



# **SCHOOL DESEGREGATION IN ERIE, PENNSYLVANIA**

A STAFF REPORT OF  
THE UNITED STATES COMMISSION  
ON CIVIL RIGHTS

May 1977

## U.S. COMMISSION ON CIVIL RIGHTS

The U.S. Commission on Civil Rights is a temporary, independent, bipartisan agency established by Congress in 1957 and directed to:

- Investigate complaints alleging that citizens are being deprived of their right to vote by reason of their race, color, religion, sex, or national origin, or by reason of fraudulent practices;
- Study and collect information concerning legal developments constituting a denial of equal protection of the laws under the Constitution because of race, color, religion, sex, or national origin, or in the administration of justice;
- Appraise Federal laws and policies with respect to equal protection of the laws because of race, color, religion, sex, or national origin, or in the administration of justice;
- Serve as a national clearinghouse for information in respect to denials of equal protection of the laws because of race, color, religion, sex, or national origin;
- Submit reports, findings, and recommendations to the President and the Congress.

### MEMBERS OF THE COMMISSION

Arthur S. Flemming, Chairman  
Stephen Horn, Vice Chairman  
Frankie M. Freeman  
Manuel Ruiz, Jr.  
Murray Saltzman

John A. Buggs, Staff Director

**SCHOOL DESEGREGATION IN  
ERIE, PENNSYLVANIA**

**A Staff Report of the  
U.S. Commission on Civil Rights**

**May 1977**

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The investigation and report were the principal staff assignment of Victoria Squier, with assistance from Armando Rodríguez, Wanda Hoffman, Edward Darden, and Iver Stridiron, and support from Ruth Peete and Joann Harris.

This report was prepared under the overall supervision of Jacob Schlitt, director, Mid-Atlantic Regional Office, and Eileen Siedman, deputy director.

Appreciation is also extended to Jessalyn Bullock, Frank Knorr, Michele Macon, Tom Watson, and Evelyn Chandler of the Commission staff for assisting in the final production of the report. Preparation for publication was the responsibility of Deborah A. Harrison, under the supervision of Bobby Wortman, in the Commission's Publication Support Center, Office of Management.

At the appointment of the Staff Director of the Commission, all activities that contributed to this report were under the general supervision and coordination of William T. White, Jr., Assistant Director, Office of National Civil Rights Issues.

## PREFACE

The United States Commission on Civil Rights released on August 24, 1976, its report to the Nation: Fulfilling the Letter and Spirit of the Law: Desegregation of the Nation's Public Schools.

The report's findings and recommendations were based upon information gathered during a 10-month school desegregation project. This included four formal hearings (Boston, Massachusetts; Denver, Colorado; Louisville, Kentucky; and Tampa, Florida); four open meetings held by State Advisory Committees (Berkeley, California; Corpus Christi, Texas; Minneapolis, Minnesota; and Stamford, Connecticut); a survey of nearly 1,300 local school districts; and 29 case studies of communities which had difficulties with desegregation, had moderate success with desegregation, or had substantial success with desegregation.

Subsequent to the report's release, considerable interest was generated concerning the specifics of the case study findings, which, owing to space limitations in the national report, were limited to a few brief paragraphs. In an effort to comply with public requests for more detailed information, Commission staff have prepared monographs for each of the case studies. These monographs were written from the extensive field notes already collected and supplemented, if needed, with further interviews in each community. They reflect, in detail, the original case study purpose of finding which local policies, practices, and programs in each community surveyed contributed to peaceful desegregation and which ones did not.

It is hoped that the following monograph will serve to further an understanding of the school desegregation process in this Nation.

