

Mississippi's School Equalization Program, 1945-1954: "A Last Gasp to Try to Maintain a Segregated Educational System"

By: Bolton, Charles C.

[Bolton, C. C.](#) (2000). Mississippi's School Equalization Program, 1945-1954: "A Last Gasp to Try to Maintain a Segregated Educational System" *The Journal of Southern History*, 66(4): 781-814

*****Note: Figures may be missing from this format of the document**

A genuine attempt to integrate Mississippi's public schools did not occur until 1970, sixteen years after the United States Supreme Court's pivotal 1954 *Brown v. Board of Education* decision. White resistance to school desegregation proved both deep-seated and sustained, relenting only under a steady stream of legal action by black parents and federal intervention. Consequently, the elimination of Mississippi's dual educational system occurred largely on white terms. Black teachers and administrators lost their jobs and the black community saw an erosion of the control they had exercised over their children's education. In the years that followed, as federal support waned, efforts in Mississippi and across the nation to create unitary school systems usually floundered, in many cases leading to a resegregation of schools.¹ Given the difficulties surrounding the dismantling of separate schools, it is not surprising that many have judged school integration a failure.² One flaw in the process that a number of commentators have pointed to is that the attempts to achieve school integration did little to help (or even hindered) the attainment of the larger goal surrounding school integration efforts: the improvement of black education.³

In the decade before the *Brown* decision, upgrading black schools within segregation was considered a viable alternative to school integration by both blacks and whites. This strategy of educational equalization sought to ensure a balanced distribution of resources between separate black and white schools. From 1925 until 1950, black southerners, working primarily through the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), focused their efforts on trying to equalize educational spending rather than directly assaulting the *Plessy* doctrine of "separate but equal"; after the NAACP shifted its tactics to challenge Jim Crow head on, many black southerners continued to embrace the equalization policy as the best method for improving black education. Southern state governments in the decade after World War II, faced with both a federal government increasingly sympathetic to the cause of black civil rights and changes in the region's demographics and economy that threatened to undermine the racial status quo, also recognized that a little more emphasis on the "equal" part of the separate but equal equation might be prudent if segregation were to be preserved. After the war, these states all began or enhanced programs to improve black education.⁴ And some southern states, such as Mississippi, continued to advocate educational equalization even after the *Brown* decision had declared segregated schools inherently unequal, in the vain hope that the federal government might somehow still accept an improved version of separate but equal over desegregation.

Although implementing the *Brown* mandate ultimately proved difficult, educational equalization was never a viable alternative. An examination of Mississippi's educational equalization program of the 1940s and early 1950s shows that it did little to improve black education in the state and

ultimately demonstrated the need for the establishment of a unitary school system. The state's equalization program failed for a number of reasons. First, as one of the poorest states in the nation, Mississippi had limited resources to expend on closing the huge gap between black and white education created under the system of segregation. The only real solution to this problem was to obtain federal funds, but the use of such monies threatened to destroy the Jim Crow arrangements the state's equalization program was designed to protect. Second, Mississippi, like other southern states, developed its equalization program as a bulwark against perceived threats to segregation. Consequently, equalization proposals were designed to make only minimal adjustments in state spending on black education in the hopes that such an effort would deflect a possible challenge to separate but clearly unequal arrangements. In 1950 the editor of the Grenada (Miss.) Grenada County Weekly expressed succinctly the rationale behind the state's recent efforts to improve black education: "I claim that we had better do a little than to be MADE to do a heap."⁵

State-supported school segregation, however, had long allowed racial discrimination to proceed unchecked in the operation of the state's educational system, creating a seemingly unbridgeable chasm between black and white schools. As a result, the limited equalization proposals offered by the state in the years after World War II were patently ineffective. At the same time, the practical motivations that led Mississippi political leaders to favor even inadequate equalization schemes did not necessarily alter local attitudes of racial discrimination committed to preserving white educational prerogatives. And since local officials often implemented the state equalization mandates, an already insufficient effort became exceedingly lame in actual operation. Finally, white Mississippians never wholly embraced an honest and fair equalization program because of concerns that growing numbers of blacks in the state favored abolishing school segregation, the institution that equalization was designed to prop up. Although many black Mississippians actually endorsed a justly administered equalization policy, white leaders proved hesitant to spend millions to upgrade black schools without an explicit pledge of support from black leaders to maintain Jim Crow education.

By the 1940s many Mississippians, black and white, increasingly understood that the state's minimal support for black public education would no longer do. Black citizens began to press more stridently for improvements in black schools. In the spring of 1941 a group of black teachers from the Mississippi Association of Teachers in Colored Schools (MATCS) met with white political leaders to complain about short school terms for black schools and unequal salaries for black teachers. The meeting left the black teachers "without 'promises' and without hope," so the following fall the teachers' organization created a legislative committee to "use whatever method is available to law-abiding citizens in a democracy to secure better educational opportunities for our children and better salaries for our teachers." During World War II the membership of the MATCS began raising funds to file a teacher salary equalization suit similar to those already initiated in other states. Although the association set aside \$500 for the effort, its inability to secure a local lawyer eventually sidetracked the attempt.⁶

Black demands for educational improvements grew even louder by the end of the war. In January 1945 T. R. M. Howard, a black doctor from Mound Bayou, bluntly announced to the black Greenwood Civic League what most of his listeners already knew: the state's black educational system was a "failure." And he asked, "Will it interfere with any good Southern tradition to do

something about this problem?" A 1945 survey conducted by the MATCS's Mississippi Educational Journal revealed that 95 percent of the organization's membership favored court action if the 1946 legislature did not address the teacher salary equalization issue. A statewide mass meeting of black leaders held in Jackson in early 1946 drafted a message for the legislature outlining many of the educational problems that required legislative solutions: unequal teacher salaries, inadequate black school facilities, insufficient teacher training institutions, and limited higher education offerings. As the black leaders noted, no additional taxes would even be necessary to begin the upgrade of black education; an equal distribution of levies already collected would itself allow for significant betterment.⁷

During the late 1930s and 1940s, for the first time since Reconstruction, serious public discussions also occurred among white Mississippians about how to improve black education. In the wake of the Supreme Court's 1938 *Gaines v. Canada* decision, which held that Missouri's failure to provide a law school for blacks violated the Plessy doctrine, Frederick Sullens, the fiery editor of the Jackson (Miss.) Daily News and certainly no foe of segregation, warned white Mississippians that "if the Missouri contention should be sustained, it will play havoc with the whole system of public instruction throughout the South. Here in Mississippi we ought to have at least a little common honesty in expenditure of the public school fund." Among the earliest white supporters of the efforts to improve black schooling were educators. In the late 1930s the all-white Mississippi Education Association appointed a committee to study black education in the state, and in 1940 the committee issued a report outlining a number of deficiencies and suggested improvements. The Delta Council, composed of the area's leading planters and businessmen, also endorsed improvements in black education in a 1943 resolution. Among various other groups examining the problem, a group of Methodist women met in Jackson in the fall of 1948 "to study the present status of Negro education in Mississippi and see what steps can be taken to improve our state facilities."⁸

Those white Mississippians who began to call for greater equalization between white and black public schools generally made sure to emphasize that their ultimate motive remained preserving white privileges and saving school segregation. When Percy H. Easom, the supervisor of black schools for the state's Department of Education and a white man truly interested in advancing the cause of black schooling in the state, asked the state legislature for improvements in the training of black teachers in 1938, he carefully couched his request for change in the language of white supremacy: "[I]t is not so much a question of what the colored people deserve as it is a question of what the white people of Mississippi deserve. The white people deserve to have something done to improve the status of their colored people. Do not the white people depend upon the colored people for their labor supply, for their tenant farmers, for their cooks, for their nurses, for their brickmasons, for their plasterers, for their chauffeurs, etc.?" As the threats to segregated education began to appear more visibly on the horizon, Easom began to emphasize not only the benefits of equalization but also the danger to continued segregation if some type of equalization program was not pursued. At a speech before the Indianola Rotary Club in 1946 Easom reiterated his theme of how black educational advances benefited whites, and he also suggested that segregation could only be preserved if whites made a sustained attempt to address long-ignored black educational needs.⁹ Given such self-serving attitudes about why black education should be improved, it is not surprising that white Mississippians typically endorsed equalization plans that provided only the most minimal of changes in the operation of the state's dual

educational system. Real educational equalization would have required a vigorous and sustained program to close the yawning gap that existed between white and black education at the end of World War II.

In order to understand just how feeble the state's post—World War II equalization efforts were, it is important first to recognize how the operation of state-enforced school segregation over the preceding four decades had altered Mississippi education. In the late nineteenth century, white and black education, while unequally funded, remained almost everywhere equally inadequate, except in the state's largest towns. Most rural schools in the state had short terms, few supplies, and poorly paid teachers in one-, two-, or three-teacher operations. But during the first two decades of the twentieth century, Mississippi, like other southern states, dramatically upgraded white schools, while black education—receiving only limited state aid—languished, despite valiant efforts from black citizens and assistance from northern philanthropists.¹⁰

Perhaps the most important of the Progressive-era reforms to improve white rural schools in Mississippi and other southern states was school consolidation, which allowed small schools to combine to form larger, graded schools, with at least one teacher for each grade. At the same time, control of these consolidated schools passed from local school trustees to centralized, usually countywide, school authorities who gained the power to raise taxes on a district or countywide basis. The modernized school districts used their newly available local funds to improve white schools by extending the school term, raising teacher salaries, and instituting a system of public transportation of students to the larger and more amply furnished consolidated schools. Although southern whites frequently objected to consolidation because of the additional taxes or the loss of local control, the reform increasingly gained popularity as a mechanism for increasing the educational benefits available to the white youth of the South's rural districts.¹¹

The Mississippi legislature's initial school consolidation measure, passed in 1910, provided for the creation of rural school districts that could levy taxes and issue bonds. Over the next thirty-five years, whites took advantage of the new law to initiate a massive consolidation of their schools. In the 1909-10 school year, Mississippi had 4,256 rural white schools; by 1946, the state had 861 consolidated white schools and only 164 that had not yet been consolidated. State leaders hailed the changing structure of white education as a dramatic improvement. As the Mississippi Board of Development noted in 1944, "There is as much difference between the modern Mississippi consolidated school plant and the one-teacher school it has replaced as there is between the modern automobile and the 1890 horse and buggy."¹²

