

1953

# Report to the Recess Education Committee

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## Recommended Citation

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V.F.

Miss Education, Dept. of

REPORT TO THE RECESS EDUCATION COMMITTEE

Following are the findings and interpretations of data secured during the time I have been serving the Recess Education Committee. The Tables lettered from A through P give data that are more or less self-explanatory. Therefore the narrative part of this report has been made brief but succinct.

Accurate Child Count Sought. One reason for the non-adoption of the education program submitted by the Citizens' Council on Education during the last session of the legislature was the uncertainty as to the number of children actually attending schools or eligible for enrollment in them. The charge that school rolls were padded had been made on several occasions and the number of children on the educable rolls had been questioned. Securing actual enrollment figures and an interpretation of census figures were tasks assigned to me by the Committee. Correct figures are needed since state funds for schools are allocated on these bases.

Method of Distributing State Funds. School funds are distributed to county and municipal separate school districts chiefly on two bases. One, the "per capita fund" basis and two, the "equalizing fund" basis. Generally speaking, state allotments for schools are divided equally and placed in these two funds. All districts receive state money from the "per capita fund". The amount is determined simply by dividing the number of educable children (6-20 years inclusive) into the amount of money in this fund. Each county or separate school district is paid on the number of educable children



it has. The State Board of Education sets up rules for determining the cost of a minimum education program and the rules for determining whether or not a county or municipal separate school district has enough money to finance this minimum program. Those not having enough to finance such a program are given whatever more is needed from the "equalizing fund" if more funds are available. Only those counties and separate school districts that do not have enough money to finance a minimum education program are eligible for money from the "equalizing fund". Schools receiving "equalizing funds" operate only eight months and for the most part the relative meager offerings in such schools could be greatly improved. These funds are discussed individually on the following pages.

It should be set forth here that all monies appropriated by the legislature for the public schools are allocated to the schools to be spent on the basis of present law. Therefore the number of educable children and number of pupils in average daily attendance (A.D.A.) do not decrease the total amount spent on the schools but they do determine the distribution of the funds appropriated. Thus if a miscount of educable children (children of 6-20 years of age inclusive) in each county and municipal separate school district in the state occurred to the same degree, no unfairness would result in the amount of money received locally for schools if the miscount were in the same proportion throughout the state. The same is true for the distribution of the "equalizing funds".

Educable List. A census of the educable children, ages 6-20, is taken in odd number years by the county superintendents as required by the state



constitution and by statute. The "per capita fund" is distributed on the basis of this list and ordinarily there is no other set of figures with which to compare the educable list. However, the U. S. Census of 1950 offers a basis for comparison of the 1951 Mississippi census. Table G previously released by the Committee to the press as Table I, shows the county by county figures of the Mississippi school census and the U. S. Census for comparable age groups.

The Two Censuses. An explanation of the two censuses is needed to understand Tables G and H. The Mississippi census was taken in 1951 and includes all the boys and girls from 6-20 years of age inclusive. The U.S. Census was taken the preceding year, 1950, and includes all the boys and girls 5-19 inclusive. Thus, exactly the same group of children were included in both censuses although they were taken one year apart.

Differences in Censuses. The differences between the two sets of figures are astonishingly great. Nearly one-quarter million more people were reported by the Mississippi census than by the U. S. Census. A total of 895,779 people were reported by the Mississippi census while only 651,600 were reported by the U. S. Census. On a percentage basis 37 per cent more people were reported by the Mississippi census than were reported by the U. S. Census.

If each county showed a similar variation of approximately 37 per cent, then we might assume that similar factors prevailed in the taking of the two censuses. As has been stated previously, an accurate count or an inaccurate count in which the percentage differences remained the same, would not affect the amount of money disbursed by the state to the counties and the



separate school districts for the educables. However, Table G shows that the range in the difference was from 103 per cent in Stone County to 194 per cent in Clay County.

The allocation of funds on the "per capita fund" basis rewards "padding" the educable rolls. "Padding" of these rolls works to the advantage of all school districts--both equalizing and non-equalizing--, however, it works particularly to the advantage of the non-equalizing counties or districts. Of the eleven non-equalizing counties listed only two, Hinds and Tunica, do not exceed the state average per cent of 37 in the difference between the two censuses.