## CONTENTS

	Page
I. Background .....	1
II. The Development of a School Desegregation Plan .....	4
III. Preparation for Implementing the Plan .....	6
IV. The Plan and Its Effects.....	7
V. Community Attitudes to School Desegregation .....	11
Attitudes of Parents	
Attitudes of Students	
Attitudes of Teachers	
Attitudes of Business, Religious, and Political Leaders	
VI. Impact of the Desegregation Plan .....	15
VII. Conclusion .....	17
Prospects for the Future	
 <b>Tables</b>	
1. Student Population by Race and Ethnicity 1968-75 .....	2
2. Faculty by Race and Ethnicity 1974-75 .....	2
 <b>Appendices</b>	
A. Racial Band Analysis Proposed Plan .....	21
B. The School District of the City of Erie, Pennsylvania ....	22

## I. BACKGROUND

Erie is a small northern industrial city located in the far northwestern corner of Pennsylvania. Approximately 40 percent of Erie's employed population is engaged in manufacturing. There are large ethnic enclaves in Erie, but only a small minority population. According to the 1970 census, 7 percent of the 129,231 residents were black. Historically, there has been no inner-city ghetto area for blacks, but there are three separate areas within the city where blacks are concentrated. There has been some movement in the direction of open housing and more is being predicted. Erie is still a vital city and housing within the city is still desirable. Most new construction is in the surrounding county suburbs, which are still primarily all white and have middle- to upper middle-income housing. There is little low- to medium-income housing being constructed. White professional employees coming to Erie are shown residences in the suburbs.

During the 1975-76 school year, Erie had 28 public schools enrolling 17,462 students. There were 4 high schools, 1 in each quadrant of the city (grades 9-12); 4 middle schools (grades 6-8); and 20 elementary schools (grades K-5). (Student enrollment by race for school years 1968-75 is shown in table 1; faculty composition by race and ethnicity for the school years 1974-75 and 1975-76 is shown in table 2.)

Ninety percent of the population of Erie is Roman Catholic, and the Roman Catholic Church supports a parochial school system almost as large as the public school system. Fewer minority students attend parochial schools than attend public schools.

Erie has never operated a de jure segregated or dual school system. Some schools had larger concentrations of black or white students because of housing patterns within the city. The schools that had higher percentages of minority students had facilities comparable to those with lower percentages of or no minority students. All schools used the same series of textbooks.

In February 1968, a determination that de facto segregation was present in the Erie school district was made by the Pennsylvania Commission on Human Relations and the

Table 1

Student Population by Race and Ethnicity 1968-75

(Number and Percentage)

<u>Fall</u>	<u>American Indian</u>	<u>Black</u>	<u>Asian American</u>	<u>Spanish Surname</u>	<u>All Others</u>	<u>Total</u>
1968		2,889 (13%)			18,817	21,706
1970		3,173 (14%)			19,149	22,322
1972		3,122 (15%)	6	10 (.05%)	16,846	19,984
1974		3,257 (17%)	6	6 (.03%)	15,064	18,333
1975	3	3,234 (18%)	23	69 (.4%)	14,133	17,462

Source: School District of the City of Erie, Pa.

Table 2

Faculty by Race and Ethnicity 1974-75

(Number and Percentage)

<u>Fall</u>	<u>American Indian</u>	<u>Black</u>	<u>Asian American</u>	<u>Spanish Surname</u>	<u>All Others</u>	<u>Total</u>
1974		47 (4%)			1,047	1,094
1975		50 (4%)			1,059	1,109

Source: School District of the City of Erie, Pa.

State Department of Education and that corrective action was required. This determination was made on the basis that there were six schools having 80 percent or more black student population. These schools were located in predominantly black residential areas. There were also 16 schools having 80 percent or more white student population located in predominantly white residential areas. The school district was required to develop a plan to effect a racial balance in the Erie school system.

The impetus for the most recent desegregation effort came from the courts. It took 6 years for the school district to develop a satisfactory plan to desegregate after the State human relations commission and the department of education in 1968 first charged that the Erie school system was not adequately desegregated.

During the 6-year period, there were groups organized in support of or in opposition to desegregation. No one civil rights or minority community action group played a strong leadership role in advocating school desegregation. And while there were varying opinions about desegregation within the political, business, and religious community, and the media, an organized coalition in public support of desegregation did not emerge. The school board had several vocal members who opposed desegregation. Reportedly, some members had been elected to the board on the strength of their antidesegregation views.