As a general rule, whites, who controlled all county governments in the state because of the disfranchisement of black citizens, did not extend this basic technique of school modernization to black education. During the 1909-10 school year, the state had 3,006 black schools, a number that had increased to 3,737 by 1946, only 100 of which had been consolidated.¹³ Between 1910, when the state enacted consolidation legislation, and 1930, only fifteen black schools were consolidated in the entire state, and almost half of these were in Forrest County, located in south Mississippi. This county clearly had the early progressive edge among the state's counties, at least in terms of assisting the development of black education. Before consolidation, the county had twenty-six black schools, only two of which were located in structures clearly identifiable as schoolhouses; the remainder held classes in one- room shacks or even sawmill sheds. The

average length of the school term in these institutions was just forty days; the average white school term at the time was not much better, only fifty-nine days. When a new county superintendent, John Gay, took office in 1918, he helped convince the county authorities to consolidate not only the white schools but also the black ones. At a time when opportunities for migration out of the state had become more attractive, Forrest County officials may have acted to improve black education as part of an effort to persuade the black population that had only recently moved to the area to work in the timber industry not to leave. Whatever the reasons, the county soon had a \$75,000 high school for blacks in Hattiesburg, built with bond money authorized by white voters in the city, as well as five additional consolidated schools around the county, all built with help from the Rosenwald Foundation, which provided building funds that required local matching monies. The county even provided transportation for black students to the new consolidated schools in "auto trucks." Although blacks in Forrest County, like those who took advantage of the generosity of Julius Rosenwald elsewhere in the South, had to raise \$13,000 in matching funds from their own communities to build these schools, at least the county supported their effort to construct modern, graded schools.¹⁴

Although they spent only a small sum of money on their black schools, Forrest County officials created perhaps the best public educational facilities for blacks in the entire state at the time, an achievement that offers a sad commentary on the condition of black education in the state and provides a revealing example of the impact of school consolidation. In the 1930s the five consolidated schools in Forrest County located outside the city of Hattiesburg had modern desks and blackboards, "deep wells," drinking fountains, and other amenities not found in the typical one-room schoolhouse. Accompanying the improvements in the school plant was an upgrading of the system's black teachers. By 1940 twenty-six of the twenty-eight teachers working in the county's five consolidated black schools had some college work and all were high school graduates, making the faculty in the Forrest County black schools easily the most educated black faculty in the state. By comparison, a more typical district in the state, such as Amite County in southwest Mississippi, had only sixteen high school graduates among its fifty-five black teachers in 1940. Consolidation in Forrest County also meant the extension of the school term, initially to seven months, and by 1940, to eight months. These improvements drew area blacks to the public schools; during the 1930s over 70 percent of eligible black children attended school in Forrest County, a significant achievement in a state that regularly failed to attract large numbers of black or white students to its schools. Consolidation of black schools meant a greater investment by whites in black schools, and even if that investment still lagged far behind monies expended on white schools, at least the disparities did not reach the absurd proportions they did in other counties. In 1940 Forrest County's per capita expenditure on its black schools was \$18.20, while \$37.84 went to each white child; in the same year Amite County officials spent only \$3.51 per black student, while providing \$30.24 for every white one.¹⁵

More typically, school consolidation was for whites only, and it widened the inequalities between the education of the two races throughout Mississippi. For one thing, white teachers in the consolidated schools began to get more training for their profession—and more pay. White teacher salaries in rural districts increased over 90 percent between 1890 and 1937, while black teacher salaries in the same areas remained essentially stagnant during the same period. Other inequities created by white school consolidation were readily apparent to black Mississippians. In the 1940s Sidney D. Redmond, a black physician, attorney, and businessman in Jackson,

recalled that during his youth in the 1880s "gross discriminations" between white and black education did not exist. Redmond understood that the failure to consolidate black rural schools along with their white counterparts led to easily recognizable educational inequities: "the sending of the Negro boy and girl on a several mile trudge, to an old 'tumbled down,' one or two teacher-room shack, where one teacher has to try to teach 5, 6, or 7 grades, while the white child whizzes by in a bus, bought and paid for with the taxes paid by all the people, to a 12 grade school house, of 12 or 15 rooms, of commodious proportions, manned by 15 or 20 [w]ell paid teachers—where the work is so divided and systemized that real results are possible."¹⁶

While providing little benefit for blacks, the consolidation of white schools created additional burdens for black schools and black taxpayers. In some places, county officials actually moved black schools to make way for the new, larger white schools. In the northeast Mississippi community of Taylor, for example, the local black school "was pushed out of the town limits" in the early 1930s to make room for a white consolidated school. Similarly, in the 1940s Hinds County officials rebuilt the rural Liberty Grove School for blacks as "another little frame 2 or 3 room shack" a short distance from its original location so that they could erect a large white consolidated school on Liberty Grove's initial site. Black landowners around the state had to pay the additional taxes imposed on residents to effect consolidation of white schools without receiving any of the educational benefits for their children. Blacks had long subsidized white education, and whites merely ignored black complaints about this latest inequity. In the late 1930s, for instance, black landowners in Prentiss chafed under the realization that "we are assessed with a 15 mill levy for the White Consolidated schools and are to have more for a bond issue, and have repeatedly [been] denied a consolidated school for we Colored." The landowners asked, without success, to be exempted from the new taxation.¹⁷

Although many black parents, like those in Prentiss, wanted school consolidation for their children, the reform generally occurred only when blacks were willing to invest their own funds in the project. Local officials bankrolled school consolidation, but since most blacks were disfranchised, they had no incentive nor any legal obligation to aid black citizens. By the late 1930s county governments sometimes did contribute funds to help build larger, consolidated black schools, but as in previous years, most local authorities still expected blacks to raise most or all of the monies to ameliorate their children's education. For example, when blacks in white-majority Jasper County moved to create the six-teacher consolidated school in Shady Grove during the late 1930s, they received \$150 from the county board of education, a few contributions from local whites, and 4,500 feet of wood from the nearby Masonite Corporation. The bulk of the funds to build the new school, however, were amassed by blacks themselves. The principal of the school held fish fries and "went out on a speaking tour to every little church in every little corner and raised money." After whites in Monroe County voted down a bond issue to build a consolidated black school in the neighborhood of Union Grove during the early 1940s, "the colored people of the community . . . started raising money by subscription and giving suppers and picture shows." The building was completed in 1945, but the black community did not finish paying for their new school until 1949.¹⁸

While school consolidation for blacks generally offered fewer of the financial benefits associated with white consolidation, the process also eroded what small control blacks had over their schools. Groups of neighborhood black trustees often had a voice in how their local

unconsolidated black school was run. Certainly the black trustees of the neighborhood one-teacher school were essentially, as one principal suggested, "powerless," since the amount of support they received from the county treasury depended on the disposition of the local white superintendent. A sympathetic one, such as Charles Johnson, who headed the majority-black Canton schools in the 1930s, tried to divert some county resources to improve the physical plant of black schools. He remembered that he "would take extra books, chalk, etc." when he visited them. In other cases, according to Dave Dunaway, a white principal in the Greenville schools, the white superintendent often "simply tried to get him a good man to run the black schools and just say, `Ya'll do want you want to. Just don't bother us.'" But if black trustees often remained powerless in the sense of being unable to tap into county revenues to furnish their schools adequately, they still had an important voice in how the school operated on a day-to-day basis. And they frequently recognized that consolidation primarily meant, as Bolivar County superintendent A. H. Ramsey put it, placing the black school "in the hands of the white people to operate."¹⁹

Because of its early-twentieth-century transformation wrought through mechanisms such as school consolidation, the public education system in Mississippi became perhaps the most glaring refutation of the notion that separate could ever be equal in the state. By the 1940s the amount of money spent on black elementary and secondary education in the state remained ridiculously low, even by the standards of the rest of the Deep South. In 1942-43 Mississippi spent an average of \$47.95 on each white child but only \$6.16 on each black one. The corresponding numbers for neighboring Alabama were \$48.92 and \$14.91. In 1945 black teachers in Mississippi made on average about 36 percent of what white teachers earned. Hundreds, perhaps thousands, of black children did not attend school in the 1940s because of a lack of adequate school facilities.²⁰

As both national and local criticism of the shortcomings of Jim Crow education mounted in the late 1930s and 1940s, the state of Mississippi undertook a series of measures to equalize state spending on black and white schooling.²¹ Correcting the disparities between white and black education that had been created over the previous decades, however, represented an expensive proposition, and Mississippi simply did not have enough money for the job. Although Mississippi would spend significant amounts of state funds to improve education after World War II, the state essentially could not finance one school system adequately, much less two. Mississippi already spent a considerable part of its citizens' earnings on public education, ranking ninth among all states in percentage of income expended on education in 1945. Because of the state's relative poverty, however, Mississippi remained dead last in terms of actual tax dollars used for public education.²²

White administrators touted federal aid as a possible way to help fund segregated (but equalized) education. Superintendent H. M. Ivy of Meridian recognized that a federal aid bill under debate in the U.S. Congress in the late 1940s would provide \$7 million for the state's black schools, "almost treble the amount now being spent for that purpose," a sizeable down payment on necessary improvements to black schools if Jim Crow had any chance of surviving court scrutiny in the post-Gaines era. Robert Mayo, Hinds County superintendent, identified the state's three options for addressing the educational equalization issue: "lowering of expenditures for white education," hiking local taxes to fund an equalization campaign, or accepting "federal aid

without federal control." Only the last of these, according to Mayo, represented an appealing choice.²³ Although federal aid to education seemed like a real option in the late 1940s because the issue—sporadically offered as a possible solution to assist the lagging educational systems of the southern states since the 1870s—had recently been revived as a result of the New Deal, most white Mississippians continued to view such subsidies with great caution out of fears that federal finances would come attached with federal requirements to end discriminatory funding of education.²⁴

Without adequate resources to do much, state leaders still resolved to do something. The first significant move came in 1944 when Governor Thomas L. Bailey appointed a legislative committee to study the state's public school system. Bailey, a former schoolteacher, had long supported education improvements as a representative and speaker of the Mississippi House, and when the legislative committee's report appeared in early 1946, he backed its recommendations: improve the training of black teachers, provide for a general increase in teachers' salaries based on the training and experience of individual teachers, and appropriate \$3 million for the building of public schools. The 1946 legislature approved the committee's suggestions. To improve black teacher training, the state allocated additional funds for Jackson College and Alcorn College and created a new institution, Mississippi Vocational College, to educate black teachers in the Delta. The legislature also increased the overall budget for the state's public schools, with much of the increase targeted for raising teachers' salaries. In response to the legislative committee's call for new school buildings, the legislature allocated the suggested \$3 million. To help pay for the new schoolhouses, the legislature required that counties provide matching funds and authorized them to levy additional taxes if necessary.²⁵

The measures to aid school construction and to increase teachers' salaries made no mention that the funds should be spent either in whole or in part on black education; however, Jackson Daily News editor Fred Sullens later claimed that, at least for the school construction resources, "[t]here was a sort of gentleman's agreement, fully understood among lawmakers who voted for the appropriation, that this money would be used for the improvement of Negro schools." Blacks certainly believed that most of the state funds appropriated for school construction would be used to revamp or replace their woefully inadequate facilities. At the 1946 meeting of the MATCS, the organization's president, E. S. Bishop of Corinth, heralded the \$3 million fund as "'heavenly' news to those of us who have found it necessary to give 'box suppers' and 'fish fries,' which helped us get the meager funds to build the many shacks in which we teach." In the same address, Bishop noted that his only concern was "the fair and equitable distribution of these funds without discrimination."²⁶ Given Mississippi's long history of denying blacks their fair share of the state's education money, such concerns seem unremarkably appropriate.