Why Censuses Differ. There are some logical explanations for variations between these two sets of data. The population of the State of Mississippi is not static. Some people change their residences both within and without the state every year. This could be one reason for a different number of children being counted one year over the number for the preceding year. It is thought by some that the U. S. Census might be under census, especially among the negroes. In the Mississippi school census some overlapping, and therefore duplication of names, is bound to occur since school districts and school attendance areas overlap and the census is taken by each school.

Differences for Negroes Greater. Table H previously has not been released to the press. It shows the two sets of census figures given in Table G but listed by race. It may be seen from this table that: (1) The percentages of differences between the censuses for whites were consistently less than those for negroes; (2) Based on the U.S.Census, the Mississippi



census for whites ranged from 77 per cent in Issaquena to 167 per cent in Lauderdale County; (3) Based on the U. S. Census, the Mississippi census for negroes ranged from 100 per cent in Covington County to 231 per cent in Issaquena County; (4) Issaquena County's range of 77 per cent for whites and 231 per cent for negroes was greater than the range in any other county.

From an analysis of these tables it is evident that the distribution of state funds on the basis of the number of educables is an unfair method of distributing state funds. In my opinion, this method of distributing state funds should be eliminated even though a constitutional amendment is necessary to effect it.

Pupils Enrolled In School. One factor in determining the amount of money necessary for the minimum education program of a county or separate school district is the number of children who attend schools. This factor is referred to as the number of children in average daily attendance (A.D.A.) and state funds are paid according to the number of children in A.D.A. The theory here is good---the greater the need in a poor county the more the state should help to educate. This budget deficit type of finance however encourages a deficit on the local level so that more state funds may be secured. However, since the A.D.A. factor is not used in allocating state funds to schools in non-equalizing counties, "padding" of rolls in this manner will benefit, by additional funds, equalizing counties only.

Securing Hosters of Children In School. In an attempt to determine the number of pupils actually enrolled in school, the Committee sent two forms to each school superintendent in the state. The first form, Form 1,



"Report of Children Actually Enrolled In School On September 1, 1952; or September 15, 1952", was filled in by the home room teachers and listed every child enrolled on those dates. Bound copies of Table A show the tabulations, school by school, and by elementary and high school divisions, of the information obtained from these forms. Listed also is the 1951-52 A.D.A. so that comparison readily may be made.

The original Form 1 sheets for all schools are filed in cabinets in the office assigned to my use.

Table A-1 is a summary of the data listed in Table A on a school by school basis. It may be seen from Table A-1 that over all the September enrollment figures are only two per cent greater than the A.D.A. figures for 1951-52. Also there were 53,071 fewer children enrolled in September 1952 than were enrolled during the school year of 1951-52.

To determine pupils who enter school late the Committee sent a second form to all superintendents in the state. This was called, Form 2, "Report of Children Actually Enrolled in School Who Were Not Listed on the Recess Education Committee's 'Report of Children Actually Enrolled in School' (Form 1)", December 1, 1952. Approximately one-third of these reports had been returned by January 15, at which time the tabulation count was closed. From these incomplete reports estimates were made of the total number of children in school. The estimated increase over the September enrollment is listed in Table I, column 4. In this column it will be seen that the white school enrollments in both the counties and separate school districts increased little while the negro enrollments increased about three times that of the whites. In all, only 26,710 pupils were added since September.



It is expected that the total enrollment at the end of 1952-53 will be less than for 1951-52. If this occurs, it may logically be attributed to the influence of the Committee on school reporting.

Padding. "Padding" can occur in two ways. (1) Names of pupils who do not go to school may be added to the rolls as though they did actually attend. (2) Pupils actually enrolled in the schools may be counted present on days when they are absent. The Committee did not attempt to determine if "padding" occurred as indicated in item (2) but it did find some evidence of "padding" by the addition of spurious names to the school rolls.