## II. THE DEVELOPMENT OF A SCHOOL DESEGREGATION PLAN

On the basis of a finding of de facto segregation in the Erie School District, the Pennsylvania Commission on Human Relations and the State Department of Education directed the school district to present a plan to effect a racial balance before July 1, 1968. The commission tried to correct the situation in the school district during a State-required period of conciliation. When this failed, the commission held a public hearing on June 22, 1971. Consequently, the hearing commissioners ordered the school district on June 28, 1971, to develop a plan for desegregating the school system. The school district failed to develop a plan by the deadline, therefore the human relations commission filed suit in the Commonwealth court to compel compliance with the hearing commissioners' order. The two parties negotiated an agreement and the Commonwealth court issued a consent decree on May 3, 1972, requiring the school district to develop an acceptable plan by February 1, 1974. When the school district again failed to develop a plan by the deadline, the court then authorized the commission to devise a school desegregation plan for Erie. The human relations commission's plan was submitted and the court determined that the plan had merit but chose not to implement it because the school district had not submitted its comments to the court.

On January 27, 1975, the court ordered the district to prepare a plan acceptable to both the human relations commission and the department of education by September 1975, but to be submitted to the commission for review and any revisions if needed. The plan, developed by the school district in May 1975, was reviewed and modified by the commission, approved by the court, and implemented in September 1975.

The superintendent of schools was the principal author of the final desegregation plan, with technical assistance on school reassignments from a task force of district school administrators. The superintendent developed a plan that he believed would "do the least harm and the most good all around." His solicitor checked the school district's legal

rights and the superintendent created a plan to meet the minimum legal requirements for compliance.

Although political, business, religious, community, and human rights leaders had made suggestions for previous desegregation plans, they were not directly consulted in the development of the May 1975 plan.

The school board, publicly elected to a 6-year term, appoints the superintendent. The superintendent selects all school administrators with the approval of the board. The attitude toward desegregation of the present school administration as stated by the superintendent is that "it is treated as an ordinary educational program."<sup>1</sup> He stated also that his main purpose is to give a well-rounded education to the children in his district.

Applications were made for Federal funds by the school district to facilitate implementation of the desegregation plan. Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) funds were requested in order to upgrade the quality of education for all children. ESEA funds were received by the district and are now being used for staff training and special programs for remedial services.

### III. PREPARATION FOR IMPLEMENTING THE PLAN

The district administrators developed planning and preparative procedures for school desegregation. Notices were mailed to parents of reassigned pupils. Letters notifying teachers of school reassignments were also sent.

Other preparatory measures consisted of technical arrangements for pupil and faculty reassignments, development of safe walking routes, and the hiring of additional school-crossing guards. A few inservice training sessions dealing briefly with human relations were held for teachers.

District administrators were accessible by phone to answer parent, student, or faculty questions about the plan. Parents were welcome to visit the school for consultation with principals, counselors, and teachers, but otherwise were not involved in planning for implementation. Those most directly affected by desegregation--the students--also were not involved in the preparation.

Special programs were expanded using ESEA funds. A counseling staff, developed and previously funded through ESEA, added some new members for desegregation purposes. The counselors provide services for disadvantaged and minority students in both the public and parochial school systems. They work in designated areas throughout the district and are not assigned to one particular school. Some training in human relations counseling was received by the counselors but the training program was not extensive.

#### IV. THE PLAN AND ITS EFFECTS

The order to racially balance schools throughout the Erie district called for total desegregation of all district schools. To comply with the court order, the district's plan contained the following:

- **School Pairing:** During the 1975-76 school year, the district had planned to complete implementation of the 4-4-4 system (grades K-4, 5-8, 9-12). However, until the district is able to do so, alternative systems of, 6-2-4 (grades K-6, 7 and 8, and 9-12) and 5-3-4 (grades K-5, 6-8, 9-12) are being used.
- **School Closing:** To date, two schools have been closed--Garfield (33 percent white enrollment and 67 percent black enrollment) and Longfellow (68 percent white enrollment and 32 percent black enrollment). Also, students in the Marshall attendance area have been reassigned to other schools. Five other elementary schools constructed at the turn of the century and located in the old section of the city will be eliminated--Burns, Jones, McKinley, Penn, and Washington. The plan states:

These buildings are all old and relatively inflexible and inefficient. The ratio of useable space to total space is low. The necessity for transporting large segments of the school population from the center of the city in order to overcome racial imbalance in schools in the residential areas leaves these old buildings without enough pupil enrollment to effectively use them.

