

VOCATIONAL EDUCATION

During the 1966-67 school year, 477 schools in Alabama offered vocational education; 448 or 94 percent were regular secondary schools and 27 were technical or vocational schools. The former provided vocational training for in-school youths; the latter for out-of-school youths and adults. All are under court order to desegregate.

The importance of vocational education in breaking the poverty cycle was demonstrated by the success of the State trade schools in Alabama. J. F. Ingram, the Alabama Director of the Division of Vocational Education, stated that the employment experience of the trade school graduates has been very good. Most of the graduates have been able to get jobs in the trade for which they were trained. The schools remain segregated, however, and the few black schools are inferior to the white ones.

The trade schools were established along racial lines with separate districts for the black and white schools. In several cases, a black and a white trade school are located in the same city. These districts remained unchanged by the *Macon* decree.

For example, Tuscaloosa and Montgomery each have two trade schools. In each city one of the schools is virtually all black with few if any white students and the other nearly all white with a few black students. With the exception of one white instructor at the black school in Montgomery, there is no faculty integration at the four schools.

In both cases, the schools serve overlapping areas. Both of the black schools serve a much wider geographic area than the white schools. In some cases, a black school located in one county serves another county which has a predominantly white school. For example, black students are bused 50 miles from Selma (Dallas County) to the predominantly black Trenholm School in Montgomery (Montgomery County), even though the predominantly white King School is located in Selma. Thus, white and black students are given an opportunity to choose schools virtually or largely segregated by race.

The directors of both trade schools in Tuscaloosa told Commission staff that they recruited only at those high schools at which the predominant race of the student body was the same as that of the students at the trade school. A similar situation pertained at the Montgomery Schools. Seven of the courses offered in the black trade school in Tuscaloosa are identical to those offered in the white school. The two schools in Montgomery offer 10 identical courses. This situation indicates clearly that the schools are intended to serve racially different populations. Students desiring to take cosmetology, in fact, are encouraged to attend the school serving their race, because of differences in hair texture and styling. Not only does such a practice reinforce the idea that the school where particular courses are offered is for either black or white students, it also limits the employment opportunities of the school's graduates. Black cosmetologists for, example, by not being trained to work with the hair of white persons, are thus limited to employment in all-black establishments. Some courses, on the other hand, are offered at one school, but not the other. Those offered exclusively at the white schools tend to be in the relatively higher skilled categories and lead to higher paying jobs, while those at the black schools tend to be courses preparing students for the lesser skilled, lower paying jobs traditionally filled by black persons.

Commission staff visited five cities having only one trade school. The instructors at the five schools were all white. The number of black students at these schools varied from one (enrollment 150) at the Hobson School in Thomasville, to 31 or 22 percent (enrollment 140) at the Sparks School in Eufaula, to approximately 60 (enrollment 400) at the Opelika School in Opelika. Although some of their directors had visited black high schools, none of the schools engaged in an aggressive recruitment program among potential black students.