If lawmakers did have a gentlemen's agreement that their \$3 million school construction appropriation would be spent primarily on black schools, they did little to ensure that those charged with dispersing the state funds—the State Building Commission and local officials—had a similar understanding. State Superintendent of Education J. M. Tubb realized that, although school districts might have had a "moral obligation" to spend money on black schools, the state program for school construction had not created any "legal obligation" to undertake such endeavors. Without such compulsion, most of the \$3 million appropriation of 1946 went to white schools. By October 1947 the State Building Commission had approved the use of over \$2.8

million of the funds, but only 35 percent had been allocated to black schools. The needs of white schools, while certainly not as glaring as those of blacks, were also quite substantial, and county officials and the State Building Commission responded to pressures from white school patrons for a share of the state's largesse. As A. H. Ramsey, the superintendent of the largely black Bolivar County school system in the Delta, noted, in many districts "the white schools made a run on the Building Commission and secured their allocation for white schools."²⁷

Black Mississippians who sought to take advantage of the state appropriation of 1946 to improve the educational facilities for their children ultimately had to depend on the goodwill of local whites, just as they had with school consolidation programs in years past. Some communities, such as Yazoo City, New Albany, Philadelphia, Laurel, and Biloxi, did provide funds to construct modern schoolhouses for black children, but most rural districts made little effort to raise local funds or to apply for state monies specifically to aid black school construction. For example, in the largely black Tunica County system, the school board's improvements during the late 1940s for its forty-eight black schools, which included sixteen located in churches and four in private homes, amounted to the construction of three two-teacher schools and a one-room addition to two existing schools. In addition to a failure to act, at other times simple indifference by local whites could sabotage the state's equalization program, as the following example from northeast Mississippi illustrates. In 1946 a man in Booneville donated five acres of land for a black school in Jumpertown, eleven miles northwest of Booneville. A group of black men in the Jumpertown neighborhood had agreed to donate \$300 in labor to build the school. With these contributions in hand, the proposed Jumpertown school was eligible for \$2,500 in matching funds from the state. But the State Building Commission rejected the planned school because the county superintendent of education "sent a very crude drawing of the proposed buildings." Needing only to get a qualified draftsman to make the architectural sketches for the school, the local superintendent had absentmindedly hampered black efforts to take advantage of the 1946 school construction law.²⁸

Mississippi's effort to solve the problem of unequal salaries for white and black teachers foundered on a similar failure of state leaders to provide a clear and unequivocal mandate to local officials. In 1946 and 1948 the state appropriated additional money for public schools so that school districts could raise teachers' salaries, but the distribution of such increases was left solely in the hands of local school officials. As with the school building program, local leaders generally used the extra money to benefit whites as much as blacks. Of course, the actual handling of salary adjustments varied from district to district. Black teachers automatically received a lesser proportion of salary increases in rural locales where the black school term remained shorter than the white one, since raises were usually applied to a teacher's monthly wage. In 1948, 40 percent of the state's black teachers still taught in schools that had only five- or six-month terms. In more urban areas, black teachers frequently received a share of the funds slated for salary increases that was more nearly equal.²⁹ Between 1945 and 1950, statewide pay for white teachers increased by 63 percent, from an average of \$1,108 to \$1,806; during the same period, salaries for black teachers rose on average 78 percent, from \$399 to \$711. But in 1950 black teachers still made 39 percent of what their white counterparts earned, up only slightly from the 36 percent of five years earlier.³⁰ Clearly, the program of general state increases in teachers' salaries did little to narrow the pay disparity between white and black teachers, especially when the monies were filtered through the hands of local white officials who had little

incentive to use additional monies for salary equalization when white teachers also needed pay raises.

The results of the state's 1946 educational improvement project led to widespread criticism from blacks—and even from some whites. A "State-wide Mass Meeting of Negro citizens" assembled in Jackson in February 1948 to protest the unequal operation of the so-called equalization program. Noting "the great problems involved in an equitable distribution of the resources of the State," the group called for the creation of a biracial commission to oversee the process, a request denied by Governor Fielding L. Wright, who was soon to be the vice presidential candidate of the Dixiecrat revolt. A group of white citizens from Jackson labeled the disbursement of school construction funds "unfair and unchristian," and Daily News editor Fred Sullens warned white Mississippians that "[o]ur educational theory of 'all for the white folks and nothing for the Negro' must be abandoned."³¹ But the protest that really got the attention of the state's white leaders was a civil suit over unequal pay launched by a black teacher in Jackson.

When the legislature failed to act on salary equalization in 1946, black teachers resolved to carry out their threat of legal action. In 1947 the MATCS secretly invited the NAACP's Thurgood Marshall to talk to them about initiating a suit. Informed that such an action would require at least five thousand dollars, the teachers voted to increase their annual dues by one dollar to raise the requisite money. In order to allay any possible white suspicions, they officially claimed the increase was for the creation of a benevolent fund. With the five thousand dollars amassed, the MATCS only needed a willing plaintiff, and most expected teachers from Jackson, with the state's largest school district, to take the lead. In November 1947 the all-black Jackson Teachers Association adopted a resolution requesting equal salaries for black and white teachers in the district and promising legal action if the school board failed to act. The group delayed relaying³² their bold pronouncement to the local school board, however, until a plaintiff could be found.

In February 1948 Gladys Noel Bates, a young Jackson teacher, stepped forward. Her father, Andrew J. Noel, a U.S. railway mail clerk and an active participant in local civil rights groups such as the Progressive Voters' League and the NAACP, had helped prod his daughter to take up the challenge of becoming an equalization plaintiff. But Bates herself had long been engaged in the struggle for black civil rights, first as a participant during the 1930s in the local NAACP chapter's Youth Council and then as a member of the local branch's board of directors. After graduation from Tougaloo College, Bates secured a job working in the Jackson public schools. She had been teaching at the city's oldest black school, Smith Robertson, for about four years when she submitted her petition to the Jackson school board asking that they quit "discriminating against Negro teachers and principals in the payment of salaries." The school board president briefly responded: "I know of no discrimination against the colored people in the Jackson Public Schools." Faced with this defiant stand on the part of white school leaders, Bates refused to back down and filed a lawsuit against the school district. Her principal declined to offer her a contract for the following year. Another teacher, R. Jess Brown, joined the suit in 1949, and he also did not receive an invitation to return to teach in the Jackson public schools. Even with the support of the national NAACP, the lawsuit failed. The local federal district court dismissed the case in early 1950, basing its ruling on the technical grounds that, although the unequal salaries between black and white teachers may have resulted from racial discrimination, the plaintiffs had not exhausted their administrative appeals before filing suit. In addition, the court found that the

dismissal of Bates and Brown was not illegal, even though little evidence existed that the firings were motivated by anything but the lawsuit.³³

The Bates lawsuit demonstrated how little leverage black teachers in the state had in pressing equalization claims. While some black teachers in Jackson supported Bates in her struggle, much of that support could not be expressed openly. According to Bates, some area "principals and teachers vied for first place as informers to the Superintendents, each trying to secure an audience to let 'the man' know that 'I'm not in that mess"; other teachers merely avoided contact with Bates after she filed her suit. As Mrs. Bates noted, "The old cry [was] 'I have too much to lose to become involved in anything of this nature.'" Such attitudes were clearly prudent, for those who refused to shun Bates, such as Mariam Michael, who taught with Bates at Smith Robertson School, also soon found themselves without a teaching job in the Jackson public schools. When the school board tried to have the Bates case dismissed in 1949—on the grounds that Bates was no longer an employee of the district—the board delayed the renewal of teachers' contracts as long as possible to discourage any teachers who might consider joining Bates in her lawsuit. Against such pressure, only R. Jess Brown stepped forward to keep the lawsuit alive. The MATCS, which had secretly helped to initiate the legal action, made no public statement in support of the Jackson equalization effort, but the organization continued to promote the struggle behind the scenes. In fact, the MATCS hired Bates to work for it after she lost her teaching job, and it paid for Brown's first year of law school at Texas Southern University after the school system released him. Although state NAACP leaders hoped that the Bates example would lead to the launching of equal pay suits in every county in the state, they underestimated the exceptional courage of Bates and Brown as well as the enormous pressure local white school officials could put on black teachers and principals.³⁴ If an equal pay lawsuit in the state's most urban area could be so easily crushed, the state's rural black teachers really had little chance of standing up to demand equal salaries.

The Bates lawsuit did, however, jolt many whites into rededicating themselves to the cause of educational equalization, for although the court had dismissed Bates's suit, it did note that the inequality in teachers' salaries sprang from racial discrimination. By the end of 1948 black leaders noted reports from newspapers around the state that more counties had begun to increase black teachers' salaries and "are building new schools for Negro children and also providing transportation for Negro children where it has not hitherto been given." When the legislature made additional appropriations for school construction in each of the two sessions of 1950 and 1952 (which brought the total since 1946 up to \$10 million), state officials took greater care to ensure that blacks received their fair share of the state funds. In fact, the \$2 million approved for school construction by the legislature in 1950 mandated that all the funds go to black schools. When some white legislators tried to direct at least half of the monies to white schools, Representative Curtis Swango of Panola County (later the judge in the Emmett Till case) helped squelch the movement by reminding legislators that "since 1946 we have appropriated \$5,000,000 for school building improvements and mighty little of it has gone to Negroes." As the state moved to designate building funds specifically for black schools, the school construction program began to look more like an actual equalization program. By 1953 the total state funds that had been spent on school construction since 1946 were almost evenly divided between black and white projects.³⁵

The Bates lawsuit also put pressure on the state to revisit the issue of black and white teacher salary disparities, even though white politicians and teachers in the state generally did not favor a true salary equalization plan. With black teachers earning on average only 38 percent of what white teachers made in the 1948-49 school year, many whites worried that the state did not have the resources to raise black teachers' salaries up to the level of white teachers. Kirby P. Walker, the longtime superintendent of the Jackson public schools, believed that it just was not possible for the legislature to appropriate enough money and the school districts to get enough money to equalize compensation " As a result, many white teachers were convinced that if the state could not pay for an overall increase in black salaries, then any equalization plan would have to lower white salaries in order to "level out the wage structure."³⁶

