that a consolidation of administrative units would, from the point of view of cost alone, increase the efficiency of local school administration.

There are factors, other than cost, that would also provide opportunity for better local school administration. To mention one is that of better planning of school facilities for school children adjacent to unit boundaries. Good roads and transportation have provided the means for larger and better rural schools. Larger administrative units could, in many instances, provide even better educational opportunities at less expense than the system of many small units now affords.

To surround the taxable wealth of city units for the sole benefit of those who live within their borders is unfair also. Citizens of rural areas trade within the cities and thus help to create the taxable wealth therein located. A consolidation of many of the city administrative units with the county administrative unit of the county in which they are located would not only save state funds, but would tend to equalize the educational opportunities of the entire county.

North Carolina Education Twentieth Century, a publication issued in 1955 by the State Department of Public Instruction, stated that consolidation of some of the smaller county administrative units would be advantageous, and as to city administrative units said:

Where units are small, where the fringe area around a city unit is growing rapidly, and where separate city units fail to provide services superior to those offered by the county unit, then consolidation of such units would result in more efficient and more economical administration and operation.

In 1960, the State Board of Education greeted the consolidation of the Charlotte and Mecklenburg school systems as one of the most important steps in school administration in North

Carolina in this century, and predicted that it would be a harbinger of future consolidations.

Also, in the last few years there has been increasing discussion about the possibility of consolidating some of the smaller county administrative units into larger regional units.²⁷

Advantages and Disadvantages of Consolidation

Aside from the creation of units large enough to provide a good educational program at a reasonable cost, the advantages claimed for consolidation include elimination of boundary line building problems and city annexation problems in city and county units, better utilization of school buildings, equalization of educational opportunities, and equalization of school tax rates. And, it should be pointed out, even where the separate administrative units are already larger than the optimum minimum sizes mentioned above, these reasons may be sufficient to justify consolidation, as those concerned felt was the case in Charlotte and Mecklenburg County.

A good statement of the various reasons which have been advanced for and against school consolidation was made by a 1954 Kentucky legislative study commission. The Kentucky school system is very similar to that in North Carolina, with a county unit for each county in the state and 104 (in 1954) city administrative units.

The legislative study commission reported as follows:

27. An example of the concern in this area is a speech made by Dr. Selz Mayo, Professor of Rural Sociology at North Carolina State College, at the 1960 Conference of School Superintendents at Mars Hill College. As reported in the Durham Morning Herald on Thursday, August 11, 1960, Dr. Mayo, after pointing out that during the past ten years 39 counties have lost in population and that the total population of the State's 25 smallest counties is less than that of the largest county, made the following additional observation:

The county is no longer a reasonable unit for public school administration, especially in view of a widespread declining population and the educational needs for a larger school population at the secondary level. These pressures demand more and more consolidation of the variety which guarantees that the school is not isolated or insulated from the community itself.

He went on to predict that area and sub-area administrative units would replace county and city administrative units in many situations in the State as quality of education became the dominant basis for educational planning instead of educational planning being an adjunct of city or county government policies.

Advantages of the county plan. The probable advantages resulting from adoption of county-wide units in Kentucky may be summarized as follows:

1. Educational services and facilities would be more nearly uniform for all peoples within each county, and expenditures would be equalized among rural and urban children;
2. Opportunities for more efficient management of districts and better utilization of available educational leadership would be improved;
3. Considerable savings could be made in per capita cost of administration;
4. Efficient, long range planning and location of attendance areas and transportation routes would be facilitated and duplication of some facilities could be eliminated;
5. The school tax burden could be equalized within each county and all citizens of the county would be subject to the same tax rate;
6. State equalization aid would be distributed more equitably if the required local tax effort for the foundation program were calculated on a county-wide basis; (Since state aid to county and city school districts in North Carolina is not based on an equalization formula, this has no application to North Carolina.)
7. Units which are too small to offer a broad program of educational services at a reasonable per pupil cost would be eliminated;
8. Problems of disputed boundaries and annexation of property by units would be obviated by making each unit coextensive with the county;
9. The number of transfer pupils would be reduced, minimizing problems of tuition payments and giving parents of these children some control over their schools;
10. The adoption of larger, more efficient units throughout the state would strengthen local control of education.

Disadvantages of city-county school consolidation were listed by the same report as follows:

1. Some aspects of the school program in wealthier units might be 'leveled down' to equalize services throughout the county;
2. Evidence indicates that no substantial economies would result;
3. Residents of independent districts would no longer have exclusive control of city schools; (Reasons 4 through 6 are concerned with peculiar Kentucky administrative problems not applicable to North Carolina.)
7. Merger might permit excessive consolidation of attendance areas, closing some schools which serve as community centers;
8. While the number of superintendents and board members would be decreased, the total administrative and supervisory staff required would not necessarily be reduced.

Any study of consolidation must take

into account the above disadvantages and perhaps others which will be applicable in the particular situation. There are, also, several other problems which may rule out consolidation as a practical possibility in a particular instance. It may be that problems of area or road condition would make transportation too difficult. It may be that the economic levels of the two areas are so markedly different as to make it impractical to attempt to consolidate the schools. It may be that different social ideals and different ideas as to what schools should provide will make consolidation undesirable.

Legal Provisions Concerning Consolidation

Presently the statutory authorization for consolidation of city and county administrative school units is G.S. 115-74 which provides:

Nothing in this section shall prevent city administrative units from consolidating with county administrative units in which such city administrative unit is located, upon petition of the board of education of the city administrative unit and the approval of the county board of education and of the State Board of Education.

This provision, worded in a somewhat backhanded fashion, permits consolidation of city and county administrative units upon petition by the city board of education and approval by the county and State boards of education. A vote of the people in the two units is not required unless a supplemental school tax levy is a condition of the merger. Since most of the city administrative units in the State have a higher supplemental school tax than that levied in the surrounding county unit, one of the most pressing problems in any consolidation scheme is the question of the adjustment of the tax rate in the two systems.

The General Assembly, recognizing this, in 1957 passed an act, now G.S. 115-116(g), which provides:

Elections may be called for an entire county on the question of a special tax to supplement the current expense funds from State and county allotments and thereby operate schools of a higher standard by supplementing any item of expenditure in the school budget, where the boards of education of all the city administrative units in said county have petitioned the county board of education for a consolidation with the county administrative unit, pursuant to the provisions of G. S. 115-74 and prior to the approval of said petitions by the county and State boards of education. In which event, and provided the petitions so specify, if said election for a county-wide supplemental tax fails

to carry, said petitions may be withdrawn and any existing supplemental tax theretofore voted in any of the city administrative units involved or in the county administrative unit, shall not be affected. If the vote for the county-wide supplemental tax carries, said tax shall not be levied unless and until the consolidation of the units involved shall be completed according to the requirements of G. S. 115-74.

Under this act, consolidation may be made conditional upon the approval of a particular tax rate by the whole county. Of course, in counties where consolidation of the city and county administrative units might be desirable even though the whole county would not approve a supplemental school tax levy, the former city administrative unit, as a district in the county unit, could, under the State school law (G.S. 115-116), vote on itself a supplemental tax which could be used to increase the level of instructional services within the former city administrative unit.

As the above discussion indicates, the consolidation of city and county school administrative units is relatively free from legal problems. However, since some administrative procedures and the method of selection of school board members in the city and county school units are not the same, in many situations a special act would be desirable in order to modify the general school law provisions under which the county unit operates. For example, district school committees with the right to hire teachers are not used in city administrative units, and city units which consolidate with county units may wish to provide that district committees in the former city administrative unit not have this power, or they may want to

give the county board of education power to decide whether or not district committees shall be used in any district in the county.

There is at present no statutory authority in North Carolina under which several county administrative units may merge, and, since Article 2, Section 29, of the North Carolina Constitution prohibits local or private acts "establishing or changing the lines of school districts," there is some question whether the consolidation of county administrative units could be accomplished by local or special act. Because of this, it would seem that some general law provision under which consolidation of several county administrative units could be accomplished is desirable.

Any legislation authorizing consolidation of several county administrative units must, however, deal with at least two thorny problems: what group would be the budget approving agency for the consolidated system, and how would school taxes be levied among the various counties. The county commissioners are presently the tax approving authority for county administrative units, and the county is the basic unit for property tax levies, which supply most local school funds. In a consolidated system some agency or group representing the entire system would have to be made the budget approving authority, and, since the ratio between actual property values and taxable valuations varies in different counties, some method would have to be worked out to equalize these different ratios so that the school tax would be applied equally in all counties. Of course, a per capita cost arrangement could be worked out, but this would ignore the ideal of tax equalization in the administrative unit.

Present Status of Consolidation Attempts

In the twenty-seven years since 1933, only two city administrative units have merged with their county unit and there have been no county unit mergers. In 1941, the Enfield unit, which had less than one thousand students, merged with the Halifax County unit. In 1960, the largest city administrative unit in the state, Charlotte, with more than 30,000 pupils, merged with the Mecklenburg County system to create a county administrative unit which has an enrollment of over 60,000 pupils. Winston-Salem and Forsyth County are currently studying consolidation, and it seems certain that the question will be presented to the voters of the county and city shortly after the General Assembly convenes in 1961. In at least one case, the question of consolidation of a city and a county system has been defeated at the polls. In October, 1958, Durham and Durham County voters overwhelmingly defeated a merger proposal.

While there have been only two city-county school consolidations since 1933, the question is being raised with increasing frequency in the various counties of the State. The issue is probably most often raised by county commissioners who have difficulty making the budget requests of the different units in the county show a reasonable relationship to each other. The issue is also frequently raised by citizens' groups such as the Chamber of Commerce and the League of Women Voters and occasionally by school boards and school personnel. In the following portions of this article, facts are gathered about several city administrative units which have merged or attempted to merge with their county unit.



Barringer Elementary School, Mecklenburg County Schools

SCHOOL UNIT CONSOLIDATION IN CHARLOTTE AND MECKLENBURG COUNTY

Introduction and Summary

On July 1st of this year, after more than eleven years of discussion and study, the two largest school systems in North Carolina, the Charlotte and Mecklenburg units, merged. In 1949, Henry Lewis of the Institute of Government pointed out that consolidation of the two school systems would result in several advantages, notably equal educational opportunities for all children in the city and county and better utilization of school buildings, particularly those near the boundary between the two systems.

The consolidation issue was raised occasionally during the next eight years, but it was not until 1957, in connection with a proposal to double the area of the city of Charlotte, that the school consolidation proposal received substantial support. As an outgrowth of the annexation proposal, the Charlotte Chamber of Commerce, in 1957, appointed a committee to study school consolidation. The committee recommended consolidation, and in 1958 the two school boards appointed a joint committee which endorsed consolidation and worked out a proposal to be submitted to the voters of the city and county. A special act setting up this program was adopted by the 1959 General Assembly and the election was held on June 30, 1959. The proposition was approved by a better than two to one margin and the schools were merged on July 1, 1960.

While the two school boards did not initiate the movement for consolidation, they, perhaps under some pressure from the Chamber of Commerce committee, made an independent study and recommended consolidation.

Early in the development of the proposal the administrative staffs of the two school systems were brought into the study, and both superintendents endorsed consolidation. The two school boards also unanimously approved consolidation. Even school board members who at first opposed the proposal, when they saw that the majority of the board was in favor, joined with them to present a unified front. This uniform support for consolidation helped prevent the development of a nucleus around which opposition could form. No organized opposition appeared, but the two to one majority in favor of consolidation would probably not have been as large had it not been for the fact that the future of the schools in a large area annexed to the city in 1959 was in doubt. The fact that both school systems needed the area to maintain their financial position, and that consolidation appeared

to be the only way to avoid a fight over the area was strongly emphasized in the consolidation campaign.

Also emphasized was the equalization of educational opportunity for city and county children. This appeal based on the "social justice" of consolidation seemed to have been well received and there was practically no evidence of a feeling on the part of residents of the wealthier city that they should not be taxed to provide support for the education of county children.

In school systems as large as the Charlotte and Mecklenburg systems were, the argument that the units should be consolidated to provide administrative efficiency and support for expanded supplemental services is not as strong as it would be in smaller units, but the leadership of the two systems did feel that the larger unit would be able to provide some central staff services which neither system had been able to provide separately. It was pointed out, also, that consolidation would cause a reduction in new construction requirements in the area near the city-county boundaries.

The 1949 Institute of Government Survey

Henry Lewis, in 1949, as part of a city-county consolidation study undertaken by the Institute of Government for the City of Charlotte and Mecklenburg County, studied the possibility of consolidation of the two school systems. His study pointed out two major advantages of consolidation. In the first place, a consolidated school system would provide equal educational advantages to the children of the city and county and make the tax burden for educational purposes uniform throughout the city and county. In the second place, consolidation would remove the problems involved in trying to locate school buildings in the area near the boundaries between the city and county systems.

The study pointed out that Charlotte and Mecklenburg County were becoming a homogeneous unit—the urban area surrounding the city was growing so rapidly that the city could no longer consider itself an entity separate from the rest of the county. Many of the workers in Charlotte business and industry lived outside the city and the large majority of all graduates of county high schools sooner or later wound up as residents of, or employees in, Charlotte.²⁸ Even though probably

28. A survey made by the county schools indicated that about 85 per cent of the 1959 county high school graduates who did not continue their education secured jobs in Charlotte.



Pupil and Teacher—Merry Oaks School, Mecklenburg County Schools



Right—Dr. Elmer H. Garinger, Superintendent, Mecklenburg County Schools

Below—Sedgefield Elementary School, Mecklenburg County Schools





Above—Class in physical education.

Below—reading class. Both in the Mecklerburg County Schools.



a majority of the rural residents of Mecklenburg County were employed inside the city and thus contributed to its economic growth, the county school system did not have access to Charlotte's wealth for supplementary school tax purposes. The county schools had over one-third of the school population of the county but only about one-fifth of its taxable wealth. In view of these facts, the study concluded that consolidation of the city and county schools would be the easiest and most equitable means of providing equal and adequate educational services for the children in the county and city schools.

Because of the outward expansion of the city, the city school board had adopted a policy of building its new buildings as close to the current boundaries of the city administrative unit as possible. This practice led to construction of schools which drew all their patronage from the side toward the heart of the city. Children living in the county a few hundred yards from new city schools had to ride miles to the nearest county schools. By the same token, the county administrative unit, in building schools to serve the rapidly growing suburban population, tended to try to keep its schools far enough away from the Charlotte perimeter so that they would not be gobbled up by the city administrative unit. Even though the city and county administrative units, realizing this problem, had employed the same educational building consultants in order to partially overcome the problems of the perimeter area, there was still an unnecessary duplication of buildings around the perimeter which, according to the survey, needed to be carefully examined, and which would be eliminated by consolidation.

