

The first part is a joint statement by W. L. Robinson, president of the Fulton County Board of Education, and myself, so I shall go beyond a discussion of the programs in which we have participated, and begin at this point.

Our school board commends the Federal Government for its interest in, provision for, and sustaining of these programs which strengthen American education, provided it does not attempt to exercise autocratic and unreasonable control over local schools.

Our major concern is with the implementation of the 1966 guidelines of the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare.

We were greatly distressed by the confusion and chaos emanating from the Office of the Commissioner of Education when he presented the 1966 guidelines and their application to local school districts.

We were shocked by the severity of his statements, and his unbending manner when professional and articulate questions were asked by members of our professional group. His presentation was characterized by complete inflexibility and frigidity.

An example of this uncompromising manner was his reply to a school superintendent who asked him what a superintendent and board of education would do in the case of a white teacher who might be assigned to a previously all-Negro school, and who might refuse to accept the new assignment. His cryptic reply was, "You would fire her for insubordination."

May I say parenthetically that U.S. Education Commissioner Harold Howe said he was cognizant of individual school systems. He said there could not possibly be a consistency throughout the land, that each had its own personality, its own problems, and he did not feel it would ever be possible to arrive at any iron-clad policies or regulations which could be made applicable to every system in the country.

That, Madam Chairman, is my statement, and I think Mr. Robinson would like to supplement it.

Mrs. GREEN. Thank you, Dr. West.

We will call on Mr. Robinson next.

STATEMENT OF W. L. ROBINSON, PRESIDENT, FULTON COUNTY BOARD OF EDUCATION

Mr. ROBINSON. Thank you.

Madam Chairman and Congressman Erlenborn, I am W. L. Robinson, president of the Fulton County Board of Education, and immediate past president of the National School Boards Association once removed. I served as president during the year 1964-65.

I would like to supplement this joint statement prepared by Dr. West and myself by underscoring the fact that the people in this area, and, I might say, the people in 11 or 12 Southeastern States, and I speak with some authority on this matter, because we have had two meetings with representatives from 11 or 12 of the Southeastern States here in Atlanta, because of their concern about the inconsistencies, the ambiguities, and the contradictions that come out of the Office of Education, and as a matter of fact, the contradictions of the Commissioner of Education himself.

I did not know that Congressman Flynt would be here this morning. I have several exhibits that I would like to quote from briefly, just to get them in the record.