With the equalization of teachers' salaries seemingly blocked due to the enormous costs involved, Governor Wright supported a plan that would provide the appearance of equalization while locking in or even worsening existing inequalities. In 1949 Wright advocated a program to "equalize" black and white teacher salaries on the basis of education, experience, and the results of the National Teacher Examination (NTE). During the 1940s other southern states had adopted the NTE as the basis of state salary scales. By using the NTE, Jim Crow governments could justify paying white teachers more than black teachers not because of racial discrimination but rather on the basis of an ostensibly objective and scientific measurement—albeit one that ignored the long history of inadequate training for black teachers.³⁷ White leaders like Wright, who firmly believed in white supremacy, obviously saw testing as a way to avoid the costs of equalization, and they also incorrectly assumed that all whites would do better than all blacks on any test.³⁸

In Mississippi, however, any salary scale pegged to test scores or educational qualifications would have led to a dramatic decline in the money received by the average black teacher. In 1945 less than 10 percent of black teachers possessed a bachelor's degree; over 23 percent did not even have a high school diploma. At the same time, almost half of white teachers had a college degree, while over 98 percent had completed high school. In addition, black teachers in the state had no access to regional graduate education. For example, when N. R. Burger, a black principal in Hattiesburg, sought to obtain a master's degree in the early 1950s, he had to take a leave of absence without pay to earn one from Cornell. Fearing that deficiencies in the training of black teachers and the lack of opportunities to obtain higher degrees would naturally translate into lower test scores on the NTE, black teachers overwhelmingly rejected Wright's school pay plan. In a statewide vote held in the fall of 1949 at eight regional meetings, black teachers opposed the measure by a vote of 4,579 to 208. But white teachers also rejected the governor's teacher pay proposal. In their statewide referendum, held during the same period at twenty local meetings, they declined to support the initiative by a tally of 5,529 to 2,462. Many white teachers in the state were apparently not convinced that testing would necessarily preserve the prerogatives of white supremacy. Even the president of the all-white Mississippi Education Association (MEA), Zack Huggins, who supported the governor's plan, admitted that some white teachers would likely see their salaries reduced once the test results were obtained. White teachers preferred instead that Wright's plan be adopted without the testing component, but legislators, led by J. A. Thigpen of Bolivar County, remained committed to the use of the NTE as part of any state salary plan.³⁹

When teachers and legislators failed to agree on a suitable salary proposal, the legislature decided to delay any action on salary equalization in favor of another round of general salary increases, although this time with specific monies designated for black teachers. In both 1950 and 1952 the legislature made a special appropriation to augment the salaries of black teachers; each county received a share of the funds based on their number of black teachers. These state funds would have helped considerably in closing the gap between white and black teachers' salaries, but many counties ignored the intent of the legislature and refused to pass along the extra monies to black teachers. For example, of the \$2.24 million dispersed to the counties for the 1952-53 school year as part of the special allocation for black teacher salaries, the counties probably spent less than half of this amount on its intended target.⁴⁰ A legislative committee in 1953 revealed that the state funds appropriated to improve black teachers' salaries had not always reached black educators, and after an investigation by the state attorney general, twenty-six counties had to return funds to the state treasury. Many local school districts were obviously opposed to placing more money in the hands of black teachers even if the state footed the bill. As Bolivar County superintendent A. H. Ramsey reasoned at the time, "Our negro teachers are getting all they are worth." As a result of such local opposition to the state's special effort to improve black teachers' salaries, by the 1953-54 school year, black teachers still earned on average only 56 percent of what their white counterparts made.⁴¹

While the state's post—World War II equalization program brought some small improvement in black school facilities and teachers' salaries, nothing in the state's equalization campaign addressed the consolidation of black schools. As late as 1951, the state still had over fourteen hundred one-room schools, almost all of which were for blacks.⁴² Since white school consolidation had already been largely accomplished through the use of local funds, state leaders simply ignored this expensive yet basic improvement to black schools. In the absence of a state mandate requiring consolidation of black schools, even after state funds for black education became more widely available after 1946, counties typically would only pledge local matching funds for projects that shored up antiquated one, two, or three-teacher black schools rather than construct modern, consolidated facilities, which would have entailed greater expenditures. For example, almost 77 percent of the black school projects built with state funds in 1946 and early 1947 involved the construction of one, two, or three-teacher schools. As noted earlier, when school districts began to increase the monthly salaries for black and white teachers after 1946, one reason black teachers received a smaller share of the funds was because most still taught in unconsolidated, short-term schools. The failure to provide for black school consolidation, however, undermined the state's equalization effort, because unconsolidated schools meant substandard buildings, shorter school terms, inadequately trained and poorly paid teachers, and no provisions for transportation of school children.⁴³

Furthermore, although more forceful state action after 1948 had eventually resulted in the equal division of state building funds between black and white school systems in Mississippi, even the state's building program ultimately failed to work as an overall equalization measure because of the continuing disparity in local funds spent on black and white schools. Most local boards of supervisors raised taxes during this period to cover the building of new schools, levies that frequently generated revenues above the amount necessary to match state building funds. However, few local governing bodies, elected almost solely by whites, dared to devote the lion's share of any local tax increases to support the betterment of black schools. As a result, between

1946 and 1953, counties and local school districts spent almost \$30 million on white schools but only \$11 million on black ones. In some cases, disparities in spending stemmed from the fact that local officials refused to use their funds to properly equip new black schools. For example, when officials in Monroe County took advantage of the equalization program to build a new black school in the western part of the county, they provided school books and teachers, but according to area blacks, the black community still "had to buy the desk[s] and equipment to equip the building because the county didn't give us anything."⁴⁴ In the long run, new state appropriations for school construction aimed at blacks, by sparking an increase in local revenues targeted for education, succeeded in creating a virtual boom in the building of white facilities, even while the relative amount of funds distributed for the improvement of black schools continued to languish.

Overall, the state's equalization efforts between 1946 and 1952— underfunded, vaguely worded, and implemented by local officials more concerned with preserving white privilege than fending off some seemingly distant threat to segregation—represented a hopeless attempt to make separate schools more equal. If nothing else, however, the equalization attempts of the late 1940s had generated a great deal of discussion among whites about the state's educational shortcomings, especially regarding unequal facilities for blacks and whites. In one instance, white educators collaborated with their black counterparts to undertake the first serious study of the true costs of school equalization. In the fall of 1950 three white education organizations— the state PTA, the State Department of Education, and the Mississippi Education Association— joined the black Mississippi Association of Teachers in Colored Schools to create the biracial Mississippi Citizens Council on Education (MCCE). Their mission was to investigate the widely discussed school equalization question. Among other actions, the MCCE tried to gauge public opinion by sending out twenty thousand questionnaires to black and white citizens around the state. The survey results demonstrated, among other things, that over 75 percent of the more than sixteen thousand respondents (many undoubtedly teachers and parents) believed the state should provide "equivalent school services and facilities" to black and white children. MCCE's recommendations, presented to the governor and legislature before the opening of the 1952 session, called for a massive equalization of school facilities, teachers' salaries, and curriculum funds, as well as a major consolidation program. The total cost of these changes, exclusive of the building campaign that full consolidation and equalization would require, was estimated at \$34 million annually. Building needs would require an initial outlay of another \$144 million.⁴⁵ Legislative supporters of the MCCE introduced bills to enact the council's recommendations during the 1952 session. The program was delayed, however, when the legislature received a report about the widespread padding of school rolls. Every district in the state had apparently overestimated the number of educable children in its district, perhaps in an effort to secure a larger share of the miserly biannual education budget. Statewide, the 1951 school census listed about 37 percent more school-age children than were shown in the 1950 federal census; some counties, such as Clay and Warren, claimed almost twice as many children on their rolls as had been found by the census enumerators. The "padding" scandal certainly caused the legislature to hesitate before appropriating additional millions to educate phantom children, but it also provided a convenient excuse to delay acting on the costly equalization program laid out by the biracial MCCE. Instead, the 1952 legislature passed another stopgap education bill, which continued to increase the funds spent on education, although still without adequate regard to equalization issues. It also created the all-white Recess Education Study Committee, composed entirely of state legislators.⁴⁶

The Recess Education Committee essentially duplicated the work of the MCCE, except for the canvassing of public opinion, and in the end it adopted recommendations similar to the original MCCE report. Governor Hugh L. White called a special session of the Mississippi legislature to meet in the fall of 1953 to act on the committee's suggestions. When the legislature assembled in early November 1953, it adopted a sweeping array of educational reforms: completion of school consolidation; a single salary scale for all teachers, based on the type of certificate held; a Minimum Foundation Program consisting of an eight-month term and a 30:1 student/teacher ratio; and annual credits toward a building fund, based on a district's average daily attendance, with \$12 per child granted for each district.⁴⁷

The 1953 equalization plan, the first serious legislative proposal to end the inequalities in the state's segregated school system, initially remained an unfunded mandate. During both the special session and the regular 1954 session held a few months later, legislators balked at funding any of the acts other than the teacher salary measure. Mississippi lawmakers were hesitant to sink so much money into an equalization scheme when a federal court decision on the legality of the South's separate but equal arrangements seemed imminent. The argument that carried the day was best expressed by state representative Hilton Waits of Washington County in the Delta, who issued a minority report to the Recess Education Committee's report. Waits insisted that any equalization program should be delayed until the Supreme Court rendered its decision and also pointed out that the 1953 equalization program was "too ambitious" and too costly. Promising to improve on separate but equal was one thing, but Waits and many other whites, especially Delta leaders, cringed at the hefty price tag attached to a comprehensive equalization scheme. As Joe Wroten, perhaps the most "liberal" member of the legislature at the time, later observed, most legislators viewed the equalization program as "sort of a last gasp to try to maintain a segregated educational system" by putting more money into black education, but "I don't think they really meant to make it equal."⁴⁸

Others saw the full funding of the 1953 educational program as a preemptive strike against pending federal intervention in their affairs. Most members of the Recess Education Committee reasoned that "[t]he fact that Mississippi has made an honest attempt to remedy an inequitable situation may have a psychological influence upon the United States Supreme Court in its decision in the segregation cases." Others, including Governor Hugh L. White and George W. Owens of Pontotoc County, vice-chairman of the Recess Education Committee and chairman of the Senate Education Committee, believed that the improvements in education were needed whether the Supreme Court required integration or not. Owens reasoned that if the Supreme Court did invalidate Jim Crow schools, "the only possibility of maintaining a segregated system in Mississippi is by persuading the Negro to attend of his own volition schools provided for him." Such persuasion would be easier if "adequate, respectable, and equal facilities are provided."⁴⁹

State leaders such as Owens often recognized that black support was necessary for the success of the state's equalization program, especially if the separate but equal doctrine were invalidated. But, except briefly through the MCCE, blacks were rarely consulted about whether or how the state could build a better segregated school system. When black leaders complained in 1948 about the unequal distribution of the 1946 school building funds and called for the creation of a biracial commission to oversee the process, Governor Wright initially agreed to adopt such a

commission if the black members assured him that their objectives did not include overturning segregation. After all, maintaining segregation remained the rationale for the state's equalization campaign. In April 1949, however, Wright told a gathering of Mississippi teachers that he "was ready to make the appointments when it was learned to my amazement" that some of the blacks being considered for membership on the commission "did believe in the abolition of segregation and [it] would be their purpose to work to that end." Apparently never recovering from his discovery that leading blacks in the state did not wholeheartedly support Jim Crow, Wright subsequently appointed an all-white education advisory committee.⁵⁰ Such well-founded doubts about black support ultimately meant that constructing a better form of segregation remained the sole prerogative of those who had long benefitted from the inequalities of separate education. Given these circumstances, the state's equalization program never had a chance of being funded fully or implemented fairly.