Consideration was given to closing other elementary centers, however, the availability of sites in the Model City area and transportation patterns indicate these were the schools which should be closed.<sup>2</sup>

A proposal was offered to utilize a number of closed schools for community programs. The buildings could provide much needed space for community centers, adult learning centers, Head Start programs, and health clinics that would be beneficial to the community at large.

- **Experimental School:** Burton School (housing grades K-4) has a unique experimental program. Although the school is racially imbalanced (51.8 percent black), there are no boundary changes or student reassignments proposed for this school. (See appendix A for a racial analysis of all schools in the district.)

For the past two years, Burton School has served as the Pilot School for the Urban Network Project, a federally funded program by [the Department of] Health, Education, and Welfare. This is a unique experimental program that has strong community and extensive parental support. The program attempts to eliminate cultural deficiencies by using strong supportive staff, reduced class size, personal counseling, home visitations, and increased rapport among home, school, and community.

It is feared that any alteration of the Urban Network Program could result in a significant loss to the entire Burton School community at a critical point in the program's development. Furthermore, any diminution of the program could result in the loss of Federal funding for a very worthwhile enterprise.<sup>3</sup>

- **Effect on School Programs:** The plan also affected ongoing programs requiring additional services. The effect on supportive programs--health provisions and transportation requirements are reflected in portions of the plan given below.

#### Supportive Programs:

Since every elementary school will now have a significant number of culturally and educationally disadvantaged students, supportive programs will be instituted and/or maintained in every elementary school....

With the closure of two elementary schools, it will be possible to enhance the Fine Arts Program in all the other elementary schools.

The Physical Education Program will be improved by the availability of additional staff.

The closure of two schools will permit the more efficient utilization of staff. A judicious redistribution of supportive staff will not be possible.

Students from schools having had such programs will continue not only to receive such programs, but will have these programs improved and strengthened.

All Special Programs, e.g., Speech Therapy, Special Education, Learning Disabilities, will be continued and improved through the consolidation of staff.

#### Health Provisions:

Additional nurses will be available for assignment to the District through school closures.

The District will have available transportation for students who become ill to be transported home.\*

#### Transportation Requirements:

The transportation requirements of the district will remain basically the same, but modification will be required. (See appendix B for modification plan.) According to the superintendent, redistribution of students was necessary because of a "peculiarity in the Federal law requiring certain percentages of racial mixes to qualify for funding."

The Erie desegregation plan further states:

It must be recognized that this proposal is fundamentally an attempt to avoid massive busing by reassigning students in dissolved attendance

areas to contiguous attendance areas. Thus, whenever feasible, this proposal employs WALKING rather than BUSING to balance schools racially. This proposal will not significantly increase the need to bus students.<sup>5</sup>

The proposal increased busing by 1 percent throughout the district. In the year prior to implementation of the desegregated plan, 11 percent of the students were bused. During the first year of desegregation, 12 percent were bused. Students who are provided transportation receive passes subsidized by the school district for use on the public transit system. Only special education students ride yellow school buses.

## V. COMMUNITY ATTITUDES TO SCHOOL DESEGREGATION

### Attitudes of Parents

Because the desegregation plan was developed without public involvement, the parents of both white and minority students had anxieties about implementation. Consequently, there was apprehension in the community. Most parents interviewed felt frightened or threatened by desegregation and afraid of problems that might arise.

An antidesegregation organization, Concerned Parents, opposed reassignments that involved transportation in order to desegregate the schools. The group protested publicly with peaceful demonstrations at school board meetings, in letters to the newspaper, and on radio, and television programs. It filed suit in the court of common pleas against the school board to stop the desegregation plan. The court upheld the plan and dismissed the challenge.<sup>6</sup>

Another group, Citizens for Better Schools, was indirectly supportive of desegregation because of the group's interest in quality education. These two groups confronted each other at televised school board meetings without moderators present; this led, in part, to further polarization of the opposing viewpoints and no real progress. Representatives of both groups were eventually able to meet privately and resolve some of their differences. Neither group is presently active. They are, however, still loosely organized and probably would coalesce quickly if significant desegregation issues are raised again.

