

# Education

## School consolidation order threatens national redistricting

The public school of the city of Richmond, Virginia and those of two suburban counties were ordered by a federal judge to consolidate their school districts before next September to end an increasing pattern of unequal and segregated education.

The schools of Richmond are 70 percent black and those of the two suburbs are each about 90 per cent white.

The consolidation order is the most far reaching court order handed down by a federal court designed to end school segregation. Judge Robert R. Merhige, Jr. went far beyond the extensive bussing program he had earlier ordered for the Richmond schools. He held that bussing within a predominantly black system had failed. In effect, he said that the constitutional requirement that black and white children have an opportunity to attend an equal, unitary school system transcends the right of local government to establish their own educational boundaries.

"The court concludes," Judge Merhige's opinion declared, "that the duty to take whatever steps are necessary to achieve the greatest possible degree of desegregation in formerly dual systems by the elimination of racially identifiable schools is not circumscribed by school division boundaries created and maintained by the cooperative efforts of local and central state officials.

"Just as the city's geographic borders, viewed as limits upon pupil assignment, do not correspond to any real physical obstacles, so also are they unrelated to any marked practical or administrative necessities of school operation. The boundaries of Richmond are less than eternal monuments to a city planner's vision."

He pointed out that it is the state's responsibility to carry out an educational system that is within the law and swept aside the concept of "local control."

"School district lines within a state are matters of political convenience," he said. "The claim that the defendant counties had a right to keep separate school systems had little merit in the face of past discriminatory practices on the part of all the defendants."

"Such a contention, buttressed by the historical facts of gross discrimination against the blacks in almost all aspects of life which have in the instant case approximately resulted in the white islands surrounding the city of Richmond, simply points up the immediate need of the relief sought."

The court decision is certain to be appealed to the United States Court of Appeals and then to the U.S. Supreme Court. If it survives the Supreme Court, the impact across the country could be enormous.

The impact would be felt most in the North where the white suburban housing pat-

tern is more pronounced than in the South.

Jack Greenburg, director and chief counsel of the NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund, Inc., whose lawyers argued the case, hailed the ruling as one of "immense importance, with implications that go far beyond the desegregation of a large city school system." The decision also offers a way of equalizing school expenditures between cities and their suburbs. Suburban jurisdictions in the United States usually spend more per child on education than urban areas do.

The suit was originally brought by a group of black plaintiffs against the City School Board, the State Board of Education and the school boards of the two suburban counties. Then the Richmond School Board moved to change its position from that of a defendant to an ally of the black plaintiffs. The legal strategy was to prove that the state had a controlling role in establishing the segregated school boundaries, that the state had pleaded that it could not eliminate its own creation, and that the state had failed in its duty to eliminate the dual school system.

Judge Merhige, 52 years old, is a native of New York City, a Democrat and a Roman Catholic. He practiced law in Richmond for 25 years before being appointed to the federal court by President Johnson in 1967.

## Student's project brings fame

Students at Highland Park College, an inner city community college with 95 per cent black enrollment, have attracted national attention with the African coloring book they have produced.

The project was initiated by a 15 member advanced drawing class. The project was conceived by their instructor, who said she had seen coloring books on Greek and Egyptian art - but none on African art.

The school's marketing class assisted in sales of the book. With the permission of college officials and a grant of \$1,300 from the school board of Highland Park, the students formed Highland Park College Press.



Drawing of a bronze from Nigeria is in the Highland Park College book.

"African Art", a 4 page collection of sketches of art objects from 11 different African countries, has sold all three weeks. Major Detroit department stores have bought the book, which sells for \$1.25 a copy. Students have gone to Cleveland to Western Reserve University and to Chicago on sales expeditions.

The Detroit Institute of Arts, the Smithsonian Institute in Washington, D.C., the Philadelphia Institute of Art, the Frederick Douglass Museum in Washington and the Harlem Museum in New York have also placed orders.

The United States Information Agency is considering using portions of it in Topic, a USA magazine circulating in Africa.

The proceeds from sales go to a scholarship fund and to finance future projects.



Portrayal of a Nigerian royal leopard in bronze.

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## Local school support barred

A federal court in San Antonio, Texas ruled that Texas' public school financing system unconstitutionally discriminates against children in poor communities and ordered the system to become less dependent on local property taxes within two years.

The California Supreme Court ruled last August that the system of financing schools through local property taxes is unconstitutional and lawsuits and legislation have been initiated in several other states.

As in most states, Texas' public schools are supported through locally raised property taxes. The system was challenged by 15 Chicano parents. The parents argued that their children were short-changed because poorer communities have less money to spend on education. They argued that school funds should be based on the wealth of the state as a whole.

Hawaii is the only state that pays the full cost of local schools out of state revenues. Utah has an equalization plan that helps even out expenditures. Other states have equalization plans but they do not fully level financing resources.

## PCC makes innovation in auto program

Some changes are being made in the way auto mechanics is being taught at Portland Community College. Gone is the traditional scheduled program where a student is locked into a highly structured sequence of courses. "You have to take this course before you can take that course." Gone, too, is the need for a student to take all courses of the program before he is prepared to hold a job.

Here at PCC, instead, a flexible, unitized, auto mechanics program allowing a student to begin and end his studies at any time, select one of six certificate or degree programs, plan his schedule around his needs, and receive satisfactory achievement ratings by successfully performing actual "on-the-job" objectives, is being offered for the first time.

The auto mechanics program is a collection of 17 three-week instructional units. Each unit is a short course teaching the knowledge and skills of a special area. At the completion of the unit, the student must demonstrate that he can perform the unit's objectives. This achievement is documented, and the student proceeds to another unit. The student will repeat a unit until he can satisfactorily demonstrate the skill and knowledge necessary for successful performance on the job. Most units may be taken in any order and for this reason students may enter the program at the beginning of any three-week unit. Only six units out of 17 have prerequisites. A student has maximum flexibility in setting up a program to meet his time and educational needs.

The auto mechanics student may also select the job entry skills he wants to develop. He may be certified as having job entry skills as either a Brake Specialist or as an Alignment Specialist after just two three-week units. In nine weeks a student may receive a certificate in automatic transmission repair and in 21 weeks in tune-up. Twenty-two units will qualify a student for a two-year certificate. With the addition of 18 hours of general studies a student completes requirements for an associate degree in auto mechanics. A student may take what units he wishes, enter the work force, and then return at any time to build on the knowledge and skills he has already achieved.

PCC has facilities to offer as many as 13 units during one three-week period. Staffing, too, differs from traditionally scheduled programs. There are instructors and assistant instructors. Each instructor is a highly qualified professional responsible for three assistant instructors; he gives the major class presentations and makes the decisions concerning students and classes. An assistant instructor usually has an associate degree and some experience in the field; he supervises "hands on" work and demonstrations of the unit performance objectives.

New auto mechanics units begin January 24, February 14, March 16, April 3, April 24, and May 15.

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<p><b>Adorn Self Adhesive Decorator Plastic</b> Reg. \$1.59 roll \$1.00 4 yd. roll You'll find many uses for it in your home. Traditional, floral or wood grain patterns in an array of colors. Available Paint Center</p>	<p><b>Topco Envelopes and Paper</b> Reg. 3 \$1.00 39¢ for Choose from 100 letter size envelopes, 50 legal size envelopes, or 6" by 9" ruled, or plain letter tablets. Available Stationery Section</p>	<p><b>"One Size" Panty Hose</b> 3 pair \$1.00 for Seamless one size nylon pantyhose in beige, taupe, cinnamon and fashion color opaques. Fits 100-150 lbs. Available Apparel Section</p>
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