The Chamber of Commerce School Consolidation Committee

While the newspapers and the League of Women Voters kept the consolidation idea alive, no real progress was made toward consolidation until 1957. In that year, a Charlotte Chamber of Commerce committee studied the possibility of extension of the Charlotte city boundaries. One of the problems the committee dealt with was what should happen to the boundaries of the city school administrative unit if and when the city boundaries were extended. The committee reported that one of the new county junior high schools lay in an area proposed to be annexed and that annexation of this school to the city school system would have a seriously disruptive effect upon the county school system. Consequently, the committee recommended that, if the city school unit

boundaries were to be extended with the city boundaries, this area not be annexed to the city. The report went on to say:

It has always been the custom in Charlotte when city limits were extended to extend the boundary of the city school district to match exactly the new city limits. It has been assumed by most people that this custom would be followed in the proposed extension. Both school systems are operating with an overload of pupils and every facility is strained to the limit. Although in recent years both the city and county school people have worked together in planning the location of new schools, they cannot shift the perimeter territory from one school system to the other without raising some operating problems and causing great inconvenience to the pupils and to their parents.

The report went on to point out that within the 31 square mile perimeter area which the committee proposed be annexed to the City of Charlotte lay 43.7 per cent of the total taxable valuation of the county school system but only 33 per cent of its pupils; therefore, if the county school system lost this perimeter area, it would lose much more in the way of tax resources than it would lose in the way of children, making it extremely difficult for it to secure the supplemental tax revenues necessary to maintain a school system equivalent to that operating in the city. The report went on to say:

A common school system for all of Mecklenburg County would have completely eliminated all of the problems encountered in our study, would allow the fullest and most efficient utilization of all school buildings and administrative staff and teachers, . . . and would be generally more efficient and less costly than the two systems we have now. . . .

Extension of City Limits

The 1957 Legislature adopted a bill authorizing an election on July 15th, 1957, to determine if the corporate limits of the City of Charlotte would be extended on December 31st, 1959, to take in the additional 31 square miles of territory mentioned in the Chamber of Commerce report. Annexation was approved by the voters, and the prospective annexation made imperative a decision as to the permanent status of the schools in the area to be annexed.

The Thigpen Committee

As a result of the findings made by the annexation committee, the Chamber of Commerce had immediately appointed another committee, under the chairmanship of Mr. Richard Thigpen, Charlotte tax attorney, to study the possibility of consolidation of the city and county school systems. In April,

1957, this committee held a meeting with the county commissioners, the city council, the city and county school boards, the superintendents of the city and county school systems, the two school board attorneys, and other civic leaders to discuss consolidation possibilities. As an outgrowth of this meeting, a committee composed of Mr. Thigpen as Chairman, three other Chamber of Commerce representatives, and one representative each from the city school board, the county school board, the city P.T.A. Council, and the League of Women Voters was organized to continue study of school unit consolidation.

Consolidation Recommended

After more than nine months of work, this committee recommended in January, 1958, that the Chamber of Commerce:

Request the city school board and the county school board to consider and approve the consolidation of the two school systems, and to procure the enactment of appropriate legislation by the 1959 General Assembly that will make consolidation possible at the beginning of the 1959-60 school year in Charlotte and Mecklenburg County.

The committee did not go into the details of how consolidation would be accomplished, but stated only that it felt that consolidation of the two systems could be accomplished under special legislation providing for the continued use of the best features of each system. It went on to say that the city and county school boards, at the effective date of consolidation, could become the first members of the consolidated board of education, with new members to be elected and the size of the new board to be finally fixed as the legislative act might provide. The committee also felt that questions of administrative organization and questions concerning whether or not district committees in the county should be continued could be best handled by the consolidated school board, if and when consolidation became a reality. While this recommendation was general in nature, it laid down the pattern which was in fact used in consolidating the two systems.

Reasons for the Recommendation

In the years between 1949 and 1958, the county school system, under the direction of Superintendent J. W. Wilson, had made giant strides in improving its educational standing, so that it, in the 1958 Chamber of Commerce report, was recognized as the academic equal of the city system. Therefore, it was not necessary to consolidate the two systems in order to bring the county system up to the academic level maintained in the city.

The committee, however, advanced the following reasons for consolidation:

First, consolidation would equalize expenditures per school child in the two systems. During the 1956-57 school year, the expenditure per school child in the city had been \$246.24 while it had been only \$187.82 in the county.

Second, a consolidated system would ultimately be more efficient and able to get more educational value per tax dollar.

Third, the county school system would not be able to continue its present educational program if it lost the perimeter area to the city system and the city unit would face a period of decline as the old city became the home of low income groups if it were not able to annex the perimeter area. In this situation, a consolidated system in which all schools in the county could share the taxes received from the wealthy perimeter seemed to be the only permanent answer.

Fourth, consolidation of the two systems would remove the artificial boundary which had caused the two school boards so much difficulty in the selection of school building sites in the rapidly growing suburban areas.

Community Support for Consolidation

The Chamber of Commerce report was presented to the city council and county commissioners and other civic leaders at a dinner held on January 30, 1958. At this meeting, also attended by the city and the county school boards and school administrative personnel, the city council and county commissioners present, with one exception, endorsed the report of the commission.

Both newspapers published in the city continued a barrage of editorials and news articles begun in 1957 urging consolidation of the two systems.

In early 1958, Oliver Rowe, Charlotte businessman and civic leader, stumored the county urging support for consolidation. Mr. Rowe, who had served as a member of the Thigpen Committee, came to Mr. J. W. Wilson, Superintendent of the County Schools, and told him that he had a speech for which he would like to have an audience. Mr. Wilson arranged for Mr. Rowe to speak to the county P.T.A. Council on February 6, 1958.

Mr. Rowe made an energetic, fiery speech. He first declared that the opinion that he had held until recently, and others still held, that the county schools were inferior to the city schools was false, and that the county schools did not need to consolidate to become academic equals of the city schools.

But, Mr. Rowe said, this did not mean that consolidation should be ruled

out because the problem of which school system should have the perimeter area was a real and compelling reason for consolidation. He pointed out that the development of the perimeter area, with its influx of urban people into the county unit with their wealth and their leadership, had been the very reason for the tremendous improvement in the county system in the past ten years, and then noted that the perimeter, which had been the making of the county system, might be its undoing if it were taken into the city school system. He pointed out that loss of the perimeter area would adversely affect the county school system in two ways. In the first place, it would take away a great deal of the county system's taxable wealth, and in the second place, it would take away a great many of its pupils and disrupt the system under which particular elementary schools were designed to feed particular junior and senior high schools. Mr. Rowe concluded by stating that the possibility of losing the perimeter, however slight, was too great a risk for the county system to take. Therefore, he said, to avoid a fight over the perimeter, and to make sure that the entire taxable wealth of Mecklenburg County and the city of Charlotte be put behind each child's education, the people in the county system must support consolidation.

Superintendent Wilson and Mrs. Charles W. Ramsey, Jr., P.T.A. Council president, were so favorably impressed by Mr. Rowe's speech that they arranged for him to talk to all the local P.T.A. groups in the county. Both of them, already in favor of consolidation, felt that, at the best, Mr. Rowe could persuade all of the P.T.A. groups in the county to endorse consolidation and, at the least, his speech would serve as a morale booster for the people of the county. Mr. Wilson and Mrs. Ramsey also drafted a resolution endorsing consolidation which was introduced at each county P.T.A. meeting at the conclusion of Mr. Rowe's speech. By May, 1958, Mr. Rowe had spoken to 32 of the county P.T.A. groups and 30 of them had endorsed the consolidation program. This endorsement by practically all of the P.T.A.'s in the county dispelled the impression held by many people that the county residents would not support the consolidation movement.

Opposition to Consolidation

Organized opposition to the consolidation movement was practically nonexistent, and was limited to two sources. Teachers in the city of Charlotte were at first somewhat cool to consolidation because they were afraid

that it would jeopardize their salary and work load position, since they had higher salaries and a smaller number of children per teacher than was customary for teachers in the county system. However, after discussion of the situation, the teachers generally became convinced that in the long run a consolidated school system would mean better educational advantages for all children in the county and better working conditions for all teachers, even though consolidation might prevent further immediate increases in the city salary scale.

In the second place, some people in the county, while agreeing that sooner or later consolidation would be the necessary answer to the problems of the two school systems, felt that the time was not yet ripe for consolidation and that it should be postponed until the urban characteristics of the two areas became more nearly the same. Opposition from county sources was typified by Lacy Ranson, a member of the county school board, who made an alternative proposal which contained the following three points:

(1) That the city of Charlotte school administrative district and the Mecklenburg County administrative district shall be left as they are for the ensuing eight years.

(2) That at the end of the eight years the two school administrative districts shall be consolidated.

(3) That the city and county boards of education individually and jointly adopt the above proposals as a policy and begin now joint preparation of plans looking to that end.

He went on to say:

My reasoning back of these proposals is as follows: Extension of the city district lines at this time would place on the shoulders of the city schools a tremendous burden of responsibility for education in an area drastically different in many ways than usually found in city school districts. Among these problems is the one of transportation.

The removal of a disproportionately high percentage of the taxable wealth from the county district would materially affect the balance in the operation of the remaining county schools to the detriment of the educational opportunities of the children.

Mr. Sid McAden, Chairman of the county board of commissioners, has estimated the time for the development of a set of conditions in the whole county, including the city of Charlotte, for a natural fusion of the two systems at from eight to twelve years. In that period of time he felt normal growth would produce a metropolitan area covering the entire county.

This program will allow the county district residents time to

gradually equalize the supplemental tax rate and thus match city salary scales and add programs of instruction on a broader basis in music, physical education, art, and special training for children who vary widely from the median, the exceptionally bright, the exceptionally dull.

No serious opposition developed in the county, however, and Mr. Ranson later fully supported the consolidation program.

School Boards Request Legal Opinion on How to Consolidate

In July, 1958, the two school boards requested their attorneys to prepare a memorandum on the legal aspect of consolidation of the two systems. The attorneys, Brock Barkley and Paul Erwin, recommended that consolidation, if attempted, be carried out under the procedure established by General Statute 115-74. Under this statute, the first step in consolidation is the submission, by the city school board, of a petition requesting consolidation to the county school board. Upon approval of the petition by the county school board and the State Board of Education, merger is complete. The statute provides that the petition by the city school board may be made contingent upon approval of a county-wide supplemental school tax by the voters.

The attorneys also pointed out that while consolidation could be carried out under the general law, a special act would probably be desirable to fix such things as: (a) the size and manner of election of the consolidated board, (b) whether district committees would be continued and whether they would continue to have power to hire teachers, (c) whether the new system would have districts, (d) who would be treasurer for the new unit, and (e) what control the county commissioners would have over tax levies for the consolidated system.

Staff Research on Consolidation

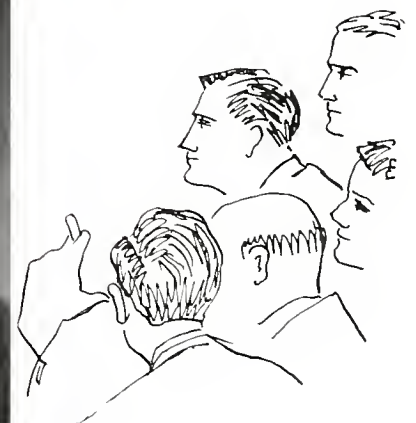
In March, 1958, Dr. Garinger, Superintendent of the Charlotte City Schools, had begun a letter writing campaign designed to collect from other consolidated school units over the country information which might be of benefit in the consolidation of the Charlotte and Mecklenburg schools. He also requested advice from National Education Association research officials concerning consolidation and got in touch with officials at the Teachers' College of Columbia University and asked them for assistance. Mr. Wilson, of the county system, also investigated consolidated systems and made a trip to Florida to study the modified county unit system



Above—Oliver Rowe speaks to County P.T.A. Council on consolidation



Below—J. W. Wilson, Associate Superintendent of the Mecklenburg County Schools.



which has been adopted there. These activities gave the two school systems some insight into what might and might not be expected in a consolidated system. For example, as a result of his investigations, Dr. Garinger was early able to tell those working for consolidation that they could not expect a reduction in the amount of tax money necessary to operate the schools in a consolidated system.

Joint Consolidation Committee of the Charlotte and Mecklenburg School Boards

The two school boards in October, 1958, "going on the assumption they would consolidate their systems," appointed a seven man joint committee to study consolidation possibilities. The committee was composed of three members from each of the boards together with a chairman chosen from the city school board.

This committee immediately met serious difficulties. In the first place, the city school board, by special act, had been given power to fix the city schools' supplemental tax rate, limited only by the maximum amount approved by the voters. In all other administrative units in the State, including Mecklenburg County, the final tax levying authority as to all school taxes rests in the hands of the county commissioners or city governing body. The members of the city school board felt that it would be impossible for them to give up this fiscally independent status.

Secondly, the county was divided into nineteen separate school districts, each of which, under State law, had district committees, appointed by the county school board, which had power to hire principals and teachers with the approval of the superintendent and

school board. The city, not being divided into districts, had no such committees, and was opposed to their use and particularly opposed to their having the power to hire school personnel. The county school board, on the other hand, felt that the district committees were an invaluable tie between the school administration and the communities in a rural system.

Another problem which bothered the city school board was whether the city pay scale, higher than that of the county for most teachers, would be continued under a consolidated school system. There were, of course, other problems, but these seemed the most difficult of solution.

As to the fiscal independence problem, the committee recommended that the consolidated school board have fiscal independence as to the amount of the local supplemental tax levy, though there was apprehension, later proven to be justified, that the county commissioners would object to this recommendation.

The joint committee reached a compromise on the district committee problem. They recommended a provision in the special act setting up the merger which would allow the school board of the consolidated unit to appoint school committees for such districts as it desired, with the school board to perform the functions of the committee in districts for which no committee was appointed.

On the teacher pay issue, the joint committee recommended that the school board in a consolidated system attempt to fix salaries at the highest present scale for each classification, whether city or county.

The joint committee and the two school boards also felt that consolidation should not be proposed unless the expenditure per school child in the consolidated system remained at least as high as in the present city system and they estimated that a 60 cent supplemental tax levy would be necessary to do this. The school boards had already decided to ask the county commissioners for a six million dollar (later increased to eight million) school construction bond election, and they decided that this bond issue election should be combined with the election upon the supplemental tax levy for the combined system.

Special Legislative Act Concerning Consolidation

The joint committee had the two school board attorneys draft a special act to be presented to the 1959 Legislature which would permit consolidation on July 1, 1960, under the procedure set out in the State school law,

if a supplemental tax levy were approved in a county-wide election. Under the original terms of the act, the consolidated school board would have been fiscally independent of the county commissioners. The act also contained the provisions previously discussed concerning district committees.

