

South Carolina

One school district in Chesterfield, South Carolina, has fully desegregated; another will enroll 22 percent of its Negro students in predominantly white schools. A district in Anderson County, despite great political pressure, is planning to assign two Negro teachers to each white school and two white teachers to each Negro school.

Manatee County (Florida)

White students, 12,200; Negro students, 3800

Manatee County has been cited by EEOP compliance staff and by the NAACP leader in Florida as a good example of progress, although statistically it has achieved only 15 percent desegregation—580 Negro students in school with whites.

Manatee's distinguishing feature is a superintendent who makes speeches locally and nationally for desegregation, relating it to improved education. The superintendent is a supporter of Title VI and beneficiary of Title IV. In fact, his district gets about \$2 million a year in Federal funds for a variety of education programs.

As a reward for his early progress under the guidelines, the superintendent lost three Democratic school board members in the recent election, large on the race issue, and his most recent effort to plan for further desegregation next year was rebuffed by the board. At issue: proposed closing of a Negro elementary school, Rubonia, and reassignment of the 70 students to predominantly white schools. At a meeting of the board, the plan was rejected by the Negro faculty and parents, as well as by some outspoken white citizens and the new board members. Manatee County's days as an example of progress are numbered, although it would still be worthwhile to get the superintendent on film with his views. An elected official himself, the superintendent—J. Hartley Blackburn—fully expects to be defeated when he faces the voters again in about 22 months. He has been in office 22 years.

The school which is the center of the current flap in Manatee is a run-down frame building in a little shanty town several miles from the bigger and better downtown schools (in Bradenton). The principal is a Negro woman who has opposed faculty desegregation in her school on the rather tenuous grounds that "We aren't good enough yet. Give us a year." The school system has 25 teachers in desegregated situations.

With all its apparent drawbacks, Manatee County is worth a visit for a chance to get the superintendent on film, for his advocacy of desegregation in the face of fierce local opposition, including front-page editorials blasting all the major decisions that he has made.

Some Negro guidance counselors in the Manatee school system, operating as part of a Title IV project, could talk authoritatively about what happens to Negro children going into a desegregated situation for the first time.

Jonesboro, Arkansas (Craighead County)

White students, 4522; Negro students, 529.

Jonesboro School District has admitted two-thirds of its Negro student enrollment to formerly white schools, moving from 6 percent a year ago to about 63 percent this year.

The school system has an all-Negro school, grades 1-8, which it expects to close in the coming school year to complete desegregation. Like most other school districts in this part of the country, Jonesboro is struggling over a plan to salvage the Negro school facility which apparently is a good building. The probable solution will be to turn it into a vocational school for white and Negro students, and give it a new name. Present name, Booker T. Washington.

Superintendent C. H. Geis and his board chairman, James Lalley, feel they have had excellent community support for their administrative decisions. The board chairman is a young (mid-thirties) executive for a local General Electric plant, which he says is also desegregating. The school system has three teachers "across racial lines," one for each school, and apparently plans no major change in its policy regarding faculty.