Even so, many black Mississippians endorsed the state's equalization efforts. Some had long accommodated themselves to the segregated world of Mississippi, and the state's post—World War II equalization attempts, however flawed, only bolstered the willingness of a number of black leaders to embrace an improved version of the separate but equal doctrine. H. H. Humes, a Greenville minister and newspaper editor, claimed in 1949 that "a majority" of black Mississippians supported equalization efforts and recognized that school integration "would make it complicated and difficult for the whites and the Negroes to exist here together without friction."⁵¹ Many teachers also accepted the logic of the equalization strategy. W. Milan Davis, president of the MATCS in 1949, told Governor Wright that teachers wanted equalization of facilities and salaries; they considered segregation an "'old account—settled long ago.'" After all, black teachers were employees of the state that had created Jim Crow schools, and now, with state promises to improve the institutions they had labored so hard to build and nurture, accommodation and compromise seemed preferable to resistance and confrontation. Black teachers, though poorly trained by white standards, generally represented the most educated segment of local black communities, and they applied their talents with incredible perseverance and self-sacrifice to the task of improving the lives of black youth. Black teachers often worked beyond the state-funded short school term either unpaid or with only room and board as compensation. Others worked at second jobs, which frequently provided more income than teaching, to make ends meet. And black teachers regularly provided extra instruction after school hours to help slow students catch up or challenge brighter ones to learn more.⁵² The obvious pride most blacks took in their schools, despite their relative inadequacies, also generated support among black parents for the state's equalization proposals. Mississippi had an active black Parent-Teacher Association, first formed in 1923 by a group of women in Natchez, and school patrons regularly turned out at their local schools both to raise much-needed funds and to celebrate black educational accomplishments. Despite the shortcomings of black schools under Jim Crow, these institutions nevertheless played an important role in black neighborhoods and were a source of community pride in black achievement.⁵³

Although educational equalization had many black allies in Mississippi—including some who were willing to pledge fealty to segregation in exchange for increased funds for black schools—Governor Wright and other white leaders were correct to recognize that Jim Crow education also had its black opponents. By the early 1950s, a small but growing number of black Mississippians, especially those affiliated with the NAACP, recognized the failure of the state's

equalization bid, sensed the national mood was shifting in opposition to the South's racial mores, and supported the NAACP's strategy of a more direct assault on segregation. Believing that the days of trying to accommodate and improve on Jim Crow had passed and that a new era had dawned, even in Mississippi, these voices became most public in the months before the historic Supreme Court decision of May 1954. At a November 1953 meeting of the state's NAACP branches in Indianola (according to one report, an assembly at which "no teachers" were present), the group's president, Reverend Amos O. Holmes of Amory, denounced those who would support the state's equalization efforts. Holmes claimed that NAACP leaders would "work toward the goal of full freedom, full integration, and full democracy for every Mississippian, Negro and white, and see to it that the vicious system of segregation is challenged until it is removed."⁵⁴

Some Mississippi blacks associated with the NAACP, however, supported both the assault on segregation and the promised but long- delayed equalization funding. In the fall of 1953, for example, C. R. Darden, a photographer and NAACP leader in Meridian, sent a formal complaint from a group of the city's blacks to the Meridian school board demanding action on improving the local black schools. "Our children sometimes have two lessons daily, some days they are sent home at noon for no reason . . .," he wrote to NAACP director of branches Gloster B. Current. "Now I am concerned about what is happening to our children while we are waiting for the decision [sic] of the Supreme Court. We do not know how long the decision may be, nor how long the officials will hang on to the administration that is depriving our children the full benefit of the limited facilities that we now have." The board refused to meet with Darden's group, and although the Supreme Court's decision was only months away, their concern that the current school administration might "hang on" for some time proved quite prescient.⁵⁵ Darden sensed that the struggle for better schools for the black children of Meridian and the rest of Mississippi would indeed be a long one, whatever the Supreme Court might decide. School integration would likely not happen overnight, and additional funds for black schools were needed immediately.

In 1953, as white state leaders contemplated whether or not to undertake a sweeping attempt at educational equalization in a last-gasp hope of undermining a likely decision by the U.S. Supreme Court against the Plessy doctrine, more and more black Mississippians seemed prepared to abandon the system of Jim Crow if they had the backing of the federal government. At its annual meeting in March 1953, the Mississippi Teachers Association (formerly the Mississippi Association of Teachers in Colored Schools) generally endorsed the stance of the organization's president, J. D. Boyd, principal of the Utica Institute, who "called for further patience" with the state's equalization program. But when Boyd called a meeting of almost three hundred black leaders (including teachers and others) in the fall of 1953 to "crystallize opinion" on the upcoming legislative equalization plan of 1953, the conclave adopted a resolution that black Mississippians would only accede to Jim Crow if the U.S. Supreme Court upheld the practice. Apparently blindsided by the group's stance, Boyd rushed a letter of reassurance to Governor White in which he claimed that the state's teachers endorsed the governor's special session "as a forward step in improving and providing equal educational opportunity for all children of the State."⁵⁶ His claims notwithstanding, a growing number of teachers apparently seemed prepared to abandon segregated education if the courts ruled against the practice. With black opinion in the state divided on whether to accept the promise of educational equalization in

return for their pledge of loyalty to Jim Crow, state legislators balked at funding a comprehensive equalization package.

In 1954 equalization seemingly became a moot point after the Brown decision shifted constitutional presumption in favor of ending state-sanctioned school segregation. Mississippi's political leaders, however, essentially ignored the decision; ten years would pass before the state took even the first step toward dismantling its system of dual schools. A resurgence of economic and physical intimidation forestalled any black attempts to desegregate Mississippi schools for a decade after Brown, but the state continued to move forward on its program of improving its separate black schools during the interim. However, this second decade of equalization efforts proved as ineffectual as that of the post—World War II years and ultimately only exacerbated black discontent with Jim Crow schools. In 1963 black parents in Leake County and in Jackson launched two of the first school desegregation lawsuits in the state. In Jackson, Medgar Evers and other black parents cited the failed equalization campaign of the previous two decades as a primary motive for their school desegregation effort. Although their action was designed in part to support the Jackson NAACP's effort to end all forms of racial segregation, they also demanded action because they wanted equal and quality schools for their children. The city had built twenty-nine new schools between 1950 and 1963, but only nine of them were designated for black students, and by 1962, the city's black schools were seriously overcrowded and understaffed. In Leake County, the close-knit and largely independent black community of Harmony lost a school that black landowners had built in the 1920s—"one of the best schools in the state," according to one of the black residents—when the county's black schools were consolidated in the early 1960s; the black residents of Harmony responded to this unilateral white decision that robbed them of a key community resource by filing a school desegregation lawsuit.⁵⁷

In the end, the state's post-Brown equalization attempts had all the problems of the previous decade's project and highlighted the necessity for desegregation. Without a substantial infusion of federal funds that white leaders saw as problematic, the state simply did not have the resources to pay for two modern school systems. Also, without the ability or will to compel local officials to spend state and local funds fairly, efforts at equitable spending would always fall short. Indeed, as late as 1962 the average Mississippi school district, despite sixteen years of state-sponsored equalization measures, still spent nearly four dollars per capita in local instruction funds on white children for every dollar expended on black students.⁵⁸ Finally, attempts to upgrade black schools through techniques like school consolidation were undertaken within a structure where resources were still distributed unequally between the races and in which blacks had little voice in how changes were implemented, and thus served only to further anger black Mississippians over the injustices prevalent in the state's educational system.

REFERENCES

1. For overviews of school desegregation, see George R. Metcalf, *From Little Rock to Boston: The History of School Desegregation* (Westport, Conn., and London, 1983); J. Harvie Wilkinson III, *From Brown to Bakke: The Supreme Court and School Integration, 1954-1978* (Oxford and New York, 1979); and Frank T. Read and Lucy S. McGough, *Let Them Be Judged: The Judicial Integration of the Deep South* (Metuchen, N.J., and London, 1978). In *Along Freedom Road: Hyde County, North Carolina and the Fate of Black Schools in the South* (Chapel Hill and London, 1994), David S. Cecelski demonstrates how the black

community in Hyde County, which had developed good schools despite inequitable state funding, resisted school desegregation once it became apparent that the process meant the loss of black jobs and the closing of black schools. The author would like to thank the following for their comments on earlier versions of this essay: Leslie Bloch, Bradley Bond, Charles Eagles, Sean Farrell, Neil McMillen, and the three anonymous readers for the *Journal of Southern History*.