The county commissioners refused to endorse the school merger bill so long as it gave the consolidated school board fiscal independence, but an attempt was made to secure passage of the bill without their approval. Three of the four Mecklenburg delegates to the General Assembly were willing to go along with this attempt, but the fourth refused to endorse the bill unless the county commissioners were given power to approve or disapprove the tax levy request made by the school board. The school boards did not want the bill to become embroiled in controversy in the Legislature and finally agreed to the insertion of a provision making the county commissioners the tax levying authority for the consolidated school unit.

The consolidation bill, as originally drafted, also had required a vote on a 60 cent tax levy, but there was some doubt that the voters of the county would approve that rate, and the bill was amended to allow the two school boards to fix the amount of the tax levy upon which the voters would decide at any sum up to 60 cents. The bill in essentially this form was passed by the Legislature on April 21, 1959.²⁹

The Election

With the passage of the bill, the two school boards immediately set about determining what tax levy would be necessary in order to maintain the city program at its present level and bring the salary scale and service in the county up to the city level. They found that \$678,300 in additional funds would be necessary, which would have required a supplemental tax levy of 56.3 cents. The school board and county commissioners, however, felt that the voters might not be willing to approve this rate, and decided to ask for a vote on a 54 cent rate which, it was estimated, would produce about \$403,000 more than the combined supplemental tax receipts of the two school systems in the 1958-59 fiscal year.

Over half of this amount was earmarked for equalizing teacher salaries, and other funds were to be used to secure more teachers for special education, physical education, art, and more librarians and guidance counselors.

The two school boards recognized

²⁹ Session Laws, 1959, c. 378; c. 556.



James Y. Phelan, Jr., member of Mecklenburg County Board of Education

that the funds which a 54 cent tax levy would provide would not be sufficient to completely equalize the services in the two school units, but they felt that the ultimate advantages to be gained from consolidation were important enough that they could afford to wait a few years before attempting to secure sufficient funds to completely equalize the city and county services.

The Charlotte School Board, on April 27, 1959, petitioned the county board of education for merger with it, requested that the county commissioners hold a county-wide election on the 54 cent supplemental tax, and requested the county board of education to withhold its decision upon merger until after the tax election.

The county commissioners set June 30, 1959, as the date of the vote on the proposed 54 cent supplemental tax and the proposed eight million dollar bond issue for construction of new school buildings.

Immediately an extensive public relations campaign was begun, spearheaded by the Chamber of Commerce, the county P.T.A. Council, and all newspapers and television and radio stations in the county. The county P.T.A. Council prepared a mailing list composed of the parents of every child in the Mecklenburg or Charlotte school systems, and the Chamber of Commerce mailed a folder outlining the benefits of the consolidated school system to all these parents.

Both school boards and both superintendents strongly endorsed consolidation, and Dr. Garinger pointed out that, if the city system were frozen in its present boundaries, it would rapidly become a predominantly minority group, low income school system which might find it increasingly difficult to provide top quality education.

At the election, the voters approved the increased tax levy by a better than two to one margin. The vote county-wide was 7,052 for to 2,632 against. Furthermore, there was no significant difference in the ratio of approval in the county and in the city. The margin for consolidation was 3,945 to 1,116 in the city and 3,107 to 1,516 in the county.

Consolidation Completed

Again on March 8, 1960, the Charlotte School Board petitioned the Mecklenburg County School Board for merger with it, the Mecklenburg Board approved the petition on March 24, 1960 and the State Board of Education, on April 7, 1960, approved the merger effective July 1, 1960.

The Plan for Consolidation

Under the special act authorizing consolidation of the two units, the

twelve members of the county and city school boards in office at the time of the merger continue to serve as members of the consolidated board until their terms expire. The terms of four members will expire in December in each of the years 1960, 1962, and 1964. Under the terms of the special act, three replacement members will be elected in each of these years, so that after December, 1960, the school board will be composed of 11 members, after December, 1962, of 10 members, and after December, 1964, of 9 members. Nine will be the permanent number of the board, and three members will be elected, in non-partisan elections, every two years for six year terms.

Under the consolidation act, the school board may appoint district committees for any district in the county, but does not have to do so. Where no district committee is appointed, the functions assigned to it under the general law will be exercised by the school board. This provision will permit the continuation of district committees in the county, and also the continuation of the present no-district system in the city. Under the general State law, the State Board of Education, upon recommendation of the consolidated board, could re-district the county into any number of new districts. Some members of the administrative staff of the consolidated system would like to see the present 19 districts replaced by four or five districts. There has also been some discussion concerning replacing district committees with county-wide functional committees, such as a committee on curriculum, a committee on transportation, a committee on athletics, and so on. However, unless a special legislative act were passed giving such committees positive powers, they would be only advisory.

Internal organization of the new school system is not set out in detail by the special act authorizing consolidation, and is being left up to the school board and administrative staff. The act does provide that there will be a superintendent and such associate and assistant superintendents and other administrative personnel as the board shall decide upon. The act also creates the administrative position of Treasurer of the Mecklenburg County Board of Education to be filled by the school board. Under the State school law, school funds would be handled by the county treasurer.

All members of both administrative staffs were absorbed into the consolidated staff. Dr. Elmer Garinger, Superintendent of the Charlotte City Schools, became superintendent of the



consolidated system, and J. W. Wilson, Superintendent of the Mecklenburg County Schools, became associate superintendent. The assistant superintendents of the city and county staffs continued as assistant superintendents on the new staff. Prior to consolidation, the two boards of education and the two staffs made plans in various areas of school administration which helped in orderly consolidation of the two units. Studies were made in the area of lunch room operation, library operation, and steps were taken to eliminate variances in curriculum requirements in the two systems.

Even though consolidation did not take place until July 1, 1960, the enabling act authorized the school boards, in joint session, to prepare the budget for the school year 1960-61 and submit it to the county commissioners before July first. The two school boards, in joint session, also determined the pupil assignment policies of the consolidated system.

School administrative personnel say that during the first years of the consolidated system, the students in any particular school will notice very little change as a result of consolidation of the two systems. This is because it will take several years to work out a uniform curriculum which is satisfactory to all persons involved and because it will be several years before there will be sufficient money on hand to extend complete supplemental services to those who were a part of the county system.

Advantages and Disadvantages of Consolidation

Charlotte and Mecklenburg County school officials feel that the primary benefits to be gained from consolidation are: (1) the elimination of artificial school district lines which have hampered sensible building programs, (2) more efficient and economical management of the school system, (3) leveling of educational advantages for all children in the county, (4) securing of a uniform tax base for the entire county school system, and (5)

the prevention of a situation in which the two school systems fight over wealthy suburban areas which each must secure to have a tax base sufficient to provide good schools.

Another consideration which was important in the support of the consolidation proposal by county school officials was the possibility of a speed-up in the building program for schools in the former county system. These officials felt that the county commissioners had displayed a tendency, which consolidation should eliminate, to give more weight to the building requests of the larger city system.

It should be observed that reduction of the taxes necessary for support of the school system was not one of the reasons given for consolidation. This was because educational studies have shown that once a school district reaches a pupil population of around 10,000, additional consolidation into larger administrative units will not produce a significant reduction in the cost of education per pupil as long as educational services remain at the same level. In fact, where one of the two school systems to be merged is spending less per school age child than the other system, the combined system nearly always results in a tax increase because no one wants to bring down the expenditures in the combined unit to the level of those in the lower unit. The people in Charlotte do feel, however, that the consolidated system, while not able to operate on a reduced tax rate, can provide more educational advantages to the children of the county than two independent systems could have provided for the same tax rate.

The joint consolidation committee of the two school boards, in attempting to make an objective evaluation of the advantages and disadvantages of the consolidated system, listed as arguments against consolidation of the two systems the fact that the consolidated system will cost more since services are going to be leveled up to the city level; the possibility that the level of services in the city will have to be reduced to some extent; the possibility of a lag in rural areas in willingness to support school taxes; and the possibility that there would be confusion and indecision in the early years of the system.

Other arguments made, at one time or another, against consolidation of the schools were that the city and county would lose some State funds since the State presently contributes toward the salaries of two superintendents but would contribute toward the salary of only one in the consolidated unit, and that a consolidated unit would be too large to be administered properly. This

first argument involves a very small amount of money out of a budget of about \$17,000,000 for the first year of the consolidated system, but the second argument may have some merit. The Charlotte school officials recognize that the combined system is so large that the administrative organization must be carefully planned if the system is to function properly.

Problems Which the Consolidated System Faces

Perhaps the major problem which the consolidated system faces will be the tendency of the two former school systems to maintain their identity in spite of the merged organization. This may be particularly true of the county unit which, while it was the smaller unit and, therefore, more likely to be swallowed up, nevertheless had perhaps a stronger sense of unity and individuality which developed during its drive to become as good a school system as the Charlotte system.

The most significant difference between the two systems is the elementary instructional program. The city uses a conventional program while the county uses a unique system devised by Miss Ruth Robinson, elementary supervisor for the county. The Robinson system stresses four things, reading, hearing, speaking, and writing. She urges that, from the very first year of school, the student not only read and receive oral instruction each day, but that the pupil talk to the class and hand in a composition each day. The "180 themes a year" aspect of the system has been the source of much comment, both good and bad, but the county school people generally are convinced that this and the other parts

of Miss Robinson's system are better than the system used in the city schools.

The city school people, on the other hand, are not entirely convinced of the value of the Robinson system, and are probably more inclined to go along with an elementary instructional program which is more in line with what is used generally over the country. There does, however, appear to be willingness on the part of former city schools personnel to give the Robinson system a fair trial, and with the passage of time this problem will be solved.

Another problem faced by the consolidated system is an administrative one of location of sufficient office space for the central staff. There was no county office building with sufficient space for the administrative offices of the consolidated system and the administrative headquarters has been set up in a converted elementary school building in the downtown area. The building, however, is substandard, was not constructed for office purposes, and is less than satisfactory. While lack of completely adequate quarters will cause some problems, the school board hopes to get an education center to house administrative offices, or, if this is not forthcoming, sufficient space in a new county office building which is now under construction.

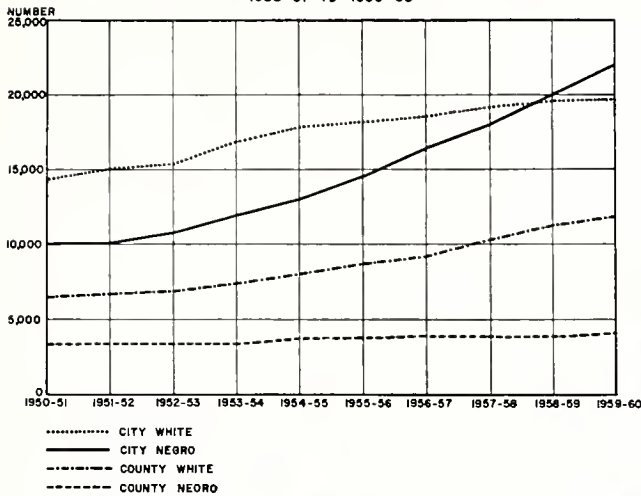
The third major problem confronting the consolidated system was created by the Mecklenburg County Commissioners when they refused to levy the full 54 cent supplemental tax which had been approved by the voters.

The school board submitted a \$10,-184,726 budget to the county commis-

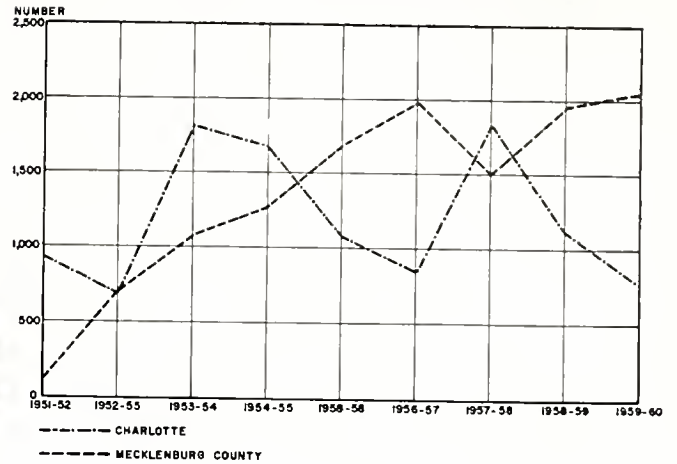


Teaching Reading as a part of the Robinson system

ENROLLMENT - MECKLENBURG & CHARLOTTE SCHOOLS
1950-51 TO 1959-60



INCREASE IN ENROLLMENT: 1951-52 TO 1959-60



sioners which included \$955,289 in capital outlay, \$2,810,303 for debt service, \$2,197,400 in current expense, and \$4,221,734 in supplemental levy. The supplemental tax rate requested was 53.89 cents.

The county commissioners, in going over the budget, cut \$95,289 from capital outlay, \$113,255 from current expense, and \$203,167 from the supplemental funds.

After the county commissioners had cut the budget, protest was made immediately by the school board, and the county commissioners restored half the cuts in current expense and capital outlay and raised the supplemental levy from 51 to 53 cents, so that all but about \$160,000 of the reduction was restored. Thus only slight reductions in the planned school program were required, but the experience indicates that the school board may have some difficulty securing tax funds sufficient to provide a level of service equal to that of the former city system.

The County System Prior to Merger

The Mecklenburg County Board of Education was composed of five members nominated in the democratic primary and elected by the General Assembly for staggered six-year terms. There were nineteen school districts in the county system, each with the district committees required by State law.

In 1959, the county system had approximately 25,000 students and 848 teachers. The teacher-pupil ratio was one teacher for every 29 students. There were 30 white elementary schools, four white senior highs, and

two white junior highs. The county had eight Negro schools, four of which had grades one through twelve and four of which had grades one through eight.

The administrative staff was composed of a superintendent, an assistant superintendent, three white supervisors and one Negro supervisor. The system had four special subject supervisors, one each for libraries, music, visual aids, and guidance.

The county system, while it had an excellent basic education program, had been limited, because of its financial position, in the extent of its special programs. It had not, as the city had, maintained separate classes for exceptional children. In the 1958-59 school year it had only three full time librarians while the city system had 47. The county had not offered any separate remedial reading classes, but this was due partly to the unusual program of elementary education used in the county schools.

Taxable property in the county unit

was about \$256,000,000 or about \$9,750 per school child; if, however, all the area annexed to the city in 1959 were taken into the city school district, the taxable property per school child in the county system would have been only \$7,700. The county system levied a 40 cent supplemental tax, which in the 1958-59 school year produced \$38.94 per school child. The county paid a teacher supplement which ranged from \$559.80 for a teacher with an "A" certificate and no experience to \$790.00 for an "A" certificate and 13 years' experience. Supplements for teachers with graduate degrees were correspondingly higher. This supplement was higher than that paid by the city for the beginning teacher and for the teacher with one year's experience, but for teachers with more experience the city scale was higher.