Ten Per Cent Check. To determine the extent of "padding" by the addition of spurious names to the registers the Committee decided to go to the schools and count the number of children present. Since counting all schools was too large a task for the Committee to undertake, a ten per cent random sample was drawn by lot. The method of selection was:

1. Each white school and each separate school district was numbered.
2. Numbers drawn from a box, in the presence of the full Committee, identified the school to be visited.
3. Only the first two separate school districts and the first 12 other schools drawn in each congressional district were visited.
4. Negro schools, located within the same territory served by white schools selected, also were visited.
5. The Committee members worked in pairs to visit the schools.
6. Pupils names appearing on pages previously sent ~~to~~ the Committee listed as Form 1, showing enrollments as of September, were used in calling the roll.



Virtually no padding was found in this check of approximately ten per cent of the schools in the State by the Committee. In this sample, only 45 pupils definitely were known to have been illegally added to the school rolls. Of these, 37 were in the high school and 8 were in the elementary school. In every case these additions were found in equalizing counties and not in separate school districts. This figure of 45 pupils probably is lower than actually exists because the Committee members were not trained investigators and therefore it is probable that some "padding" was missed.

In addition to the 45 mentioned above, "padding" was found in several school systems that were not included in the sample. These schools were checked by the Committee because individuals asked that the Committee do so since they felt certain that "padding" was going on.

"Padding" of the rolls in Mississippi, by means of adding spurious names to the registers, does occur in some school systems but the number added is slight when compared to the total school population. "Padding", by counting regularly enrolled pupils present when actually they were absent, could not be checked at this time.

Enrollments by County and Separate School District; By Race. Tables B, C, D, and E show the same information as presented in Table A-1 except these tables list data for each county and separate school district by race. Careful analysis should be made of these tables and where differences occur that are out of line with the others an investigation as to the cause or causes of such differences might well be made.



Agricultural High Schools. Table F gives the 1951-52 enrollments, A.D.A. and the September 1952 enrollments of the agricultural high schools in Mississippi. Statistics for agricultural high schools are in many instances included with the junior college figures where the two institutions are operated together. It seems advisable that where an agricultural high school exists at least the same statistical records furnished by other high schools also should be required of them.

About 2200 students were enrolled in the white agricultural high schools and about 1300 in these schools for negroes during the last two years.

At the time of their conception the agricultural high schools in Mississippi served a great need. They provided a place for boys and girls to board away from home and secure an education. With our modern roads and with the many high schools we have today, boarding schools for high school boys and girls are unnecessary. It seems to me advisable that: (1) The term agricultural high school be abolished; (2) That funds for the education of the boys and girls be distributed to such schools on the same basis as for other schools; and (3) That the special state appropriations for the agricultural high schools-junior colleges be used to strengthen the junior colleges.

Birth Rates Are High. Since 1945 the number of births in Mississippi each year has exceeded 61,000. Prior to the war and during the early war years the number of babies born in Mississippi was 8000 to 13,000 less each year than were born in the past five years. Moreover more negro children are being born in this state than are white children. For the three



years 1949-1951 nearly 10,000 more negro children were born per year than white children. Table P gives the number and rates of birth beginning with 1944.

This table has significance for those who plan for educating Mississippi's children. More children are going to start school in the next five years than ever before in the history of this State. Of the total number starting the number of negro children is considerably larger than the number of white children. Whereas the white schools may be able to house the white children through crowding, the number of negroes is such that even crowding in the schools will not house this increase.

Per Pupil Expenditure Unequal For Races. Many of the schools for white children compare favorably with the best schools in the United States. Mississippi is reputed to have poor schools because when total amount spent for white and negro schools is lumped together and divided by the total number of children, the amount per child is among the lowest of any state. It generally is known that the amount of money spent per child for education in Mississippi is more for white children than for negro children. However, the great difference between the amounts spent usually is not known or is ignored.

Table M lists the counties and separate school districts and gives the amount spent per pupil in each, for each race. These figures do not show the exact picture since the present system of accounting does not make allowance for tuition students from one school to another in this type of cost accounting. Moreover, most administrative costs are accounted for in the white figures only. If a proportionate part were accounted for in the



negro expenditures, the amounts for them would be higher while the amounts for the whites would be lower. Since administration usually makes up about five per cent of the total school cost, the amounts would not be greatly changed by different administration cost accounting.