Many white parents resented the intervention of the Pennsylvania Human Relations Commission and the Commonwealth court in imposing the desegregation plan on the Erie school district. However, once the court's ruling to desegregate was handed down, citizens complied peacefully.

Many minority parents were also apprehensive about the desegregation plan, but they generally were more supportive for they were hopeful the plan would raise the quality of education for their children. The minority parents felt

that a desegregation plan should have been implemented earlier, and that there had been too much footdragging by the school system. Most minority parents interviewed are satisfied with the progress that has been made but believe that more changes still are needed. They are encouraged by the steps that have been taken and see these as a positive factor in making more progress.

Because the majority of reassigned pupils were in the elementary schools, parents of both races were concerned about young children traveling some distances from their homes and about possible transportation problems if their children became sick or injured at school. These parental concerns have subsided somewhat because the longest traveling time by a student is estimated at one-half hour, and most children actually spend less time in transit. Most parents interviewed now believe that using public transportation was a great asset in facilitating desegregation.

Some neighborhood schools did not have cafeterias because the children walked home for lunch and returned to school afterward. Every school now has its own cafeteria or has food service available. New walking routes were designed and additional crossing guards were hired.

### Attitudes of Students

Because Erie has never operated a segregated system, students have always attended schools with some degree of desegregation. Consequently, there was little opposition by students to the plan. On the whole, students accept desegregation as a way of life and as preparation for working-life situations.

Athletic programs and school clubs and organizations are desegregated. Socializing between white and minority students is increasing. While cross-racial socialization exists, this is still an area of concern to some parents and consequently to some students. Reportedly, some white students have been warned by their parents not to socialize with minority students and are discouraged from participating in activities with them.

## Attitudes of Teachers

The attitudes of white teachers (96 percent of the faculty) were mentioned most frequently in the staff interviews as one of the problems in the desegregation process. Students, both black and white, indicated that the major factor contributing to the teachers' attitudes appeared to be a lack of understanding of the minority culture and racial background. The students also believed that many white teachers seem to have a feeling of fear and mistrust of minorities.

The teachers have received little support from the school administration and only a few inservice training sessions in human relations were scheduled.

Another concern of the teachers, black and white, is the small number of minorities at all levels employed by the school district. The school administration claims that the recruitment of minorities for staff and administrative positions is one of its priorities. The Pennsylvania Human Relations Commission has requested the school district to raise the percentage of professional and nonprofessional minority staff from the present 8.2 percent to 12.5.

In 1974, because of budgetary problems, the percentage of minority staff dropped even lower. Over the summer of 1975, those minority staff members who had recently been hired were given notification of temporary layoff. The district, however, was prepared for a court case test of "last hired, first fired." This matter was never tested before the court because the district received ESEA funds for additional staff, and the teachers were rehired in time for the school term beginning September 1975.

## Attitudes of Business, Religious, and Political Leaders

Business leaders interviewed expressed concern because they had not been asked to make public statements about the plan as is the custom on any local issue. Like other leaders in the community, the business leaders resented having a school desegregation plan imposed on the school administrators by court order; they did not want the "State or Federal Government telling them what to do."

Nevertheless, most business leaders believe that school desegregation "is an idea whose time has come," and that the only sensible thing to do "is to accept it and comply with the law."

A number of businesses seem to be making an effort to increase minority hiring. They also have helped to establish part-time jobs for vocational education students and have shown an interest in the curriculum of the Vocational Technical High School of Erie.

Strong positive leadership for desegregation did not come from Erie's religious community. There was limited support from individual pulpits and from members of white and minority religious groups, but not through any organized effort to support desegregation. The National Council of Churches spoke out encouraging school desegregation efforts in Erie and various individuals offered verbal encouragement to the minority community.

Political leaders remained neutral and did not provide leadership for desegregation. Some leaders made antibusing statements and urged resistance to the plan.

The media did not openly support or oppose school desegregation in Erie. They reported the stories factually but did not offer many editorial opinions in support of the plan. The media saw themselves primarily as voices of moderation trying to downplay negative stories about school desegregation to reduce the possibility of any inflammatory effect. The public television station began to televise school board meetings in their entirety in an effort to keep the public informed. Some in the community saw this action as helpful, others as causing further polarization between opposing groups. Desegregation itself was not considered an issue of contention by the media. The issues were quality education and methods of achieving it, teacher hiring and salary, and the amount of control parents have in decisions affecting their children's education.