The City System Prior to Merger

The Charlotte city school board was composed of seven members elected for staggered six-year terms by the voters of the city. The city system was not



NUMBER AND SIZE OF SCHOOL ADMINIST UNITS IN EACH COUNTY

The figures given are enrollments for the 1959-60 school year as reported by the State Superintendent of Public Instruction.

divided into districts and so had no district committees.

In 1959 the city system had approximately 32,800 students and 1,216 teachers. The teacher-pupil ratio was one teacher for every 27 students. There were 26 white elementary schools, six white junior highs, and three white senior highs. The city had thirteen Negro elementary schools, two Negro junior high schools, and two Negro senior highs.

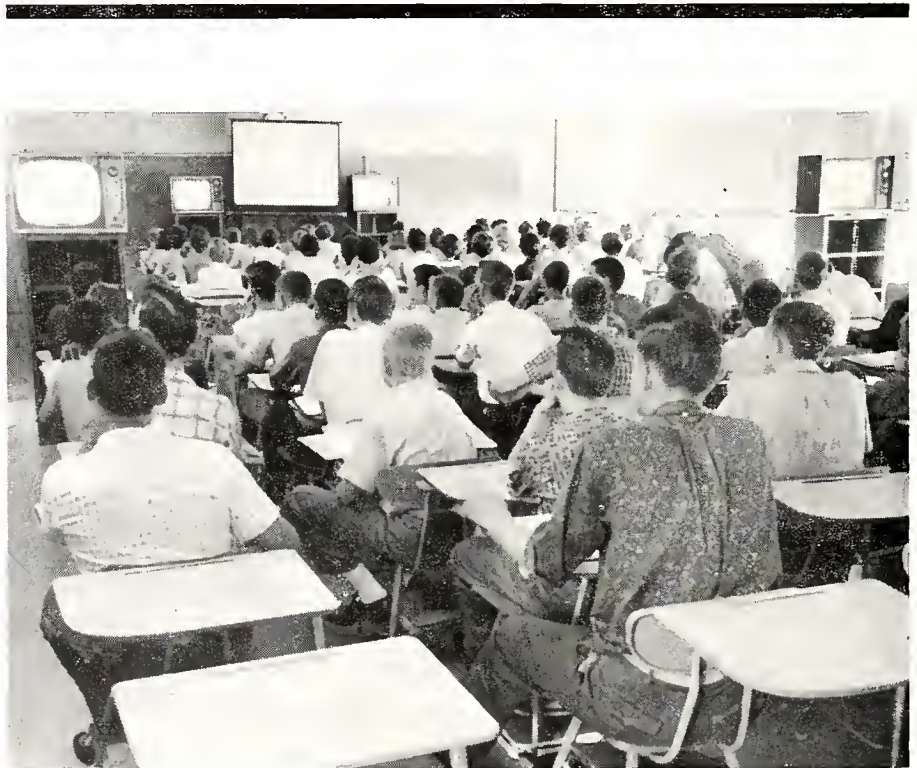
The administrative staff was composed of a superintendent, assistant superintendent, business manager, assistant to the superintendent for personnel, two white supervisors and one Negro supervisor. The city had twelve special subject supervisors, one each for art, distributive education, libraries, music, physical education, the reading center, special education, testing and research, technical and industrial education, visual aids, guidance, and child accounting.

As the number of special supervisors indicates, the city had a broad program of special services including a reading center and remedial reading classes, strong music program, special art education, and a physical education program for elementary schools. The city also provided special classes for retarded or exceptionally bright students.

Taxable property in the city administrative unit was about \$468,000,000 or about \$14,400 per school child; if, however, all the area annexed to the city in 1959 were taken into the city school district, the taxable property per school child would have increased to over \$16,000. The city system levied a 50 cent supplemental tax, which in the 1958-59 school year produced \$72.23 per school child. The city paid a teacher supplement which ranged from \$513.00 for an "A" certificate holder with no experience to \$1,197.00 for an "A" certificate holder with 13 years' experience. Supplements for teachers with graduate degrees were correspondingly higher. This supplement was lower than that paid by the county for the first two years, but after that it became progressively higher than the county rate, and the supplement for teachers with 13 years' experience was over \$400.00 higher than that paid by the county.



Balcony library, Myers Park Elementary School, Mecklenburg County Schools



T.V. Science Class, Alexander Graham Junior High School, Mecklenburg County Schools

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SCHOOL UNIT

CONSOLIDATION IN DURHAM AND DURHAM COUNTY

Introduction and Summary

In November, 1958, a proposal to consolidate the City of Durham and Durham County school administrative units was defeated by the voters of the city and county. The five to one defeat of the proposition probably effectively ended, for some years to come, discussion of Durham city and county school consolidation.

The question of consolidation of the two school systems was raised in 1951 and discussed for nearly a year before the two school boards voted not to continue the discussion. In 1957, the question was again raised, and a joint committee appointed to study consolidation, after brief study, recommended that the two systems be merged. The city school board, moving hesitantly, secured assurances from the county commissioners and county school board that they would support bringing the level of services in a consolidated system up to that existing in the city system, and then petitioned for a merger conditioned upon approval of a special 40 cent school tax by the voters of the city and county.

The special tax election was set for November 4, 1958, and at the suggestion of the county commissioners a fact finding committee was appointed to assemble the arguments for and against consolidation. This committee was not successful in arousing a great deal of interest in the proposal, and in October, 1958, opposition to the proposal began to develop in several quarters, particularly in the city school system. There was no substantial support for the proposal, except for the Herald-Sun newspapers, and the proposal was defeated by a more than five to one margin in the November 4 election.

The fact that the city school administration, teachers and P.T.A. organizations were opposed to consolidation certainly played a large part in its defeat, and their opposition may be traced in part to the fact that they

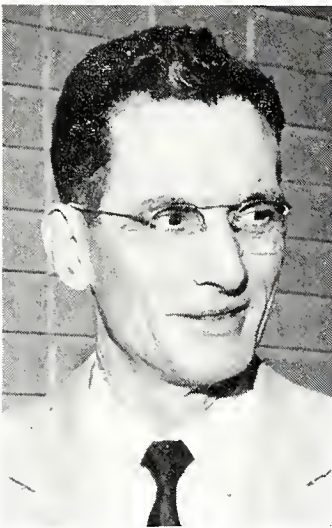
played no part in developing the consolidation proposal. There are, however, several other factors which probably affected the result. First, many members of the city and county boards of education were opposed; second, both city and county people apparently wanted to keep complete control of their respective school systems; third, the fact that no completely organized plan for operation of the consolidated system was presented to the voters probably made many of them wary of the proposal; and, fourth, the county residents probably opposed the increase in the supplemental tax rate to 40 cents. (City residents were not voting for an increased tax as the city system already had a 40 cent rate.)

The 1951-52 Study

The first study of school consolidation in Durham and Durham County leading up to the 1958 election was initiated on October 4, 1951, when a consolidation study proposal made by the board of county commissioners was approved by the county board of education. Members of the county commissioners and the county school board had been discussing consolidation informally for some time, and, when Wilmer Jenkins, county superintendent of schools, submitted his resignation effective November 15 of that year, the county commissioners and the county school board decided that it was an opportune time for a formal study.

Some county school board members spoke out in favor of consolidation at this time, pointing out that it would bring equal educational opportunities to rural children and should result in considerable savings in capital outlay requirements because long range building programs could be better planned in a consolidated system.

The county commissioners suggested that a committee composed of two members each from the board of county commissioners, county school board, city council, and city school board be



Charles H. Cheuning, Superintendent, Durham County Schools

appointed to study consolidation and within the next week all these bodies appointed members to the committee.

At its first meeting, the committee decided to ask Dr. Clyde Erwin, State Superintendent of Public Instruction, to speak to the group about consolidation. Dr. Erwin appeared before the committee on October 24, and told them that movements toward consolidation in the State were inevitable, particularly in counties with rapidly growing cities such as Durham. He said that under consolidation there would be no savings in administrative costs but would be savings in capital outlay expenses. Dr. Erwin also said that the State Department of Public Instruction would be happy to make a survey of the Durham city and county schools to determine the possibility of consolidation if requested to do so by the city and county school boards.

At this same meeting the Durham

City Classroom Teachers Association filed a letter with the committee protesting consolidation "for the present." The teachers were apparently afraid that if the two systems consolidated they would lose the salary supplement paid by the city system.

In the next two weeks both boards of education requested the State Department of Public Instruction to conduct a survey of the two systems. Dr. Erwin decided to secure educational leaders from other states, particularly ones who had experience with consolidated school systems, to serve on the survey team. By the end of November he was able to bring together a survey team which consisted of Dr. Roy Hamon, director of schoolhouse planning for the United States Department of Education; William Shaw, superintendent of the Muscogee County, Georgia, schools which had just consolidated with the Columbus, Georgia,

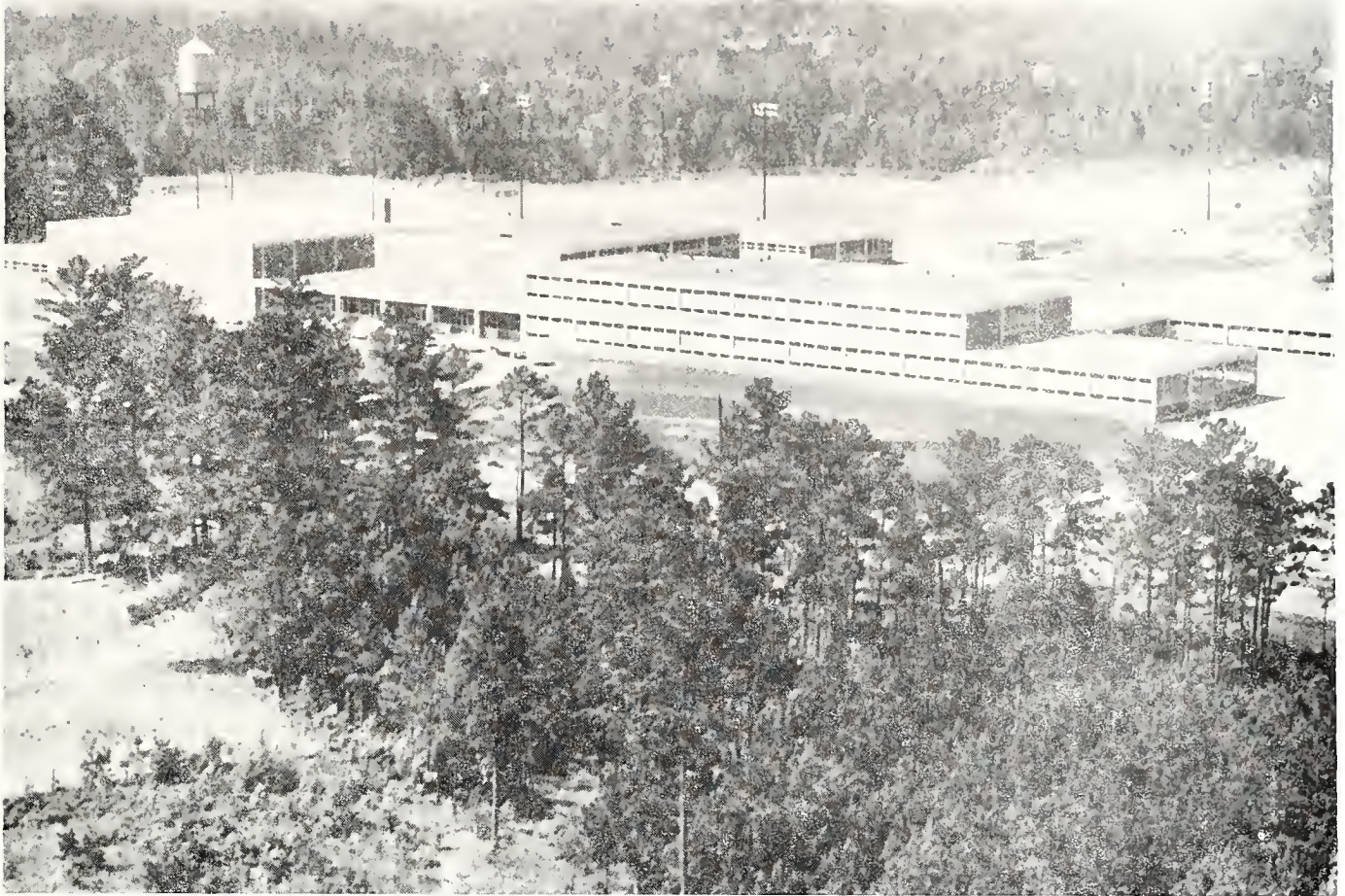
schools; John L. Cameron, director of the division of schoolhouse planning of the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction; and Dr. Tom Pullen, head of the Maryland school system. The team began its survey in late January, 1952, and completed it late in April.

The city-county school consolidation committee met to review the survey report on May 2, 1952, and decided to request the opinion of the Attorney General on what would happen to the present city supplemental tax if a county-wide special levy were approved, and what would happen if it were defeated. The joint committee also requested a joint city-county school board estimate of building costs in a consolidated system, and their opinion as to whether a 6-3-3 (junior-senior high school), or 8-4 organization should be adopted in a consolidated system.

The committee apparently felt that

York Road Junior High School, Mecklenburg County Schools





Southern High School, Durham County Schools

the State survey team report, which favored consolidation, proposed a consolidation plan which was too ambitious and costly and which failed to take sufficient account of local factors. They made no public report on the contents of the survey and did not use it as the basis of any further proposals.

On July 24, after receiving a ruling from the Attorney General that approval of a county-wide supplemental tax would automatically void the present city supplemental tax and that disapproval of a county-wide tax would leave present taxes as they are, the committee met again and, for the second time, requested the city and county school boards to submit estimated capital outlay costs and plans for operation in a consolidated system.

The two school boards, at a meeting called on August 2, 1952, to prepare the information which the consolidation committee had requested, voted unanimously to discontinue for the in-

definite future any further study of consolidation.

The action was taken because members of the two school boards felt that taxpayers of the county school system, which had no supplemental school tax, should not be asked to approve a 40 cent levy, the amount of the city special tax and the probable necessary levy in a consolidated system. Members of the county school board also reported that there was a great deal of opposition to consolidation among county residents even though the county stood to gain the most from consolidation. Also entering into the decision to suspend the consolidation study was the fact that the county school board felt it could no longer hold off selection of a new county school superintendent.

The 1957 Consolidation Committee

The consolidation question was not raised again until 1957, this time precipitated by the resignation of the city

school superintendent, L. Stacy Weaver. In June, 1957, the city board of education called for the creation of an eight-man committee composed of two members each from the county commissioners, county school board, city council, and city school board to study the consolidation question.