2. For examples, see Stephen C. Halpern, *On the Limits of the Law: The Ironic Legacy of Title VI of the 1964 Civil Rights Act* (Baltimore and London, 1995); Jared Taylor, *Paved with Good Intentions: The Failure of Race Relations in Contemporary America* (New York, 1992), 202-10; and Raymond Wolters, *The Burden of Brown: Thirty Years of School Desegregation* (Knoxville, 1984).
3. Legal scholar Derrick A. Bell Jr., in "The Remedy in *Brown* is Effective Schooling for Black Children," *Social Policy*, XV (Fall 1984), 8, argues that "the mandated physical separation of Black children in segregated schools was a manifestation of the real evil, racism, and not the evil itself"; with school integration literally forced on an unwilling white South, white racism remained "as viable and as pernicious a force for harming the hearts and minds of Black children in a racially-balanced school as it ever was under the pre-*Brown* 'separate but equal' system." Mark V. Tushnet, *The NAACP's Legal Strategy against Segregated Education, 1925-1950* (Chapel Hill and London, 1987), Chap. 8, esp. 158-60, suggests that sustained NAACP support for equalization litigation might have been a strategy equally as effective as their eventual direct assault on segregation because, given massive resistance by whites to abandoning Jim Crow, an equalization strategy might have improved educational conditions for black children at least as much as they were enhanced by 1970, when school integration finally occurred.
4. Richard Kluger, *Simple Justice: The History of *Brown v. Board of Education* and Black America's Struggle for Equality* (New York, 1975), esp. Part 1; Tushnet, *NAACP's Legal Strategy*; Numan V. Bartley, *The New South, 1945-1980* (Baton Rouge and London, 1995), esp. Chap. 1-3 and 5; Davison M. Douglas, *Reading, Writing, and Race: The Desegregation of the Charlotte Schools* (Chapel Hill and London, 1995), Chap. 1; and James T. Patterson, *Grand Expectations: The United States, 1945-1974* (New York and Oxford, 1996), Chap. 13.
5. W. W. Whitaker to J. M. Tubb, May 12, 1950, Volume 234, Records of the Department of Education, Record Group 50 (Mississippi Department of Archives and History, Jackson); hereinafter cited as RG 50 (MDAH).
6. *Mississippi Educational Journal*, XVIII (October 1941), 2-3 (first quotation on p. 2); A. L. Johnson to NAACP, November 6, 1941 (second quotation), and A. L. Johnson to NAACP, March 24, 1943, both in Series B, Part 3: *The Campaign for Educational Equality, 1913-1965*, of the Papers of the NAACP (microfilm; Frederick, Md., 1986—), reel 9; and A. L. Johnson to A. J. Noel, April 6, 1950, Gladys Noel Bates Papers (Tougaloo College, Tougaloo, Miss.). Neil R. McMillen, *Dark Journey: Black Mississippians in the Age of Jim Crow* (Urbana and Chicago, 1989), 169, notes that in 1935 the five black lawyers in the state were generally powerless to handle matters involving "white interests."
7. T. R. M. Howard, "The Mississippi Negro in Our Changing World," January 4, 1945, Box 3, Walter Sillers Jr. Collection (Charles W. Capps Jr. Archives, Delta State University, Cleveland, Miss.); "Negro Teachers Threaten Equal-Pay Suit as Solons Ready to Convene Tuesday," Jackson (Miss.) *Daily News*, January 7, 1946, p. 1; Kenneth Toler, "Mississippi Negroes Ask School Equality," *Memphis Commercial Appeal*, February 18, 1946, p. 11; and

- L. O. Todd to Walter Sillers Jr., February 21, 1946, Box 111, Sillers Collection. See also Andrew Anthony Workman, "The Rejection of Accommodation by Mississippi's Black Public Elite, 1946-1954," (M.A. thesis, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, 1988), 27-44.
8. "A Timely Warning," Jackson (Miss.) Daily News, November 14, 1938, p. 4 (first quotation); Report of the Committee on Improvement of Negro Education, Mississippi Education Association, March 28, 1940, Julius Rosenwald Fund Archives (microfilm; Amistad Research Center, Tulane University, New Orleans), reel 146; Workman, "The Rejection of Accommodation by Mississippi's Black Public Elite," 28; and Flyer, n.d. [Fall 1948?], The Southern Regional Council Papers, 1944-1968 (microfilm; Ann Arbor, Mich., 1984), reel 22 (second quotation).
 9. P[ercy] H. Easom to Judge Joe May, March 12, 1938, The General Education Board Archives (microfilm ed.; Wilmington, Del., 1994), Series 1, Appropriations: The Early Southern Program, Mississippi, reel 77, "Supervisor of Rural Schools—Negro (1914-1952)"; and "Easom Addresses Indianola Rotary," Jackson (Miss.) Daily News, July 25, 1946.
 10. The efforts to improve white education in the South during the Progressive era can be traced in Louis R. Harlan, *Separate and Unequal: Public School Campaigns and Racism in the Southern Seaboard States, 1901-1915* (Chapel Hill, 1958); Dewey W. Grantham, *Southern Progressivism: The Reconciliation of Progress and Tradition* (Knoxville, 1983), 249-61; and William A. Link, *A Hard Country and a Lonely Place: Schooling, Society, and Reform in Rural Virginia, 1870-1920* (Chapel Hill and London, 1986). James D. Anderson, *The Education of Blacks in the South, 1860-1935* (Chapel Hill and London, 1988), describes the development of black education during the same years.
 11. Spencer J. Maxcy, "Progressivism and Rural Education in the Deep South, 1900-1950," in Ronald K. Goodenow and Arthur O. White, eds., *Education and the Rise of the New South* (Boston, 1981), 52-53; and "Summary of Reports of Mr. J. T. Calhoun, Supervisor of Rural Schools—Negro, in Mississippi," July 1, 1915—January 1, 1916, General Education Board Archives, Early Southern Program: Mississippi, reel 77. Link, *A Hard Country and a Lonely Place*, 139-48 and 198, describes how Virginia whites initially resisted the efforts to consolidate their schools because of "the strength of localism in social and political life" (quotation on p. 198).
 12. *Twenty Years' Progress, 1910-1930, and a Biennial Survey of Public Education in Mississippi, 1929-1930 and 1930-1931* (Jackson, Miss., 1931), 14-15 and 20; G. J. Cain, "Financing the Public Schools of Mississippi," August 1946, Box 48, J. M. Tubb Papers (MDAH); and Mississippi Board of Development, "Educational Mississippi: Heart of the Deep South" (pamphlet; n.p., 1944), in Folder on "Education, 1901-1949," Subject File (MDAH).
 13. *Twenty Years' Progress, 1910-1930*, pp. 14-15 and 20; and G. J. Cain, "Financing the Public Schools of Mississippi," August 1946, Box 48, Tubb Papers.
 14. Simeon Lafayette Stringer, "A Survey of Two Types of School Systems for Negro Education, A Semi-Consolidated School System Without Transportation in Coahoma County, Mississippi, and a Consolidated School System With Transportation in Forrest County, Mississippi," (M.A. thesis, University of Mississippi, 1929), 67-71; *Twenty Years' Progress, 1910-1930*, pp. 51-53; and Joseph W. Addison, "The Adaptability of the Forrest County Mississippi Program of Negro Education to Certain Selected Counties of the State" (M.A. thesis, Xavier University [New Orleans], 1942). The contribution of blacks to Rosenwald-

built schools was generally quite substantial. For example, the 123 Rosenwald schools built in Mississippi between 1920 and 1922 cost \$689,235. Of this amount, blacks contributed 49 percent, the Rosenwald Foundation gave 18 percent, whites contributed 16 percent, and 16 percent came from county funds; see Bura Hilbun, "Report of Educational Activities In Negro Schools of Mississippi, 1923," Vol. 136, RG 50 (MDAH). See also Edwin R. Embree and Julia Waxman, *Investment in People: The Story of the Julius Rosenwald Fund* (New York, 1949). Blacks generally faced a system of "double taxation" in the early twentieth century in building schools for their children. See Anderson, *The Education of Blacks in the South*, 148-85 (quotation on p. 156).

15. Addison, "The Adaptability of the Forrest County Mississippi Program of Negro Education to Certain Selected Counties of the State," 1-23.
16. The difference between black and white teacher salaries can be gleaned from "Salaries Paid to Teachers in Certain Mississippi Counties in 1889-90 and in 1936-37," General Education Board Archives, Early Southern Program: Mississippi, reel 78. This report compared salaries for these two years in the following county school districts: Adams, Amite, Alcorn, Attala, Bolivar, Coahoma, Covington, DeSoto, Hinds, Itawamba, Jasper, Jefferson, Jones, Lauderdale, Leake, Lee, Leflore, Newton, Noxubee, Prentiss, and Scott. Between these two periods the average monthly salary for white teachers rose from \$31.84 to \$61.67, while the average monthly salary for black teachers in these same counties during the same period rose only from \$26.28 to \$26.89. Consolidation was widely recognized as a key factor in raising teachers' salaries, so most of the increase in white teachers' salaries undoubtedly occurred after 1910. Redmond's comments on the effects of consolidation can be found in Report by S. D. Redmond (Chairman, Steering Committee for Improved Higher Education for Negroes in Mississippi) to Governor Thomas L. Bailey, et al., n.d. [ca. 1940s], Box 2, Kenneth Toler Papers (Mitchell Memorial Library, Mississippi State University, Starkville).
17. R. D. Polk to NAACP, April 28, 1937, Group I, Series C, Box 201, NAACP Papers (Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.) (first quotation); Report by S. D. Redmond to Governor Bailey, Toler Papers (second quotation); and Joe C. Brown to Walter White, November 29, 1937, I—C-201, NAACP Papers (last quotation).
18. Mississippi Educational Journal, XVI (February 1940), 102; C. J. Duckworth, interview by Michael Garvey, December 12, 1975, transcript, Vol. 352, Mississippi Oral History Program (University of Southern Mississippi, Hattiesburg) (first quotation); and Lynda J. Davis, interview by Milan Green, July 23, 1971, transcript, Vol. 5, Oral History Collection (Mary Holmes College, West Point, Miss.) (second quotation).
19. Joe C. Brown to Walter White, November 29, 1937, I—C-201, NAACP Papers (Library of Congress) (first quotation); Charles Johnson, interview by Michael Garvey, August 26, 1975, transcript, Vol. 344, Mississippi Oral History Program; Dave Dunaway, interview by R. Wayne Pyle, March 24, 1981, transcript, Vol. 411, Mississippi Oral History Program; and A. H. Ramsey to Walter Sillers, February 19, 1951, Box 16, Sillers Collection.
20. "Public School Enrollment and Expenditures in Six Southern States," September 21, 1944, General Education Board Archives, Early Southern Program: Mississippi, reel 78; "Number and Average Salaries of Classroom Teachers," n.d. [1960s?], Folder on "Teachers' Salaries," Vol. 378, Records of the Legislature, Record Group 47 (MDAH); hereinafter cited as RG 47 (MDAH); and Memo from Mr. Dudley to Gloster B. Current, March 29, 1948, II—B-144, NAACP Papers (Library of Congress). While in Vicksburg, Dudley had found that two hundred black children were turned away from the black junior high because of a lack of

space, and he heard rumors that as many as two hundred thousand black kids statewide failed to attend classes for the same reason. A complete discussion of the inadequacies of black education in Mississippi during the first half of the twentieth century can be found in McMillen, *Dark Journey*, Chap. 3.