## VI. IMPACT OF THE DESEGREGATION PLAN

Erie's school desegregation plan went into effect in September 1975. The plan had been operating almost 7 months at the time the interviews were held for this study (March 1976). Most respondents interviewed found it difficult to assess the impact of the plan in such a short period. Some felt that the plan was implemented satisfactorily and with a great deal of ease by district administrators. A number of subjects were examined by the Civil Rights Commission's staff to determine the impact of the desegregation plan on the school system.

Classroom Composition: Although an entire school may be in racial balance, some individual classrooms do not maintain this balance.

Violence: Minor fights and disturbances have occurred since desegregation, but, according to faculty, students, and school administrators, these have not been racially motivated. No violent incidents have been reported as a result of desegregation.

Discipline: Parents, teachers, and students report that discipline is a growing problem in the classroom. They believe it is due to a lack of respect for authority and not race related. However, some white teachers have problems disciplining minority students; they have not learned to relate as well as they do to white students and either over-discipline for minor problems or allow minority students to get by with too much for fear of starting an incident. Minority students believe that white teachers have not yet learned to relate to minority students.

Minority Faculty: Both whites and minorities interviewed expressed concern over the low percentage of minority faculty members employed by the district. They believed that more minority teachers are needed as positive models for minority students. They also felt that white teachers and white students would benefit from the increased contact with minority teachers.

Attendance: Tardiness and absenteeism have increased markedly in the past 5 years, but all persons interviewed saw this not as a race-related problem but as a general social phenomenon.

Financial Costs: The cost of subsidizing students' fares on Erie's public transit system represents the largest financial expenditure to the district for school desegregation. Transportation requirements for the district remained basically the same before and after desegregation for the desegregation plan employed walking rather than busing whenever feasible. Thus, the percentage of the budget for the school district for busing remained at 2.3 percent 2 years before and 2 years after desegregation.

Curriculum: Other than the expansion of preexisting special services through ESEA funding, curriculum changes are not the result of desegregation. The same texts were used in all the schools before and after implementation of the plan. High schools are now offering mini-courses to give students a variety of choices.

Physical Plant: The addition of a cafeteria or access to cafeteria food for some elementary schools was the only change in the schools physically.

Pupil Achievement and Motivation: The district has planned a series of tests to measure pupil achievement before and after desegregation. Most teachers and administrators do not believe enough time has passed to measure accurately the effects of desegregation on achievement test scores. Pupil motivation has been mentioned as a problem by teachers and parents, but motivation did not appear to them to be related to problems of desegregation.

Teacher Performance: Teachers were criticized by many persons interviewed as one factor hindering satisfactory implementation of desegregation. The teachers were categorized as inflexible and lacking understanding.

Some teachers viewed themselves as receiving very little human relations training, only a few inservice sessions, and very little administrative support. They felt overlooked because they were not consulted before or after implementation of the plan.

## VII. CONCLUSION

Minority and white parents were surprised and gratified that desegregation occurred as smoothly as it did, in light of their fears and apprehensions prior to implementation.

The white community generally believes that a satisfactory desegregation plan could have been developed sooner, but resents having desegregation ordered by outside agencies. The minority community feels that a plan should have been enforced earlier and that the current plan is still not strong enough. Indications are that minorities will continue to push for progress through litigation, if necessary.

The primary reason for the smooth implementation of the school desegregation plan in Erie was public acceptance of the court order and community commitment to comply with the law. In Erie the absence of strong positive leadership contributed to the tense atmosphere that preceded desegregation. There was no strong effort by the school administration to publicize the intent and mechanics of the plan to the community. The desegregation plan was imposed on the community with little opportunity for community input and with little explanation from school officials. A more open development of the plan would have aided the desegregation process.

Also contributing to the smooth implementation of the desegregation plan were two factors: (1) the desegregation plan called for a small increase in busing; and (2) busing, when needed, is currently handled by the public transportation system and subsidized by the school district.