This committee was appointed²⁹ and met several times in late July and early August, 1957, and, on August 9, without undertaking an extensive study, approved, by a six to two vote, a resolution recommending consolidation of the city and county administrative units.

²⁹ The committee was composed of J. E. Strawbridge and Ben R. Roberts of the city council; Mrs. John Tate Lanning and L. A. Downey of the county board of education; Frank Kenan and Dewey Scarborough of the county commissioners; and Spurgeon Boyce and Frank Fuller, Jr. of the city board of education.



Lew W. Hammen, Superintendent, Durham City Schools

The resolution recommending consolidation was introduced by County Commissioner Frank Kenan and gave the following reasons for merger of the two systems:

- (1) County commissioners could appropriate funds on a needs basis rather than per capita, as at present, with the result that money spent by Durham County for education could be more intelligently disbursed and all Durham school children would receive the same tax expenditure.
- (2) Without special, arbitrary district lines, school buildings could be planned and built where needed, resulting in substantial savings in capital expenditures.
- (3) Teachers' salaries would be equalized throughout the county, resulting in equal standards of teaching for all children.
- (4) School tax supplement would be borne equally by all citizens.
- (5) Savings in administrative expenses could be effected.

An Election Set

The recommendation of the consolidation study committee was passed along to the city school board, which, under the applicable statutory provisions, must make the first move in consolidation of a city school unit with a county unit by petitioning the county school board for consolidation. The city school board, however, was apprehensive that consolidation of the two systems would result in lowering the educational standards of the city system, which, with its higher supplemental tax, provided more special services and higher teacher supplements than the county system.

On February 11, 1958, in an attempt to make sure of its ground before it moved, the city school board asked the county board of education to answer the following six questions about consolidation:

1. Would the present special services in the city system, now made available

by supplemental tax funds, be continued?

2. Would the Durham junior-senior high school organization continue?

3. Would the maximum classroom teacher load in a consolidated system be held at least as low as in the present city system?

4. Would the salary supplement now paid to the teachers in the city schools be continued?

5. Would the present personnel of the two school systems be retained at not less than their present salary as long as their services are satisfactory?

6. Would the county board of education look with favor on a county-wide supplemental tax of not less than 40 cents per hundred valuation, the present city rate?

The county board of education, on February 19, answered all these questions in the affirmative, but the city school board was still not entirely satisfied, and posed the following questions to the county commissioners: What is the position of the county commissioners on a county-wide supplemental school tax of 40 cents per hundred valuation? In the event of consolidation, will the county commissioners levy a sufficient tax to operate the schools at the present city level?

The county commissioners answered that they would submit the 40 cent levy to a county-wide vote, and that they would levy as much of the supplemental tax as the consolidated school board justified in its school budget request.

On March 10, 1958, feeling that its questions to the county school board and county commissioners had been answered satisfactorily, the city school board petitioned the county school board for merger conditioned on approval of a 40 cent supplemental tax levy by the voters of the city and county, and authorized the city school board chairman to join with the chairman of the county school board in a petition to the county commissioners requesting that an election be held on the supplemental tax question. This action apparently was taken not because the city school board favored consolidation, but because it did not want to block a vote on the issue. The county school board approved the city board petition on March 15, 1958, and a few weeks later the county commissioners set November 4 as the date for the supplemental tax vote.

The Fact Finding Committee

In June, 1958, at the suggestion of the county commissioners, a three member Fact Finding Committee on consolidation, composed of Mrs. Joh.

T. Lanning of the county board of education, Norwood Thomas of the city board of education, and George Watts Carr, Jr., representative at large, was appointed to gather pertinent facts concerning consolidation.

The committee met frequently during the next several months, and then issued a pamphlet setting out some facts concerning consolidation, which, while it claimed to be impartial, seemed to most observers to favor consolidation. The Fact Finding Committee also arranged for a number of personal appearances by one or all of its members before parent-teacher groups and other civic organizations.

The report of the Fact Finding Committee listed the following advantages and disadvantages of consolidation:

Benefits to county.

1. County school teachers' pay will be raised to the level of city school teachers, which will eventually attract and hold better teachers.
2. County school system would have more money available for better maintenance of its buildings.
3. County schools would have no more concern with loss of tax base through continued city limits extension.
4. County schools would have a greater variety of course[s] to offer to [their] students.

Disadvantages for county.

1. Some delay would be necessary to install 6-3-3 system of schools in county when and if it were agreed that this step should be taken.
2. County taxpayers would be subsidizing the present city system to the extent of about \$40,000.

Benefits to city.

1. City school system would gain equality with county system in library facilities, instructional supplies, and secretarial aid for elementary schools.
2. Future supplemental pay of Durham city school teachers would be protected from possible decreases resulting from ever increasing numbers of teachers necessary to staff growing system.

Disadvantages to city.

1. Assignment of pupils in present fringe areas might cause some inconvenience.
2. City would have to adjust to use of school committees as required by law in a county system.

Benefits to community.

1. All students in Durham County and City would have an equal and improved school opportunity.
2. Long range savings could be made in location of new buildings and needed classrooms without regard to artificial lines.
3. Eventual savings in administration and operation should result.
4. Durham—as a community—with unified public school system would be more attractive to people and industries looking for a new home.
5. City vs. County feeling in the

field of education would be eliminated.

Disadvantages to community.

1. More money would have to be paid by taxpayers, particularly in the county, to [operate] the new system on an equal and improved level.
2. Some people feel that competition between city and county system has produced two good systems which are operating well and efficiently now, so that there is no benefit seen in uniting them.

Plan for Consolidation

No fully worked out plan for consolidation was prepared before the election on the county-wide supplemental tax. However, it had been agreed that the school board for the consolidated system should be composed of seven members elected at large for staggered four year terms, and that the members of the city and county boards of education at the time of merger would serve as the first board of education of the consolidated system.

While there was not a great deal of discussion on the matter, it was assumed that the consolidated system would operate entirely under the State school law concerning county administrative units, and that the former city administrative unit would become a district in the county system with its own school district committeemen. The effective date of consolidation, if approved by the voters, was to be July 1, 1959.

Durham County representatives in

the General Assembly, who seemed generally to favor the consolidation proposal, assured the two school boards that if the consolidation proposal was approved by the voters they would introduce in the Legislature the necessary special legislation. There was some discussion about the inclusion in such a bill of a provision giving the consolidated school board fiscal independence, but it was finally decided that the budget approving power should remain in the county commissioners.

Opposition to Consolidation

From the beginning, certain members of the city and county school boards, particularly Frank Fuller, Jr. of the city board and L. A. Downey of the county board, stated that they were opposed to consolidation. Among the reasons given for opposition were: (1) the county voters will not approve a 40 cent supplemental tax levy, (2) since the amount of property per school child is greater in the county than in the city unit, putting both into the same administrative unit with the same tax rate would mean that about ten cents of the 40 cents levied in the county would be used for the education of city children, (3) city residents would not be properly represented on the county board of education, (4) the county people are not ready for their school system to lose its identity, and (5) the existing level of service in the city system would be reduced.

In October, strong opposition began to develop which, by the middle of the month, made it fairly clear that the consolidation proposal would be defeated. About October 10, several Parent-Teacher Associations in the city began distributing a question and answer pamphlet which was critical of consolidation. On October 14, the Durham Classroom Teachers Association voted overwhelmingly against consolidation. Also at this meeting, acting city school superintendent, Lew W. Hannen, strongly criticized the consolidation proposal. He stated that consolidation would bring about re-adjustment problems and a probable rise in juvenile delinquency, as indicated by the large Northern school systems. He also pointed out that bigness and goodness do not necessarily go together, and noted that if the two systems were consolidated there would probably be no more additions to Durham High School, while if the two systems remained separate it could be expected that the school would be substantially expanded. Hannen also charged that those who were opposed to consolidation were not being given fair treatment by the press.

On October 18, the Durham County School Committeemen's Association fired eighteen generally antagonistic questions at the consolidation Fact Finding Committee. On October 20, the city school system athletic coaches, meeting as a group, voiced their disapproval of consolidation because it

Merrick-Moore Consolidated School, Durham County Schools



would make the Durham schools less able to compete in athletics with schools from other cities in the State of the same size.

On October 29, the Parent-Teacher Associations at East Durham Junior High and North Durham Elementary School voted against consolidation by large majorities. On October 30, 48 individual members of the Durham P.T.A. Council signed a statement opposing consolidation. A few days later the Durham unit of the National Education Association voted to oppose consolidation. Also voting to oppose consolidation were the Durham Central Labor Union, AFL-CIO, and the Durham Committee of Negro Affairs.

The reasons for opposition by all these various groups are not so clear as would be desirable, but it appears that there were two primary factors. In the first place, both city and county residents and organizations felt that they would lose their voice in their own school affairs if the two systems were consolidated; and secondly, the city organizations opposing felt that the city system had nothing to gain and was apt to lose because of a leveling off of services in the combined system at a place higher than the existing county level but lower than the existing city level. It is also probable that the Negroes felt that their influence would be diminished in a county-wide system since the Negroes comprise a larger percentage of the population in the city of Durham than in the county as a whole.

Support for Consolidation

While organization after organization announced its opposition to consolidation, not a single civic, governmental, or other organization announced its support for the proposal. Except for the Herald-Sun newspapers, the only support for consolidation came from individual members of the two school boards, members of Durham's legislative delegation, and members of the joint Fact Finding Committee. And the support given by these people was rendered less effective by the fact that most of them continued to insist that they were impartial on the matter.

The Durham Morning Herald and The Durham Sun staged a vigorous editorial campaign in favor of consolidation, with editorials pounding over and over again at what were considered by the newspapers to be compelling reasons for consolidation. The following portion of an editorial which appeared in the Durham Morning Herald on July 30, 1958, is indicative of the newspapers' position and their reasons:

From a theoretical standpoint, this newspaper believes that the case for consolidation is overwhelming. There are obvious advantages to taxpayers and pupils in both of the existing school districts.

First, there is the indisputable advantage in assigning pupils and in planning school construction in the rapidly growing communities that now lie on one side or the other of the present boundaries.

Second, there is the long range tax advantage to the county district, which without consolidation stands to lose more prime tax sources through annexation by the city.

The financial position of the consolidated system would insure all teachers in Durham County of equally attractive pay, and equally low classroom loads. It would permit the system to offer all pupils the same wide range of courses.

These points and others were recognized by the special city-county committee which recommended consolidation last year. They were recognized by State education officials determining that consolidation could be undertaken to advantage.

Despite this overwhelming theoretical case, however, consolidation will face questions which must be answered by . . . [a] . . . meeting of city and county governmental and school leaders and by the attitudes of others influential in school operations here. These questions involve whether or not the practical difference between persons and groups who have operated separately can be worked out so that the obvious theoretical benefits of consolidation can be brought to Durham County.

Result of the Election

By the middle of October it was fairly apparent to the Fact Finding Committee that there was little chance for approval of the proposal. Because of the situation, the committee canceled speaking engagements which it had made for dates after October 22, and dissolved itself after issuing a statement deploring the recriminations and emotionalism which it felt had been allowed to obscure the basic issues involved in the proposal. Even the newspapers began to taper off their avid support for the measure, and the November 4th election amounted to the burial of an already dead issue.

At the election the proposal was overwhelmingly defeated, the vote being 8,959 against to only 1,723 in favor. The city vote was 3,166 against to 567 in favor; the county vote 5,793 against to 1,156 in favor. Not a single precinct in either the city or the county voted in favor of consolidation.

The Durham County School System

The Durham County Board of Edu-

cation is composed of five members who are nominated in the democratic primary and elected by the General Assembly for two-year terms. There are a number of school districts in the county, each with the district committees required by law.

In 1958-59, the county system had approximately 8,700 pupils and 323 teachers. The teacher-pupil ratio was one teacher for every 27 pupils. There were eight white elementary schools and two white high schools. The county had three Negro schools, two with grades one through twelve and one with grades one through eight. The number of pupils in the system was growing at the rate of about 400 per year.

The administrative staff was composed of a superintendent, a business manager, two white supervisors and one Negro supervisor. The system had special subject supervisors for music, band, and art, and had a special audio-visual supervisor.

Taxable property in the county unit was about \$150,000,000 or about \$17,240 per school child. The county in 1958-59 levied 17 cents of a 20 cent supplemental school tax levy which had been approved several years earlier, and which produced about \$34.00 per school child. The county paid a supplement of \$200.00 to all teachers.

Durham City School System

The Durham City School Board is composed of six members appointed by the city council for staggered four-year terms. There are no districts and no district committees.

In the 1958-59 school year, the city system had approximately 14,052 pupils and 549 teachers. The teacher-pupil ratio was one teacher for every 26 pupils. In that year, the city system had eleven white elementary schools, two white junior highs, and one white senior high. There were seven Negro elementary schools, one Negro junior high and one Negro senior high. The number of pupils in the system was growing at the rate of about 550 per year.

The administrative staff was composed of a superintendent, business manager, white and Negro supervisors, and a special supervisor for libraries.

Taxable property in the city administrative unit was about \$163,000,000 or about \$11,800 per school child. In the 1958-59 school year, a 40 cent supplemental tax was levied which produced about \$49.00 per school child. The city pays a teacher supplement which ranges from \$283.70 to \$525.05 for teachers with "A" certificates. Supplements for teachers with graduate degrees are correspondingly higher.



SCHOOL UNIT CONSOLIDATION IN WINSTON-SALEM AND FORSYTH COUNTY

Introduction and Summary

The Winston-Salem and Forsyth County school systems, under the leadership of the two school boards and the two school superintendents, have just completed a study of consolidation possibilities and have recommended that the two systems be merged under a plan prepared by a joint committee composed of members of both school boards.

The consolidation issue was raised in 1951 but a study made in that year indicated that the two systems were not ready for consolidation. In 1955, a study of the two school systems made by the Public Administration Service of Chicago recommended consolidation, but did not cause any concerted attempt on the part of city or county officials to consolidate the two systems. In 1958, the county commissioners requested the city school board to petition the county board for consolidation, so that a plan for consolidation could be worked out. However, the city board declined to submit a petition until after a plan of consolidation was worked out, and the issue was dropped for another year.

Then, in July, 1959, a Citizens' Committee was organized in Winston-Salem to consider consolidation. When the committee was organized, the two school boards moved into action with the creation of a joint committee to study consolidation. In February of this year, the joint committee recommended consolidation under a "package plan" prepared by it. The basic elements of the plan are an increased supplemental school tax levy for both the city and the county and an eight-man appointed school board (perhaps with a chance to switch to an elected board after four years).