Analysis of Table M will shock some people. The great difference in the per pupil cost for the two races is disturbing. It should show, however, that much must be done if equalization of educational facilities is to be accomplished.

Tables N and O list the per pupil expenditures by counties and by separate school districts respectively. In these tables the amount given includes both races. It is well to note that the expenditure per person exceeds \$100. in only 12 counties and 39 separate school districts.

Cost of the Program, 1953-54. It is difficult to arrive at an exact first year cost of a new educational program. The feature that causes the most difficulty in making a cost estimate is the validity of reports of pupil enrollments and pupils in average daily attendance (A.D.A.). Reports Form 1 and Form 2 were sent out by the Committee in order to obtain an accurate enrollment record. From these forms 509,112 pupils were estimated as being enrolled during this school year which is almost 26,000 fewer than were reported to the State Department of Education in 1951. Since the reports to the Committee stressed the importance of an accurate count and since they represent the latest data available it seems logical that these data should be used in computing the cost.

Under the provisions of the proposed legislation, teacher units are allowed for each 30 children attending schools 155 days per year. In an



eight-month-term (160 day) school, this means that the 30 children must be present virtually every day when school is in session (the five days difference is for holidays) to make a teacher unit. Obviously pupils will be absent during the year and therefore it will take the attendance of more than thirty pupils--perhaps as many as 36 to make a teacher unit.

Some schools, particularly negro schools, have not in the past kept a strict daily record of each pupil's attendance. Under the proposed program they must do this under penalty of fine and imprisonment. Keeping accurate records will decrease the number reported as being in A.D.A. since: (1) Some schools have assumed that all enrolled should be counted as present every day; and (2) Some children below school age and therefore ineligible for school enrollment have previously been reported. Bill Number 26 provides that where records for 1952-53 were not accurately kept, or for other reasons, allotment of funds may be made on the basis of 1953-54 records. During the 1953-54 school year the program provides for five auditors to be in the field checking enrollments and A.D.A. If, and only if these auditors are in the field checking schools, then it is reasonable to assume that the percentage in A.D.A. will be less than it has been in the past. Table I accounts for this by reducing the number of teacher units 427. This table shows the total number of students anticipated, the number estimated in A.D.A. and the net number of teacher units.

In Table J, 452 teacher units are added under the provisions for vocational teachers. In this table the teachers are classified according to their estimated certificate classification. In all 14,916 units are estimated as necessary under the minimum education program. This number

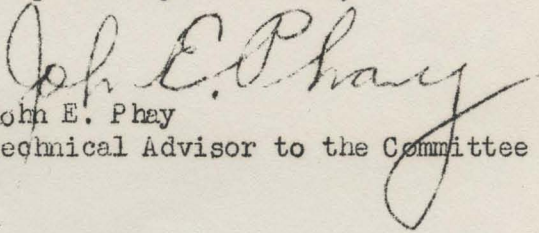


will increase if auditors are not checking in the schools at the beginning of the school term. Table K indicates the estimated cost of the teachers salaries for 1953-54. This does not include teachers who will be employed by local districts over and above those provided under the minimum education program.

The cost of the minimum education program is estimated at \$46,655,291 for current expenses. Table L lists, item by item, the estimated cost of the program. In my opinion the amounts listed for each item are adequate to pay for the services indicated during the 1953-54 school year. Current expenses will rise in subsequent years but better estimates for these years can be made after the 1953-54 year is in progress. Local sources under the provisions of the program will pay about \$15 million. \$13 million will be assessed on an ad valorem basis and \$2 million on a severance, 16th section, etc. basis. The estimated net amount for the State of Mississippi is \$31,655,291 for current expenses of the minimum education program.

In addition to the current expenses the program calls for about \$6 million dollars for new buildings. This brings the estimated total state cost to \$37,655,291 which is approximately \$12½ million dollars more than was appropriated for the 1952-53 school year.

Respectfully submitted,

  
John E. Phay  
Technical Advisor to the Committee