### Prospects for the Future

Total desegregation of the schools will be slow in Erie. The school board and administrators will have to be pressured on every point to implement further changes. There are still classes which have predominantly black students. Further steps are necessary to desegregate classes more completely within the schools.

Additional minority teachers and staff must be hired. Teachers in the school system are in need of human relations counseling in order to interact more positively with students of other racial and ethnic groups.

All respondents interviewed felt that increased contact with members of other racial and ethnic groups will improve relations in the schools and consequently in the community.

The minority community is pleased with the progress made since desegregation has been implemented. It had the same doubts and misgivings about busing young children and loss of the neighborhood school concept as the white parents. Because there was minimal required busing and little disturbance to the students and community, minority fears have been allayed. However, the burden of pupil reassignment is on the minority community because their children must be widely disbursed throughout the community to meet the terms of the court-ordered plan.

The minority community believes that future changes will only take place through further litigation. Negotiations and discussions have not been useful in securing changes in Erie; only court-ordered changes have been successful.

The school system in Erie appears to be making sincere efforts to improve the quality of education provided to all students. Increased race and ethnic understanding between teachers and students would improve the quality of individual instruction.

ESEA funds, which became available to the school district when an acceptable desegregation plan was formulated, have enabled the district to operate programs and offer services that should substantially increase the quality of education provided to all children in the Erie public school system.

## NOTES

1. Unless otherwise credited, information in this report is derived from interviews conducted by the staff of the Mid-Atlantic Regional Office of the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights during the spring of 1976. Thirty-seven interviews were conducted with the mayor, city council, board of education members, law enforcement authorities, community leaders, school officials, teachers, parents, students, and media representatives. Background data pertinent to desegregation was also collected.
2. School District of the City of Erie, Erie Desegregation Plan (May 1975), p. D-1.
3. Ibid., p. D-2.
4. Ibid., pp. 10-11.
5. Ibid., p. 12.
6. The group took its case to the district court, which affirmed the lower court's decision, ruling that the State could impose requirements greater than Federal requirements to accomplish desegregation.

APPENDIX A

Racial Band Analysis Proposed Plan

Range

Schools Below 12.62% Minority Students Population	12.62% - 29.14%	Above 29.14%
NONE	BURNS (21.6)	BURTON (51.8)
	CLEVELAND (13.1)	DIEHL (32.4)
	COLUMBUS (18.8)	
	CONNEL (13.3)	
	EDISON (24.0)	
	EMERSON (19.4)	
	GLENWOOD (21.2)	
	HAMILTON (18.1)	
	HARDING (15.6)	
	IRVING (13.5)	
	JEFFERSON (26.9)	
	JONES (16.1)	
	LINCOLN (21.5)	
	McKINLEY (25.1)	
	PENN (17.5)	
	PERRY (13.1)	
	WASHINGTON (17.4)	
	WAYNE (21.1)	

Source: Erie Desegregation Plan, sec. E, exhibit 23.

APPENDIX B

The School District of the City of Erie, Pennsylvania

Summary of Reassigned Students

A.	Walkers	<u>White</u>	<u>Black</u>	<u>Total</u>		
	Grade 1-6	431	344	775		
	Grade (Kindergarten)	115	82	197		
	Total	546	426	972		
B.	Transported	<u>White</u>	<u>Black</u>	<u>Total</u>		
	Present	117	188	305		
	Proposed	24	16	40		
	Total	141	204	345		
	Grand Total	687	630	1,317		
C.	Movement Comparison			<u>% White</u>	<u>% Black</u>	
	1. Walkers			52.2	47.8	
	2. Presently Transported			38.4	61.6	
	3. Total Transported per Proposal			40.9	59.1	
	4. Total Reassignment per Proposal			52.2	47.3	
	5. District (1-5) Comparison of Reassignment			8.4	7.7	

Source: Erie Desegregation Plan, exhibit 18, p. 3.

**U. S. COMMISSION ON CIVIL RIGHTS**

WASHINGTON, D. C. 20425

OFFICIAL BUSINESS

PENALTY FOR PRIVATE USE, \$300

POSTAGE & FEES PAID  
U. S. COMMISSION ON CIVIL RIGHTS