The strongest opposition to the plan has come from those who dislike the idea of an appointed school board and from a few who suggest that the supplemental tax of 50 cents, which the joint committee has recommended, is too high. The joint committee recently proposed that the special act setting up the merger machinery provide that an election could be called after four years to determine if the voters want to switch from the appointed to an elected school board. The special act will also provide that the

amount of tax which will be voted on can be set by the two school boards at any amount up to 50 cents per hundred dollars valuation on property. These two provisions will give the two school boards an opportunity to meet both objections which have been raised to consolidation if they think it wise to do so.

The Winston-Salem/Forsyth consolidation proposal has, from the first, been worked out by the two school boards, and is, more than either the Durham or Charlotte proposals, tailored to what the school people of the city and county wanted. So far, the primary emphasis in the Winston-Salem/Forsyth program has been on raising the level of service in both the city and county school systems, though there has also been emphasis upon the reduction in building costs which should result from the elimination of the problems associated with the boundary between the two units. There has not, as yet, been any great emphasis upon the fact that consolidation will equalize the tax burden and educational advantages in the city and county.

Perhaps the outstanding characteristic of the Winston-Salem/Forsyth consolidation efforts so far is the orderliness with which they have been carried out, and the feeling of good will that seems to exist between the two school boards and the two administrative staffs.

The Haber Kern Committee

The first step toward city-county school consolidation in Winston-Salem and Forsyth County came in 1950 when Marshall Kurfees, newly elected mayor of Winston-Salem, and Roy Craft, Chairman of the Forsyth County Com-



T. Roy Gibbs, Superintendent, Forsyth County Schools.

missioners, appointed a committee to study the possibility of school consolidation. The committee was composed of ten members, five each from the city and county, with the two school superintendents and the chairmen of the two school boards serving as advisory members. Roy T. Haber Kern, Vice-President of R. J. Reynolds Tobacco Company, was elected chairman of the committee. The committee employed a University of North Carolina economics instructor, Everett W. Schadt, to make a study of the two school systems and the possibilities of consolidation.

Mr. Schadt's report, 150 pages long, concluded that consolidation probably was not necessary or desirable at that time, as he felt that the differences in the two school systems were so great that consolidation would create a serious problem of adjustment.

On the basis of Mr. Schadt's report, the Haber Kern Committee did not recommend either consolidation or continued separate operation of the schools, but rather recommended that the city school system make certain changes in administration suggested by the Schadt report and stated that when these changes were made it would again study consolidation. The Haber Kern Committee made no further proposals and the consolidation issue was quiet during the next five years.

The PAS Survey

In the spring of 1955, the county schools launched a campaign to raise their supplemental tax from 20 to 35 cents, and as a result of the bitterness and confusion created in the county by the campaign, John C. Whitaker, President of R. J. Reynolds Tobacco Company, suggested a survey of the county schools to determine what their financial needs were. Mr. Whitaker's suggestion was endorsed by the Chamber of Commerce, and the county commissioners went so far as to contact education consultants in and out of the State to secure estimates of how much such a survey would cost, but nothing further was done.

Then in September of 1955, the county school board changed its mind about the construction of a proposed school near the southern city limits and decided to move it further into the county, generating a great deal of discontent among the school patrons in that area. In connection with this dispute, a citizens' committee was formed which requested that no more capital outlay funds be spent in the county system until a survey of county school needs had been made, and the county commissioners decided to go along with this request. The commissioners also

decided that any survey made should consider the possibility of consolidation of the city and county schools. After being unsuccessful in getting the schools of education at Duke University and The University of North Carolina to submit bids on making the study, the county commissioners, on October 3, 1955, signed a contract with the Public Administration Service of Chicago, under which PAS agreed to do a thorough study of the city and county school systems, including consolidation possibilities, for \$25,000.

The PAS report, released in October, 1956, strongly urged consolidation of the city and the county school systems. The report pointed out that:

One of the greatest benefits which can accrue from consolidation is the development of a logical and orderly banking program designed to meet the needs of the total school population. This has been impossible in the past. The county school system, with an increasing pupil population but decreasing area, has understandably located its new schools beyond the reach of city annexations regardless of the residence locations of pupils to be served. The city school system with an increasing population and a growing area to serve, can never know from day to day the limits of its service area. In consequence, it has been reluctant to locate new structures adjacent to city boundaries even when the need is apparent. The dilemma faced by the respective school authorities has resulted in a kind of no-man's-land and dearth of new school facilities at the city fringe even though this is frequently the most logical location for new structures. Consolidation, by removing the perennial dilemma associated with the boundary, will make possible a more reasonable location of future school buildings.

The report went on to say that consolidation of the two systems would also remove the existing area of strife between the city and county school systems over the allotment of capital outlay and current expense funds. Further, it stated, such services as cafeteria management and plant maintenance could be handled more efficiently by a combined unit. Also, the report pointed out, the consolidated system should be able to develop a stronger central staff in the fields of psychology, special education, music, vocational education, industrial arts, guidance and testing, health, social sciences, language, and so on, which could make these various special functions more beneficial to the children of the system.

The report noted that those favoring maintenance of separate school systems for the city and county had argued that the educational objectives desired by the city and by the county residents are not the same, the county residents

being satisfied with basic education, while the city residents want basic education plus vocational training and supplementary courses which have become associated with the modern school system; that county residents might serve as a millstone around the neck of the school system, defeating bond and tax increase elections which would be necessary for the maintenance of a first-class school system; that a small school system is better able to deal with the individual child and is more responsive to his needs; and that consolidation would cause the system to lose State funds for administration.

As to these objections the study pointed out that the progressive influence of the City of Winston-Salem seems to extend over most of Forsyth County, and is apt to extend even further in the future, so that there is little danger of the conservative influence in the county being strong enough to create a lag in the school system; that for the same reasons it is doubtful that the people in the county would consistently lag behind the people of the city in their approval of new bond issues and taxes for the school systems; that even if it is true that a small school system might be more responsive to the needs of the individual pupil, both the city and the county systems are already too large for merger to have any appreciable effect in this area; that both systems are already so large that there can be no direct contact between the central administrative staff and the individual pupil; and that preliminary studies seem to indicate that the loss in State funds to the systems in case of merger would be negligible, amounting to only about \$15,000 a year.

Even though the PAS study had strongly recommended consolidation, its arrival upon the scene did not cause appreciable agitation for consolidation,

and the idea was allowed to fade out of sight for a few years.

The 1959 School Boards Study

In the spring of 1958, the Forsyth County Commissioners requested the Winston-Salem School Board to petition the county board of education for consolidation of the two systems so that some proposition looking toward consolidation could be worked out and presented to the voters. The city school board declined to submit a petition until a definite plan for consolidation had been worked out, and suggested that a joint committee be appointed from the membership of the two boards to study consolidation. However, this was not done, and the consolidation question lay dormant for another year.

Then in July, 1959, a citizens' committee was organized to study the possibility of consolidation of the city and county schools. With the formation of this committee, the city and county school boards, feeling that the time was again ripe for further study of school consolidation, and also feeling that leadership in such a study should be taken by the two school boards involved, met together on August 5, 1959, and organized a joint consolidation study committee composed of three members each from the county and city boards of education.³⁰

At its first meeting, the joint committee decided that there were a number of basic problem areas which would need comprehensive investigation by the administrative staffs of the two school systems before any intelligent plan on consolidation could be pro-

20. County school board members appointed to the committee were Fred Hauser, Roy Ray, and Mrs. G. C. Young; city board members appointed were Mrs. Norton Tennille, Clifford Perry, and M. C. Benton, Jr.

posed. The staffs of the two school systems were instructed to study and report to the committee on the following areas:

1. Method of selection and status of consolidated board members.
2. Financial support and control of a consolidated system.
3. Status of local school committees in a consolidated system.
4. Status of pupil transportation in a consolidated system.
5. Status of district organization in a consolidated system.
6. Anticipated organizational pattern of a consolidated unit.
7. Educational standards and needs of a consolidated unit.
8. Local community attitudes toward consolidation.
9. Assignment problems in a consolidated unit.

As a result of this meeting, the central administrative staffs of the two systems set up a program of joint research and joint discussions over the next six or seven months to gather facts which the joint committee of the two school boards could use in determining the desirability of consolidating the two systems.

Results of the School Boards Study

While the two school boards and the staffs of the two systems realized that consolidation of the two school systems was theoretically a logical move which would eliminate friction between the two school boards over city annexation of county territory, provide equal educational opportunities for all children, and make for better utilization of school buildings in the fringe area between city and county, they, particularly the city board and staff, were not willing to support consolidation if these were the only advantages gained. Offsetting these advantages was the possibility that the more conservative county residents would defeat any future tax increases necessary for raising the standards of the schools.

Because of this possibility, the joint study committee decided that they would favor consolidation only if the voters of the county, in a county-wide election, would approve an increase in the supplemental tax rate, now 20 cents for the county and 35 cents for the city, sufficient to provide immediate substantial increases in the level of service in both the city and the county schools. Approval of such a tax by the voters would not only raise the educational standards of both systems, but also would be an indication that county voters had become more liberal in their attitude toward school support.



The boards had good reason for this approach to the question. Twice in the past five years the county voters had defeated proposals to increase the county school tax supplement from 20 to 35 cents. The expenditure per school child was \$30.00 less in the county than in the city and there was not a great deal of evidence of a progressive element among the voters of the county which would change this situation. Further, there was no compelling problem, such as the huge perimeter area in Charlotte and Mecklerburg, for which consolidation seemed the only logical answer. Under these circumstances the city schools, particularly, felt that an immediate additional increase in the sup-

plemental school tax rate was necessary for consolidation of the two systems.

Because of this orientation of the city and county school people, the joint staff group studying consolidation first prepared a list of goals in school organization and in number and salary of personnel which should be aimed for in a consolidated system. Among the goals proposed was the adoption of a junior-senior high school system throughout the county; a teacher-pupil ratio of 1-30, slightly lower than that existing; an increase in all teachers' salaries to the level of those currently paid in the city; and a large expansion in the number of special personnel for programs for retarded and

superior students, for library maintenance, for guidance services, and for music programs, among others.

Once these goals were prepared, the next step was to determine the amount of supplemental tax levy which would be necessary to achieve these goals. This was determined to be about 50 cents, provided that the basic county current expense levy remained at approximately its present 16.63 cents, and was made the basic element of the consolidation program.

The decision on the amount of tax levy which would be necessary to meet the goals of the consolidated system left one other major decision: the composition and method of selection of the consolidated school board. The five-

Elementary school art instruction.



member county board, by reason of a 1947 special act, is elected by the voters of the county.³¹ Under the charter provisions governing the city school system, the seven-member city school board is chosen by the Winston-Salem Board of Aldermen with two of the number being appointed from the board of aldermen. Each board, as might be expected, felt that the method by which it was selected was best. The city board, however, had the stronger feelings on this matter. Members of the city board of education pointed out that over the years outstanding citizens of the community had served as members of the city school board and it felt that people of this caliber probably would not have submitted to a political campaign to gain their seats. They further pointed out that the 1955 PAS study had recommended an appointed board.

Most of the county school board members felt that an elective board would be more responsive to the wishes of the people, and would help to maintain citizen interest in the school system. They further felt that an elective school board was in accordance with the traditional democratic principles of local government. They recognized, however, that this was one point at which the city school board would stand adamant until they were forced from their position by an indication that the people of the city and county would not approve an appointed board. The members of the county school board, therefore, not being willing to dash the hopes of consolidation upon this particular shoal, agreed to go along with the city representatives and recommend an appointed school board for the consolidated system.

Under the plan finally agreed upon, the consolidated school board would be composed of eight persons appointed by the county commissioners for staggered four-year terms. The staff study had recommended that the consolidated school board be composed of nine members, an odd number, and hence probably more desirable because it lessens the chance of tie votes. However, the members of the joint study committee favored an eight-man board. There apparently was no discussion as to whether county commissioner appointees would be of the same quality as those appointed by the board of aldermen. The emphasis was on the method to be used, and not upon where the power to appoint should be vested. The committee also recommended that

no school board member on the consolidated board serve longer than two four-year terms and that after the first four years of the consolidated system no school board member be also an elected member of any governmental body.

The joint committee recommended that the twelve people, five on the county and seven on the city school board, serving as school board members at the time of consolidation serve as the first school board of the consolidated system, and that they draw lots to determine which of them should serve one, which should serve two, which should serve three, and which should serve four-year terms on the consolidated board, three being chosen to serve for each period. During the first four years of the consolidated system the three members retiring each year would be replaced by two new members so that at the end of four years the board would reach its permanent eight-member size.

Another decision which the joint committee had to make was whether or not school district committeemen would be appointed for the consolidated system and, if appointed, whether they would have the powers committeemen in the county unit presently have.

The joint committee recommended the creation of a single district for the consolidated system and recommended that all hiring of principals, teachers and central staff personnel be done by the school board on the advice of the superintendent.

Provision was made, however, for the appointment, in the discretion of the consolidated school board, of modified district committees or "advisory councils" for each school within the system. The advisory council would aid the county school board in making decisions on matters affecting the school for which it is appointed. The organization, number of members, and term of office for these advisory councils would be determined by the school board.

The staff study also divided the county into eight attendance areas for which there would be elementary, junior, and senior high schools, the elementary and the junior highs feeding into one particular senior high school. These attendance areas were presented as an integral part of the consolidation proposal, and the citizens of the county have been assured that if and when consolidation occurs they will be set up.

Presentation of the Consolidation Plan To the Two School Boards

By early January, 1960, the joint

committee of the two school boards had reached agreement on the major features of the consolidation proposal and at the meeting held on January 7, the committee instructed the city superintendent, A. Craig Phillips, and county superintendent, T. Ray Gibbs, to meet with county school board attorney, James M. Hayes, Jr., and city school board attorney, William F. Womble, for the purpose of drafting a special act which would set up the machinery for the consolidation of the two systems.

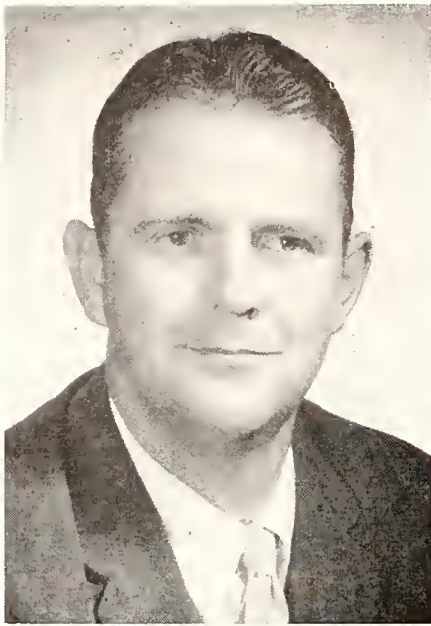
This proposed legislative draft was presented to the joint committee on January 27 by Mr. Womble and was approved. Although the county members of the joint committee endorsed the proposed plan, Mr. Fred Hauser of the county school board pointed out that a majority of the county school board members still favored an elected school board, and he presented a written proposal that this matter be decided by a vote of the people at the time of the consolidation vote. This proposal was discussed at some length but was not submitted to a vote of the committee.