21. John Dittmer discusses some of these efforts in *Local People: The Struggle for Civil Rights in Mississippi* (Urbana and Chicago, 1994), 34-37.
22. Southern Regional Council, *Wanted: An Educated South* (Atlanta, 1947), 20.
23. H. M. Ivy to J. M. Tubb, January 4, 1949, Vol. 230, RG 50 (MDAH); and Robert M. Mayo to John Bell Williams, January 18, 1949, Vol. 279, Records of United States Congressmen, Record Group 59 (MDAH); hereinafter cited as RG 59 (MDAH).
24. For the history of federal aid to southern education, see Rena L. Vassar, ed., *Social History of American Education, Volume II: 1860 to the Present* (Chicago, 1965), 5-7; Daniel W. Crofts, "The Black Response to the Blair Education Bill," *Journal of Southern History*, XXXVII (February 1971), 41-65; Gilbert E. Smith, *The Limits of Reform: Politics and Federal Aid to Education, 1937-1950* (New York and London, 1982); Diane Ravitch, *The Troubled Crusade: American Education, 1945-1980* (New York, 1983), Chap. 1; and Ward M. McAfee, *Religion, Race, and Reconstruction: The Public School in the Politics of the 1870s* (Albany, N.Y., 1998).
25. John Ray Skates Jr., "World War II and Its Effects, 1940-1948," in *A History of Mississippi*, ed. by Richard Aubrey McLemore (2 vols.; Hattiesburg, 1973), II, 131-33; Folder on "Thomas Lowry Bailey Biographical Sketches," Subject File (MDAH); Report of the Joint Legislative Education Committee on the Public School System of the State ([Jackson], 1946); and P. H. Easom and E. P. Littlejohn, "A Summary of the Main Legislative Enactments Pertaining to Negro Education in Mississippi, Passed by the 1946 Session of the Legislature," *Southern Regional Council Papers*, reel 22.
26. "Our Disgraceful Negro Schools," *Jackson (Miss.) Daily News*, February 5, 1949, p. 1 (first quotation); and E. S. Bishop, "President's Annual Message to the Fortieth Annual Session of the Mississippi Association of Teachers in Colored Schools, March 28-29, 1946," *Mississippi Educational Journal*, XXII (April 1946), 124.
27. J. M. Tubb to W. R. Nettles, October 24, 1946, Vol. 217, RG 50 (MDAH); Schools Applying for State Aid on Building Projects, October 27, 1947, Box 41, and A. H. Ramsey to Walter Sillers, February 10, 1951, Box 1, both in Sillers Collection.
28. "Address by Governor Fielding L. Wright, Annual Meeting of Teachers in Negro Schools," *Mississippi Educational Journal*, XXV (April 1949), 127; "Fair Deal for Negro Schools," *Jackson (Miss.) Daily News*, January 25, 1950, p. 1; Entries for September 9, 1946, and September 10, 1947, Tunica County Board of Education Minutes (microfilm; MDAH), reel 1; and John Martin to J. M. Tubb, September 10, 1947, Vol. 221, RG 50 (MDAH) (quotation).
29. The 40 percent figure is listed in "Local Teacher's Action May Hasten Passage of Salary Equalization Bill Now Before State Legislature," *Jackson (Miss.) Advocate*, March 13, 1948, pp. 1, 4. A comparison of the situation in rural Tunica County with that of the Hattiesburg school district reveals some of the prevailing disparities. Through the late 1950s Tunica County had over fifty black schools, the vast majority of which were one-teacher operations, and most of these black schools operated for an eight-month term at best. In Hattiesburg, where all schools operated on nine-month terms by the 1940s, the annual pay for first-year white teachers was raised by 25 percent between 1947 and 1950, while first-year black

teachers received only a 20 percent increase during the same period. At the same time, white teachers in the district with at least ten years' experience received an 11 percent bump in salary between 1947 and 1950, while black teachers in the same category garnered 19 percent more pay. See Entries for August 3, 1955, and July 3, 1957, Tunica County Board of Education Minutes, reels 1 and 2; and Entries for March 11, 1947, and May 4, 1950, Hattiesburg School Board Minutes (Hattiesburg Schools Administrative Offices, Hattiesburg, Miss.).

30. P. H. Easom and E. P. Littlejohn, "A Summary of the Main Legislative Enactments Pertaining to Negro Education in Mississippi, Passed by the 1946 Session of the Legislature," Southern Regional Council Papers, reel 22; Biennial Report and Recommendations of the State Superintendent of Public Education, 1947-1949 (Jackson, Miss., 1950), 11; and "Number and Average Salaries of Classroom Teachers," RG 47 (MDAH).
31. "State-Wide Mass Meeting Get No Answer on Request For Bi-Racial COMMISION [sic]," Jackson (Miss.) Advocate, March 27, 1948, p. 1 (first quotation); Mrs. Gordon Patton and thirty-six others to Members of the State Building Commission, n.d. [March 1947?], Minutes of the Board of Trustees of the Jackson Public Schools (microfilm; MDAH), reel 4 (second quotation); and "Our Disgraceful Negro Schools," Jackson (Miss.) Daily News, February 5, 1949, p. 1 (last quotation). See also Charles P. Smith, "Governor Fielding L. Wright's Legislative Program: 1946-1952," (M.A. thesis, University of Southern Mississippi, 1976).
32. Gladys Noel Bates, interview by Catherine Jannik, December 23, 1996, transcript, Vol. 689, Mississippi Oral History Program; Statement by Mrs. Bates, May 16, 1992, Gladys Noel Bates Papers; and Jess Wright, "Up and Down Farish Street," Jackson (Miss.) Advocate, June 4-10, 1981, p. A5.
33. Gladys Noel Bates interview transcript; Brief for Appellants, U.S. Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals, Gladys Noel Bates and Richard Jess Brown v. Board of Trustees of Jackson Separate School District and K. P. Walker, Superintendent of Jackson Schools, n.d. [1950?], Bates Papers (first quotation); Catherine Mary Jannik, "Gladys Noel Bates: Educator and Activist" (M.A. thesis, University of Southern Mississippi, 1999), 18, 40 '14; Vicki Crawford, "Race, Class, Gender, and Culture: Black Women's Activism in the Mississippi Civil Rights Movement," Journal of Mississippi History, LXIII (Spring 1996), 8; Entries of February 13, 1948, and March 12, 1948, Minutes of the Board of Trustees of the Jackson Public Schools, reel 5; John C. Batte to Gladys N. Bates, February 11, 1948, (second quotation), and Brief for Appellants, Bates and Brown v. Board of Trustees, both in the Bates Papers. The Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals upheld the district court ruling the following year; see Bates et al. v. Batte et al., 187 F.2d 142 (1951), at 142. Also see Constance Baker Motley, Equal Justice Under the Law: An Autobiography (New York, 1998), 72-79; and Dittmer, Local People, 35-36.
34. G. N. Bates to L. F. Palmer, n.d. [Summer 1948?] (quotations); Statement by Mrs. Bates, May 16, 1992; and James A. Burns to Robert J. Carter, March 24, 1949, all in the Bates Papers; "Mrs. Gladys Noel Bates and Husband Denied Further Teacher Jobs in City School System," Jackson (Miss.) Advocate, June 5, 1948, pp. 1, 8; and "Suits For Equal Pay for Negro and White Teachers to Be Filed on Every County in Mississippi," Clarksdale (Miss.) Daily Press, May 12, 1949, p. 7. Other equalization suits in Mississippi during this period barely got off the ground. An equalization petition filed by nine Madison County residents in 1948 with the county school board floundered after the NAACP refused to pursue their case, in part because, as the organization moved toward a strategy of directly assaulting Jim Crow,

they put less of their efforts into fighting equalization battles. See "Madison County Negro Citizens Acts [sic] to Take Case For Equal Educational Facilities to Court," Jackson (Miss.) Advocate, March 27, 1948, p. 1; and Edward R. Dudley to James A. Burns, Series B, Part 3, Papers of the NAACP, reel 2. Although the Jackson branch of the NAACP voted to sue Hinds County schools and the Jackson city schools "for equal school facilities and term" and received some encouragement from the national NAACP, the lawsuit never materialized; see A. W. Wells to Thurgood Marshall, March 14, 1950, and Robert L. Carter to Jackson Branch Educational Committee, March 27, 1950, both in II—B-144, NAACP Papers (Library of Congress).

35. James A. Burns to A. J. Noel, December 22, 1948, Bates Papers (first quotation); Biennial Report and Recommendations of the State Superintendent of Public Education, 1953-1955 (Jackson, Miss., 1956), 64-66; and Biennial Report and Recommendations of the State Superintendent of Public Education, 1951-1953 (Jackson, Miss., 1954), 14. Representative Swango quoted in Smith, "Governor Fielding L. Wright's Legislative Program," 60.
36. In the 1948-49 school year, the average salary for white teachers was \$1731.05, but only \$659.49 for black teachers; see "Number and Average Salaries of Classroom Teachers," RG 47 (MDAH). Walker quoted in Linuel Duane Jayroe, "Kirby Pipken Walker, Superintendent, Jackson Municipal School District, 1937-1969" (Ed.D. diss., University of Mississippi, 1983), 106; "White and Negro Teachers Vote Down Proposed Plan to Equalize Salaries; Special Session Out," [Winona (Miss.) Times?], October 7, 1949, clipping in Box 91, Tubb Papers (last quotation).
37. Smith, "Governor Fielding L. Wright's Legislative Program," 50-52; Scott Baker, "Testing Equality: The National Teacher Examination and the NAACP's Legal Campaign to Equalize Teachers' Salaries in the South, 1936-63," *History of Education Quarterly*, XXXV (Spring 1995), 49-64.
38. Although the meager funds spent on black education certainly doomed black teachers to perform worse than whites on average, statistical probabilities ensured that some whites would inevitably score in the lowest percentiles and that some blacks would fare better than those scores, despite the legacy of inequalities. An example of this pattern can be seen in a test administered by the Benton County schools to its teachers in 1929. Twenty-seven whites took the test, and four of them failed it (14.8 percent), while twenty blacks took the test, and ten of them did not pass (50 percent). While six white teachers achieved scores in the highest percentile (22.2 percent), three of the black test takers achieved the same distinction (15 percent), and one of these three actually made the highest score of all those who took the test. See Entries for April and September 1929, Benton County School Board Minutes (microfilm; MDAH), reel 2.
39. Florence O. Alexander, "The Education of Negroes in Mississippi," *Journal of Negro Education*, XVI (Summer 1947), 377; Entry of November 6, 1951, Hattiesburg School Board Minutes; "White and Negro Teachers Vote Down Proposed Plan to Equalize Salaries; Special Session Out," [Winona (Miss.) Times?], October 7, 1949, clipping in Box 91, Tubb Papers; Frances Baker, "Education Group Vote to Base Equal Pay on U.S. Teacher Exams," *Jackson (Miss.) Daily News*, August 25, 1949, p. 1, 14; "Better Negro Schools Are Now Imperative," *Jackson (Miss.) Daily News*, April 19, 1949, p. 16; George Harmon, "Thigpen Predicts All Teacher Salary Bills Are Doomed," *Jackson (Miss.) Daily News*, January 25, 1950, p. 10; and Smith, "Governor Fielding L. Wright's Legislative Program," 55-58.

