

E.R. Crow, director of State Educational Finance Commission, to Governor James F. Byrnes, 12 July 1951 (Governor James F. Byrnes papers, SCDAH, State Agencies File, Educational Finance Commission)

The State Educational Finance Commission has been charged with the responsibility of bringing about desirable consolidations of school districts in South Carolina. Section 3, Article III, of the General Appropriation Act for 1951 states, "It (the Commission) shall effect desirable consolidations of school districts throughout the entire State." The following statement of policy has been approved by the Commission as a guide to County Boards of Education and to school district trustees in carrying out the purposes of this Act.

(1) Elementary schools shall be so planned as to have sufficient enrollment to provide a teacher for each grade taught, except in those cases where natural barriers, sparseness of population, or other reasons, make the application of this requirement unwise. Separate elementary school districts must be consolidated with high school districts.

In rural areas where long distances are involved, consideration should be given to the possibility of establishing community primary schools for the first three grades. This accomplishes two purposes. It keeps a school in the community and eliminates the necessity of transporting small children such great distances. A three teacher primary school for three grades is in accord with this principle.

(2) Inefficiency of operation and inadequate educational opportunities are caused by small enrollments in many of our present high schools. Recent studies show that in high schools with enrollments of from 50-100 the per pupil cost is fifty-three per cent greater than in those with enrollments of 200. New high schools should have a minimum potential enrollment of 250 in grades nine through twelve, with exceptions as listed above for elementary schools. In cases where the State Board of Education has recognized a high school as being accredited, or in the process of accreditation, the term "new high school" will not apply.

(3) Each school district (administrative unit) shall provide high school facilities within the district for both races. In some instances this will mean one high school for the minority race and two, or more, for the majority race. The essential requirement is

that the administration of school facilities for both races be under the control of the same board of trustees. Counties operating under the county unit system meet this requirement. Other counties must reorganize into administrative areas large enough to insure a sufficient number of educable students of each race to maintain a high school for each race. Consideration should also be given to the principle of equalizing taxable wealth in the school districts. An area with a small proportion of the children to educate should not be created in such a way as to possess an undue proportion of the taxable wealth of the county.

(4) In many instances reorganization of administrative units (consolidation of school districts) can best be effected by disregarding county lines for school district purposes. Nearly every county will have small border areas where children have been attending schools in the adjoining county. School districts should conform as nearly as possible with the natural socio-economic boundaries of a community. County Boards of Education of adjoining counties should meet together and work out desirable consolidations where over-lapping occurs.

Reorganization of administrative units (consolidation of school districts) is the first step to be taken by County Boards of Education since it is the reorganized district that will be eligible for school building aid. No individual district can apply for, and receive funds, until the overall plan of reorganization for the county has been approved by the Commission. Counties which have undergone reorganization in recent years should re-examine their situation in the light of the preceding principles adopted by the Commission.