The committee then approved, four to two, a motion that the joint committee approve the total plan of consolidation as presented by the staff study and the legislative draft, and that this "package plan" of consolidation be presented to the two school boards separately in executive sessions and that the reactions of each board be reported back to the joint committee.

At a meeting held on February 8, 1960, the reactions of the city and county boards of education to the proposed consolidation plan were presented. Mr. Perry reported that the Winston-Salem board of education had met and studied the plan and was favorably impressed. Mr. Hauser reported that at least two members of the county board were still strongly convinced that an elective board would be best in the consolidated system, but that they were willing to submit this issue to a vote of the people, and that some members of the county board felt that a 50 cent supplemental tax might be more than the county voters would accept. Mr. Hauser's report led to a long discussion about the method of school board selection, and Mr. Hauser asked that the county board be given time to meet again and unify its thinking on the question.

At the next meeting of the joint committee, held two weeks later, Mr. Perry reported that all of the city school board members except one had attended a meeting of the board at which

31. In most counties the members of the school board are selected by the General Assembly from the nominees of the Democratic party of the county.



A. Craig Phillips, Superintendent, Winston-Salem City Schools

the consolidation proposal was discussed, and that those present unanimously approved the proposal. Mr. Hauser reported that a majority of the county school board members were of the opinion that the present plan was the best that could be worked out. He again, however, made the point that the county board would rather have the decision as to the method of selection of the school board members left to the voters.

At this meeting the joint committee adopted a resolution setting out the plan for consolidation and stating that the joint committee recommended this plan to the school boards and the people of the county. The adoption of this resolution signified that the basic work of the joint committee was done.

Summary of the Consolidation Plan Presented by the Joint Committee

In addition to the provisions already discussed concerning educational goals, method of selection of the school board, amount of supplementary tax needed, and creation of a single district for the entire system, the joint committee consolidation proposal made the following recommendations concerning the consolidated system:

After consolidation, transportation be provided to all children who live more than one and one half miles from the school they attend, regardless of whether they live in the city or in the county, with transportation costs above those paid by the State being paid from local sources. Under the present State school law, the State pays the transportation expenses for children who live more than one and a half miles from their school, except that no State funds are allocated for the transpor-

tation of children who live within city limits, unless they live in an area that has been annexed to a city since February 6, 1957.

The school board would be allowed to employ, on the superintendent's recommendation, an associate superintendent, assistant superintendents, and other administrative officers. No associate superintendent or assistant superintendent could be employed for a period exceeding the term for which the superintendent is employed.

The school budget, both regular and supplementary, would be subject to the approval of the county commissioners, as is presently the case under the State school law.

A comptroller-treasurer would be hired by the consolidated board to handle school funds, keep accounting records, and aid in the preparation of budgets and other necessary reports under the direction of the superintendent.

The first step in the actual consolidation procedure will be the presentation of the special act drafted by the two school board attorneys to the 1961 session of the General Assembly. The act sets up the following procedure for completion of consolidation.

An election would be held in Forsyth County on a county-wide basis prior to June 1, 1962, on the question of a supplemental school tax at a rate to be determined by joint action of the Forsyth County Board of Education and the Winston-Salem City Board of Education, but not to exceed the maximum allowed by law (presently 60 cents). If the voters approve the supplemental tax, the Winston-Salem Board of Education would petition the Forsyth County Board of Education and the State Board of Education for consolidation of the two units under G.S. 115-74. Upon approval by the county and State boards of education, consolidation would be an accomplished fact, and would take place on July 1, 1961, if the conditions are met prior to the first day of June, 1961, and if the conditions are met after the first day of June, 1961, but before June, 1962, on July 1, 1962.

Presenting the Consolidation Proposal to the Public

During the months of April and May of this year, the two school staffs, headed by Dr. Phillips and Mr. Gibbs, held meetings in each of the eight proposed attendance areas to discuss the consolidation program. A total of approximately 1,000 people attended these meetings. At the meetings, questionnaires were passed out asking whether or not those present favored

an increase in the tax rate, and whether they favored an elected or an appointed school board. Those present voted about 2-1 in favor of consolidation and increased taxes for schools, and there was a slight majority in favor of an elected school board.

Because the polls conducted at the area meetings reached so few people, the school boards decided to prepare similar questionnaires to be handed to school children and completed by their parents. On this questionnaire, three choices were given concerning the method of selection of the consolidated school board; (1) election, (2) appointment, and (3) decision as to method of selection to be left to the joint committee on consolidation.

More than 18,000 of these questionnaires were returned, giving the two school boards an excellent sampling of opinion. County school parents voted against consolidation 3,851 to 3,129, while the city school parents voted in favor 6,613 to 4,790, for a total vote of 9,752 for and 8,641 against. County parents voted against an increased tax 3,855 to 3,064, while city parents voted for the additional tax 5,750 to 5,254, for a total vote of 9,108 against and 8,814 in favor. County parents voted in favor of an elected board; 4,029 voting for the elected board, 555 voting for an appointed board, and 2,064 being willing to leave the matter up to the joint committee. City parents voted on the board selection as follows; 2,683 for an elected board, 2,730 for an appointed board, and 4,978 for leaving the method of selection up to the joint committee. This gave a total vote of 6,712 in favor of an elected board, 3,285 in favor of an appointed board, and 7,042 in favor of leaving the decision up to the joint committee. The closeness of this poll, coming as it did without an effort to sell the people on consolidation, was encouraging to those favoring consolidation, but it also indicated that strenuous campaigning would have to be done to assure passage of the necessary supplemental tax.

The Citizens' Committee Approves the Consolidation Proposal

The Citizens' Committee, whose formation in July, 1958, had been the spark that set off the consolidation study by the joint committee of the two school boards, was for the most part, inactive during the period in which the joint committee made its studies and submitted its recommendations. With the publication of the recommendations, however, the Citizens' Committee again became active,

this time as a publicity agency for the consolidation proposal.

The citizens' group held several meetings and public forum discussions on the consolidation proposal, and voted to endorse the program and exert its best efforts to secure its adoption.

Opposition to the Consolidation Proposal

While no all out opposition to the consolidation proposal has developed, and while no organized groups have voiced opposition, the provision calling for an appointed school board has received criticism and there has been some question as to whether or not a 50 cent tax levy is necessary. Perhaps the most vigorous criticism of the appointed school board was made by Irving E. Carlyle, prominent Winston-Salem attorney. Mr. Carlyle, at a forum discussion under the auspices of the Citizens' Committee, argued that election of the school board members by the voters would strengthen public interest in the schools, give the members a stronger sense of responsibility, make for a more representative board, make the operation of the schools more responsive to the wishes of the people, and make the board more independent of the county commissioners.

Jack Covington, a member of the board of county commissioners, while stating that he is in favor of the consolidation proposal, has expressed doubt that a 50 cent tax levy is necessary and has also stated that he would personally favor an elected board. He does, however, feel, that if no agreement is reached to change the present recommendations on these issues, the consolidation proposal should still be adopted. County school board attorney James M. Hayes, Jr., has also suggested that an elected board would be more apt to watch out for the schools' interests and would not be as hesitant about demanding that the county commissioners increase appropriations for school purposes. He suggested that the question of an elected or an appointed board be presented to the voters at the school consolidation election.

While these people have spoken out in opposition to particular elements in the proposal, there have been, of course, others who defend them. Craig Phillips, city school superintendent, has defended an appointed board and has pointed out the outstanding civic leaders who have served on the city school boards in the past years. Mr. Clifford Perry, of the city school board, has also strongly endorsed the appointed board, as have all of the city school board members except Rev. W. R. Crawford, the only Negro member, who favors an elected board.

Changes to Meet Public Opinion

The joint consolidation study committee, in an effort to prevent the question of the method of selection of the consolidated school board from becoming the dominant issue in the consolidation proposal, and yet give those in favor of an appointed board every chance to convince the people of the county that it is best, on August 2, made a proposal that the special act setting up the merger procedure provide that an election could be called, after the consolidated system had operated for four years, on the question of whether the board would be elected or appointed. The committee suggested that the act provide that the election could be called by either the school board, the county commissioners, or by petition signed by an as yet unspecified number of voters. In the meanwhile the board would be appointed as already proposed by the joint consolidation study committee.

The Present County System

The Forsyth County school board is composed of five members who are elected by the voters of the county for two year terms. There are nineteen school districts in the county, each with the school committeemen required by State law.

In the 1959-60 school year, the county system had approximately 17,600 pupils and a professional staff of 660. There are 16 white elementary schools, five white high schools, and two white union (grades one through twelve) schools. There is only one Negro school, Carver Consolidated, along with two Negro teachers at Memorial Industrial School, an orphanage. For the past four years, the enrollment has grown at the rate of about 625 per year.

The administrative staff is composed of a superintendent, assistant superintendent, business manager, four white supervisors, one Negro supervisor, an attendance worker, a school lunch director, and two school lunch supervisors.

The county schools have been carrying out a slow but steady school consolidation process for the last ten years and a plan has just been proposed under which the county would begin adoption of the junior-senior high program with the erection of a large senior high school near Kernersville.

Taxable property in the county unit in 1959-60 was about \$260,000,000 or about \$14,800 per school child. The county unit presently levies a 20 cent supplemental tax which in the 1959-60 school year produced \$31.34 per school child. The county pays a teacher supplement which ranges from \$255.00 to \$580.00 for teachers with

an "A" certificate. Supplements for teachers with graduate degrees are correspondingly higher. This supplement is only a little over half that paid by Winston-Salem.

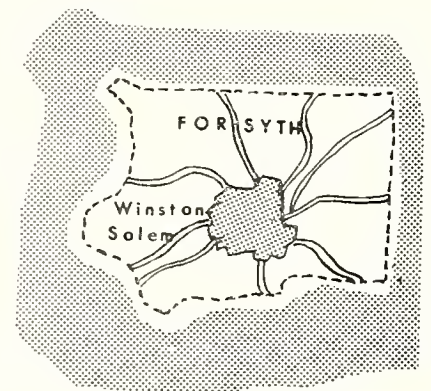
The Present City System

The Winston-Salem school board is composed of seven members selected by the Winston-Salem Board of Aldermen, and two of whom are selected from the board of aldermen. The two aldermen serve for the term for which they are elected as aldermen, and the other five members serve for staggered three year terms.

In the 1959-60 school year, the city school system had approximately 21,900 pupils and 867 professional employees. There are sixteen white elementary schools, two white junior high schools, and three white senior high schools. There are eight Negro elementary schools, two Negro junior highs, and one Negro senior high. For the past four years, the enrollment has grown at the rate of about 600 per year.

The administrative staff is composed of a superintendent, two assistant superintendents, an administrative assistant, a comptroller, a business manager, a director of secondary education, a director of elementary education, two elementary supervisors, and special subject supervisors for vocal music, instrumental music, and industrial education. There are also two school social workers. There is a total central non-teaching professional staff of some 25 persons.

Taxable property in the city administrative unit in 1959-60 was about \$330,000,000 or about \$15,000 per school child. The city presently has a 35 cent supplemental tax which in the 1959-60 school year produced \$63.74 per school child. The city pays a teacher salary supplement which ranges from \$477.00 to \$801.00 for teachers with an "A" certificate. Supplements for teachers with graduate degrees are correspondingly higher. The city supplement is nearly double that which is paid by the county system.



CONSOLIDATION IN WILMINGTON AND NEW HANOVER COUNTY

Introduction

Wilmington is the only sizable city in the State where the city schools were never a separate charter unit and where no special school tax was ever levied in addition to the county-wide tax. Because of this unique situation, the New Hanover school system has long been of interest to school units in the State which are considering the possibility of consolidation. This section covers briefly the history of the system, the reasons Wilmington never became a separate charter unit, and the present organization of the schools.

The Wilmington Districts

In 1882, Mr. M. C. S. Noble, who later became professor of education at the University of North Carolina, came to Wilmington with the title of Superintendent of the Wilmington Schools, but in fact was only principal of the four schools operated in the two county school districts in the city. He continued under this arrangement until 1899 when a section was added to the State school law providing that:

By and with the consent of the county board of education, the committees of two or more contiguous districts in any city or town, may, by a majority vote of the committee in each district, employ a practical teacher, who shall be known as the superintendent of public schools of said districts, and he shall perform all the duties of the county superintendent as to said districts, and shall make to the county superintendent all reports that may be necessary to enable him to make his reports to the State Superintendent. (Pub. L. 1899, c. 199, s. 47)

Wilmington's two district committees immediately voted to operate under this new law and Mr. Noble became superintendent in fact as well as in title. The act freed Mr. Noble from the control of the county superintendent in the management of the city schools, but it did not create a city school board with powers equal to that of the county board of education. The two district committees, appointed by the county school board, remained the governing bodies of the city schools and there was no provision for joining them together as a single body, nor did the county board of education treat them differently than the other school district committees in the county.

Wilmington's hybrid system, standing mid-way between the single county unit and the separate special charter city unit, continued to operate for over

20 years, being discontinued in 1920. However, over the years there was a gradual shift, under the State school law, which took the primary administrative power away from the district committees and placed it in the hands of the county school board, and in 1913 a special act took the power to retain a separate Wilmington superintendent away from the Wilmington district committees and placed it in the hands of the county board of education.

Reasons for Development of the Wilmington-New Hanover System

During the first years in which the city had a separate superintendent the county superintendency was only a part-time job; the superintendent, examiner, or supervisor, as the superintendent was variously called in the years before 1900, being employed generally for only a few weeks in each year. In fact, for a two year period, 1895 to 1897, the office was abolished and its duties placed in the hands of the clerk to the county commissioners, and as late as 1917 the New Hanover superintendent, Washington Catlett, also operated a private school, the Cape Fear Academy.

As long as the county superintendency was only a part-time job, it is easy to understand why the Wilmington School Districts, with a school age population of over 5,000 as early as 1886, wanted a full-time superintendent to exercise control over the schools, train teachers, and plan for the development of schools in the city. What is surprising is that the city didn't go further and have itself declared a separate special charter school district. There are, however, several probable reasons for this.

In the first place, in the 1880's, when the other larger towns in the State were creating special charter school districts for the operation of graded schools, a large number of Wilmington school children were still enrolled in private free schools supported by Northern philanthropists who came to Wilmington after the Civil War, first to operate Negro and then white schools. Because of this, the public schools had fewer children to educate and a creditable graded school could be operated without the necessity of a special school tax. Superintendent Noble's report in 1886 stated:

The session begins on the first Monday in October and continues eight months, with a week's vacation at Christmas. It is believed that there is no other township in the State in which the schools are open for as long a time without the aid of a special tax.