40. Biennial Report and Recommendations of the State Superintendent of Public Education, 1951-1953, p. 163, lists the amount of the special appropriation for black teachers for 1952-53 as \$2,241,938.80. Between the 1952-53 and 1953-54 school years, black teachers received raises averaging just over \$90. With approximately 6,500 black teachers in the state at the time, funds spent on increasing black salaries would have been about \$585,000 if all teachers had received the average raise. See "Number and Average Salaries of Classroom Teachers," RG 47 (MDAH). Although this calculation probably underestimates the amount of state funds actually spent on increasing black teacher salaries during the period, my estimate in the text that less than half of the funds appropriated were spent in the intended manner seems a conservative one.
41. Address by Kenneth Toler, June 9, 1954, Box 1, Mississippi Education Collection (Special Collections, J. D. Williams Library, University of Mississippi, Oxford); A. H. Ramsey to Walter Sillers, March 25, 1953, Box 137, Sillers Collection; and "Number and Average Salaries of Classroom Teachers," RG 47 (MDAH).
42. Biennial Report and Recommendations of the State Superintendent of Public Education, 1953-1955, p. 64.
43. Applications Filed with the State Building Commission to March 24, 1947, Box 3, Sillers Collection.
44. Biennial Report and Recommendations of the State Superintendent of Public Education, 1953-1955, pp. 64-66; Biennial Report and Recommendations of the State Superintendent of Public Education, 1951-1953, p. 14; and Mrs. Lynda J. Davis, interview by Milan Green, July 23, 1971, transcript, Vol. 5, Oral History Collection (Mary Holmes College, West Point, Miss.) (quotation).
45. J. M. Tubb to George W. Stricklin, January 24, 1953, Vol. 246, RG 50 (MDAH); Mississippi Citizens' Council on Education, "A Report on the Organizational Meeting Held in Jackson October 9, 1950," Box 3; "Questionnaire Results," 1951, Box 1 (quotation); and "Total Number Completed Questionnaires by County," Box 3, all in Association of Citizens Councils of Mississippi Papers (MDAH); Committee Report, Recess Education Study Committee, March 1953, p. 4, Box 7, G. W. Owens Papers (MDAH); and Biennial Report and Recommendations of the State Superintendent of Public Education, 1953-1955, p. 18. The report on the results of the 1951 questionnaire was not broken down by the race of the respondent, but a large number of the respondents were apparently white, since the only major black group involved in the MCCE was the MATCS. The small sampling of completed surveys in Box 2 of the Association of Citizens Councils of Mississippi Papers offers evidence that whites surveyed favored educational equalization between the races. For example, 57 of the 355 completed survey forms from Forrest County are included in these records, all from whites. To the question, "should equal services and facilities be provided" to black and white kids, 42 answered "yes," 4 said "no," and 11 did not respond to this question. Six of Pearl River County's 143 completed questionnaires have survived, and all are from whites who supported equalization.
46. "Governor Says Tax Plans For School Support May Be Given at Special Session," Jackson (Miss.) Daily News, March 22, 1952, p. 1; John E. Phay, "Report to the Recess Education Committee," n.d. [1953], Box 1, Mississippi Education Collection; "Number of People, by Counties, Listed by the U.S. Census of 1950 (Age 5-19 Inclusive) and the Mississippi School Census of 1951; and Percentages [sic] of Difference Between the Two Censuses," n.d. [1952?], Vol. 962, Records of the Governor's Office, Record Group 27 (MDAH); and

- Committee Report, Recess Education Study Committee, March 1953, p. 4, Box 7, Owens Papers.
47. Committee Report, Recess Education Study Committee, March 1953, p. 4, Box 7, Owens Papers; Biennial Report and Recommendations of the State Superintendent of Public Education, 1953-1955, pp. 15-17; John Phay, "Estimate of Cost to Bring All Schools in County or Separate School Districts to Highest Level Now in Such District," December 7, 1953, Box 1, Mississippi Education Collection; and Senate Bill No. 1204, Extraordinary Session of 1953, Box 137, Sillers Collection.
 48. Committee Report, Recess Education Study Committee, March 1953, p. 57, Box 7, Owens Papers (first quotation); and Joe Wroten, interview by Yasuhiro Katagiri, November 4, 1993, transcript, Vol. 476, Mississippi Oral History Program.
 49. Committee Report, Recess Education Study Committee, March 1953, p. 51, Box 7, Owens Papers (quotations); George W. Owens, interview by Chester Morgan, August 2, 1973, transcript, Vol. 332, Mississippi Oral History Program; and Journal of the House of the State of Mississippi, 1954, Including Extraordinary Session of 1953, pp. 1269-72.
 50. "Address by Governor Fielding L. Wright, Annual Meeting of Teachers in Negro Schools" Mississippi Educational Journal, XXV (April 1949), 127 (quotation); "2 Extra Sessions of Solons Possible," Jackson (Miss.) Clarion-Ledger, July 12, 1949, p. 1; and "Special Session on Teachers Set," Jackson (Miss.) Clarion-Ledger, August 17, 1949, p. 1.
 51. H. H. Humes quoted in "What the Negroes are Thinking," reprint of an editorial from the Greenville (Miss.) Delta Leader, May 11, 1949, in Vol. 279, RG 59 (MDAH). John W. Cell, *The Highest Stage of White Supremacy: The Origins of Segregation in South Africa and the American South* (Cambridge, Eng., and other cities, 1982), Chap. 7, suggests that once white hegemony had been well established and passed through its most violent stage (in Mississippi, the early decades of the twentieth century), more moderate white segregationists and blacks generally collaborated to foster and perpetuate a kinder, gentler form of white supremacy.
 52. "Negro Teacher President Calls Segregation Closed Issue, Asks Improvements," Jackson (Miss.) Daily News, March 26, 1949, p. 1 (quotation); Michael Fultz, "African American Teachers in the South, 1890-1940: Powerlessness and the Ironies of Expectations and Protest," *History of Education Quarterly*, XXXV (Winter 1995), 416-21; Mrs. Annie Blanchard, interview by Alvin Thomas, June 2, 1971, transcript, Vol. 2, Oral History Collection; "The P.T.A. (Jones Chapel Public School Community)," Mississippi Educational Journal, XVIII (May 1942), 153; Douglas Conner, interview by Neil McMillen, December 2, 1993, transcript (copy in possession of the author); and H. M. Ivy, "Autobiography of Horace Macaulay Ivy, Ph.D., Superintendent Emeritus, Meridian Public Schools, Meridian, Miss.," n.d. [1970s?], p. 65, Vol. 279, Mississippi Oral History Program.
 53. Rev. S. D. Washington, "The Department of Parent-Teacher Associations," Mississippi Educational Journal, II (March 1926), 135. Mentions of fund-raising and celebratory events at black schools around Mississippi are prominent throughout the issues of the Mississippi Educational Journal; see, for example, "Parent-Day Program a Success at Eureka, Hattiesburg, Miss.," Mississippi Educational Journal, XXII (May 1946), 152. Also see the advertisement for Achievement Day and County-Wide Graduation for Copiah County's Negro Schools, Vol. 230, RG 50 (MDAH). Pride in formerly all-black schools did not disappear with the arrival of school integration; see, for example, a website by Willie L. Robinson (Class of 1962) that celebrates the achievements of George Washington Carver

High School in Picayune, Mississippi, available at <http://www.angelfire.com/wi/Carver> (accessed on August 24, 1999). Vanessa Siddle Walker, in *Their Highest Potential: An African American School Community in the Segregated South* (Chapel Hill and London, 1996), demonstrates that segregated black schools provided positive educational benefits for black children, despite the prevailing inequities.

54. H. H. Humes to P. H. Easom, November 13, 1953, Folder on "Percy H. Easom," Subject File (MDAH) (first quotation); "Uncle Toms' Scored in Mississippi School Fight," press release, November 12, 1953, Series C, Part 3, Papers of the NAACP, reel 1 (second quotation).
55. C. R. Darden to Gloster B. Current, November 11, 1953, II—C-97, NAACP Papers (Library of Congress).
56. "State NAACP Conference Gets Rebuff," Jackson (Miss.) Advocate, April 4, 1953, p. 1 (first quotation); "White Says Negroes Back Dual System," Jackson (Miss.) Clarion-Ledger, November 6, 1953, p. 1; "Joint Assembly of Extraordinary Session of State Legislature Hear Gov. White Call for Immediate Action to Equalize and Raise Level of Education in This State," Jackson (Miss.) Advocate, November 7, 1953, pp. 1, 6; "See Race Relations Set Back From Widely Published False Report on Negro Meeting Held Here Last Week," Jackson (Miss.) Advocate, November 14, 1953, pp. 1, 5; "President of State Negro Teachers Ass'n. In Personal Visit Presents Letter to Governor and Members of the State Legislature," Jackson (Miss.) Advocate, November 28, 1953, pp. 1, 6; J. D. Boyd and the Mississippi Teachers Association to the Governor and the Legislature of Mississippi, n.d. [1953?], Vol. 245, RG 50 (MDAH) (last quotation); and Workman, "The Rejection of Accommodation by Mississippi's Black Public Elite," 70-74.
57. "Courts To Be Asked to Open P.S. Here," Jackson (Miss.) Mississippi Free Press, March 2, 1963, p. 1; Jeanne Marie Middleton, "The History of Singleton v. Jackson Municipal Separate School District: Southern School Desegregation From the Perspective of the Black Community" (Ed.D. diss., Harvard University, 1978), 65-69; Fifteen-Year Report of the Superintendent of Schools, Jackson Municipal School District: July 1, 1950 through June 30, 1965 (Jackson, Miss., 1965), 54-55; and Winson Hudson, interview by Thomas Dent, August 1, 1979, Mississippi Oral History Project (tape; Amistad Research Center, New Orleans) (quotation).
58. This information is contained in the New Orleans Times-Picayune (Mississippi edition), January 13, 1963, in an article (probably written by Jackson bureau chief Bill Minor) based on an unpublished report by the Mississippi State Department of Education (clipping; American Friends Service Committee Archives, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania). Efforts to locate the original version of this report have been thus far unsuccessful. The actual dollar amounts were: average local funds spent on education statewide annually for each white child, \$81.86; average for each black child, \$21.77.