In the second place, practically all

the people of New Hanover County lived in Wilmington. In 1890, Wilmington had a population of 20,056 with a total county population of only 24,026, and in 1920 the total population of Wilmington was 33,372 and the county's total population was only 40,620. Because of this, Wilmington residents probably didn't think it worthwhile to separate themselves from the small remainder of the county to establish separate schools, and the city didn't need to separate itself from the rest of the county in order to assure the passage of special school taxes, since it could easily out-vote the rest of the county on this issue. In 1909 New Hanover County was given authority, by special act, to levy a special school tax and the tax was approved by the voters shortly thereafter, making New Hanover one of the first counties in North Carolina to levy a county-wide supplemental school tax.

Consolidation of the Two Superintendencies

So long as the county school superintendency was not a full-time position not many in the county felt a separate superintendent for the city schools was an unnecessary duplication. However in 1917, Washington Catlett began devoting his full time to the county superintendency, and doubts soon appeared as to whether the double superintendencies were necessary. In 1920, without previous discussion with the committeemen of the school districts in Wilmington, the New Hanover Board of Education abolished the position of superintendent of Wilmington schools. The Wilmington district committees protested this action vehemently, particularly because the consolidated superintendency had not been offered to the superintendent of the city schools, John J. Blair, who had replaced M. C. S. Noble in 1899. The county board of education, however, stood firm, and offered the combined superintendency to O. A. Hamilton, Superintendent of the Goldsboro Schools.

Mr. Hamilton first accepted, but then apparently because of the city school people's strong opposition to the change wavered and finally refused the position, even though the county board of education had made it plain that Mr. Blair would not be elected superintendent even if Hamilton refused. The position was then offered to and accepted by Major W. A. Graham, a Wilmington native who was at that time completing work for a Master's Degree in Education at Columbia University. With this appointment, the opposition simmered down and the separate superintendencies of 30 years standing were consolidated.

One County High School

In 1913, the high school which had been operated in the Wilmington districts since the early 1890's was made a county-wide high school supported by direct appropriations from the county school board.

Most county systems in the State have gone through two separate periods of consolidation twenty years apart: first the move to the union schools in the late twenties and the thirties and the move to large county high schools that is going on now, to reach the point Wilmington and New Hanover reached in 1913. Because of this, Wilmington and New Hanover have been able to direct their energies to improvement of the curriculum, industrial education, and after the war, to the establishment of Wilmington College, while other counties were expending their educational improvement energies in consolidating small rural high schools.

New Hanover High School is presently one of the largest in the State. Its enrollment for the top three grades is about 2,200, and the school building itself has a floor space of more than five acres. Its library contains more than 23,000 volumes. Williston Industrial School, the Negro senior high school, is also a large school, having an enrollment of more than 800. The Williston library contains more than 5,500 volumes.

In the past 25 years the scope of courses offered in the junior and senior high schools has increased so that now 87 different courses are taught in New Hanover High and 67 in Williston Industrial School. While the Negro elementary enrollment has increased only 13 per cent since 1936, the senior high enrollment has increased 296 per cent. The increase is attributed primarily to the expansion of the number of courses so that high school courses are available which fit in to any plan for further education or immediate employment after high school.

The Present School System

The New Hanover Board of Education is composed of six members who are nominated by the voters in the spring primaries and selected by the General Assembly. While it is a county system, New Hanover does not use district school committees in districts located within the city of Wilmington, nor does it use district committees for the two high schools. In those districts in which no school committee is appointed, the board of education functions as the school committee and elects teachers. In rural areas of the county there are five elementary school districts for which either three or five

school committeemen are appointed. Last year a junior high school district was created in the northern part of the county because the school board felt that the various population centers served by the school needed representation in regard to the operation of the school. Since seven well-defined population centers are served by the school, a seven-man school committee was appointed for this district.

In the 1959-60 school year the system had approximately 16,750 students and had 604 teachers. The teacher-pupil ratio is one teacher for every 28 pupils. There are 12 white elementary schools, five white junior high schools, and one senior high school. The system has four Negro elementary schools, one Negro junior high and one senior high. For the past four years, the enrollment has grown at the rate of about 250 per year.

Taxable property valuation in the county in 1959-60 was approximately \$148,000,000 or about \$8,800 per school child. In 1959-60, 15.30 cents of the authorized 20 cent special school tax was levied which produced about \$13.20 per school child. The system pays a teacher salary supplement which ranges from \$130.50 to \$180.00 for teachers with an "A" certificate. Supplements for teachers with graduate degrees are correspondingly higher.

On the system's central staff there is a superintendent, assistant superintendent in charge of curriculum, secondary school supervisor, Negro elementary supervisor, white elementary supervisor, director of elementary music education, director of elementary music education for Negroes, one white and one Negro attendance officer, director of vocational education, guidance counselor, director of physical education, and speech therapist.

Advantages of the Wilmington-New Hanover System

A survey report of the New Hanover school system made by George Peabody Teacher's College in 1920 contained the following statement:

The unit of administration, which is the County, is unreservedly commended. It really seems unfortunate that the really worked out county unit, as it is applied in New Hanover County is not more widely used.

And in 1916, while the city and county still had separate superintendents, the chairman of the school board noted that Wilmington and New Hanover County levied a special tax of only 15 cents per hundred valuation, while Durham levied 25 cents and Raleigh and Asheville levied 35 cents, and then went on to say:

It may be asked how it is possible

to operate the schools here successfully with a school fund so much smaller than the school funds of other like communities in North Carolina.

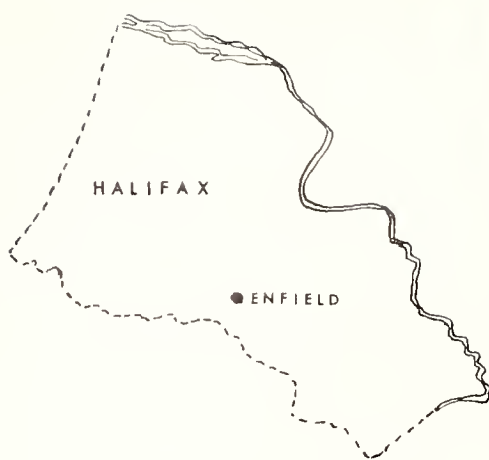
This is due almost entirely to the system under which we operate, which exists nowhere in North Carolina except in New Hanover County, and nowhere in the whole country except in a few isolated instances. Our system is what we call the County Unit System; that is, it is not divided up by district taxes, or town or village taxes, but the tax runs evenly throughout the county and in the school administration no regard is paid to the city or township boundaries. Districts are created according to the location of the children, and the districts of three of the six white grammar schools located in the city of Wilmington extend beyond the city limits. By this method we can regulate the number of children in each school and can fill the various grades to their highest administration, and I am satisfied that by this means we not only add from 15 to 20 per cent in efficiency, but save a like amount or more in cost.

Since the 1920's the New Hanover school system has been recognized as one of the better systems in the State. While its supplemental tax is now lower than that of at least 40 other systems in the State, it is still providing an excellent school program, and particularly a good high school program which is traceable directly to the fact that all students in the county attend the single high schools for white and Negro. The local school administrators attribute their ability to operate a good system on less money than that available in many other places in the State to the fact that city and county are in the same school administrative unit.

Besides the advantages pointed out above for the New Hanover consolidated system, there are, of course, the other more obvious ones such as the fact that there is no tuition problem for county students attending city schools, no problem over where schools are to be located around the city, and no problem of competition for teachers between the city and county.



H. M. Roland, Superintendent of the New Hanover County Schools from 1936 until his retirement in July 1960. The present superintendent is E. C. Funderburk.



CONSOLIDATION OF THE ENFIELD SCHOOLS WITH THE HALIFAX COUNTY SCHOOLS

Introduction and Summary

The Enfield City Administrative Unit was the first city unit, and the only one other than Charlotte, to merge with its county school system after 1933. At the time of the merger, Enfield was one of the smallest units in the State, having less than 1,000 pupils, and was facing a period of continuing decline in enrollment.

The Enfield schools were definitely too small to justify the expense of a superintendent, and with its small enrollment even its special tax was not sufficient to provide a level of instruction superior to that found in the county schools. When it was established in 1901, it did provide a level of instruction superior to that of the county one-teacher schools but as soon as five and six teacher high schools appeared in the county system there was no reason for the Enfield Unit to continue.

The merger into the county system fitted in with a general county-wide program of consolidation of the small rural high schools and brought immediate benefits to the Enfield school in the form of additional teachers.

In the situation in which it found itself, there probably was no other reasonable choice for the Enfield School Trustees to make, and they moved toward the obvious solution without undue delay when the county began its program of consolidating rural high schools which produced better schools in the county than Enfield itself could provide.

History

The Enfield Graded School District was chartered in 1901 and covered a roughly rectangular area five and one-half miles long and five miles wide

with the town of Enfield in the center. Before 1933, the Enfield schools were supported by a special school tax which ranged between 30 and 75 cents per hundred dollars valuation on property. However, the school law of 1933 abolished all special local school taxes and no new school supplemental tax was voted in Enfield until 1936 when a 10 cent special tax was approved.

When the Enfield Schools opened in 1901 they had a superintendent and five teachers in the white school and probably about the same number in the Negro school. This, of course, provided a school considerably larger than the ordinary one or two teacher county school of that time. By 1933 the number of teachers had grown to 12 white and 10 Negro for an average daily membership of 464 white and 574 colored students. This was, however, near the high point of enrollment in the schools, and by 1940-41 the average daily membership had declined to around 400 white and 400 Negro.

Consolidation

At the same time that the total enrollment in the Enfield schools was declining, the county school board had started a move to consolidate the rural high schools so that by 1940, while Enfield had only four high school teachers, three county high schools had five or more teachers. In addition, some of the Enfield pupils lived as far as two and a half miles from the school, but Enfield as a city administrative unit did not receive State funds to, and could not itself afford to, provide transportation. In this situation, many residents of the Enfield district began sending their children to county high school

which had more teachers, a better high school program, and which operated school buses which were easier to get to than the Enfield schools.

This circumstance had the Enfield schools in a destructive spiral; the more pupils they lost the harder it was to provide an adequate school program, and the more inadequate the school program the more pupils they lost. The Trustees attempted to break the spiral by persuading the county school board to refuse to accept Enfield students in the county schools and by persuading the Halifax County Commissioners to provide bus transportation within the Enfield unit. They were unsuccessful in both these attempts, however, and found the spiral continuing.

With little hope that the Enfield schools could again recruit enough students to operate even a passable program on the basis of State allotted teachers, and realizing that not enough local tax money could be raised to make any appreciable improvement on the State program, the Enfield School Trustees, in 1940, petitioned the Halifax County School Board to consolidate the Enfield unit with the county schools upon condition that a \$1,200.00 debt of the Enfield schools be assumed by the county. Even this small attempt to save money for the district failed, however, as the county board refused consolidation on these terms. In the next year the Enfield School Trustees made a sort of total surrender and petitioned for merger without any conditions. The petition was accepted by the County Board of Education on June 2, 1941, and the merger became effective with the beginning of the 1941-42 school year.



A classroom in Dilworth Elementary School, Mecklenburg County Schools

SUMMARY

There have been three major developments in local school administration in North Carolina during the years since the State public school system was established: the shift of local administrative power from the district to the county; the growth in the number of school districts until the early years of this century and then the decline in their number as the school consolidation movement gained ground; and the development of city school systems independent of the county systems.

In recent years there has been increasing discussion about consolidation of city and county administrative units and about consolidation of some of the smaller county units. Such consolidation, it is argued, would create school systems large enough to provide the full range of desirable educational services at a reasonable expense, equalize the tax burden and educational opportunities in the areas consolidated; and, as to consolidation of city with their county units, remove the annexation problems which are continually developing as the cities grow larger, make for better utilization of school buildings, and eliminate tuition problems for children in one unit who attend schools in the other. On the other hand, some disadvantages of consolidation which have been cited are that cities and towns which have separate administrative units would lose exclusive control of their schools, areas with differing ideas about what the

school should do may be joined together, and standards in the better city units may be lowered if the whole county is not willing to approve a tax sufficient to provide a high level of support.

While the long experience of the Wilmington and New Hanover schools seems to indicate that city-county consolidation is feasible and while interest in consolidation has increased in the past decade, only two city systems, Enfield and Charlotte, have consolidated with their county units since 1933. A proposal to consolidate the Durham and Durham County schools was defeated by a five to one margin by the voters in November, 1958. One other city and county in the State, Winston-Salem and Forsyth County, are in the midst of a campaign to consolidate their schools, and an election on the issue will probably be held early in 1961.

Since the consolidation proposal was approved by the voters in Charlotte, but was disapproved by the voters in Durham, it is interesting to look at some of the differences in the background of, and campaign for, consolidation in the two places.

Following is a short statement of the more obvious differences between the methods and procedures used in Mecklenburg and Durham:

In Mecklenburg, both school superintendents were brought in early to help work out the technical details

of a consolidated system; both announced early that they were in favor of consolidation; and both made substantial contributions to the program finally proposed. In Durham, the two school superintendents were only slightly, if at all, involved in working out the technical details of a consolidated system; neither made any substantial contribution to the proposal which was presented to the voters; neither announced support for consolidation, and the city superintendent actively opposed the measure.

In Mecklenburg, a special act which fixed the details of the plan under which the consolidated system would operate was adopted before the issue was presented to the voters. In Durham, the plan was to submit a special act to the Legislature fixing details of the consolidation plan after it had been approved by the voters.

In Mecklenburg, those who had prepared the consolidation proposal spoke out in favor of it. In Durham, those who had prepared the consolidation proposal generally, at least publicly, remained impartial.

In addition to the differences in the way the consolidation proposal was prepared and presented in the two places, there were, of course, substantial differences in the existing conditions at the time of the consolidation proposal.

In Mecklenburg, the whole school consolidation proposal grew out of an annexation of more than 31 square miles of territory to the city of Charlotte. The Charlotte school system had always been extended to include all areas within the city, but this time, if the systems remained separate, the county system was apt to make a strong effort to keep this territory. In Durham, there was no such territorial fight looming in the immediate future which consolidation would avoid.

In Mecklenburg, the county property valuation per pupil was lower than that in the city, while in Durham the property valuation per pupil was higher in the county than in the city.

In Mecklenburg, the combined enrollment of the two systems was growing at a rate of about 3,000 per year, while in Durham the combined enrollment of the two systems was growing at a rate of less than 1,000 per year.

In Mecklenburg, both school boards, both school superintendents, and the city and county Parent-Teacher Associations, along with other educational and civic groups supported consolidation. In Durham, several members of both school boards, at least one of the school superintendents, and many Parent-Teacher groups opposed consolidation.



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