

LETTER OF TRANSMITTAL

OKTIBBEHA COUNTY BOARD OF EDUCATION
STARKVILLE
MISSISSIPPI

Gentlemen

We are transmitting to you herewith the Survey for your County as required under Chapter 12, Laws of the Extraordinary Session, Mississippi Legislature, 1953 precedent to the reorganization and reconstitution of your County for public school purposes.

This Survey is also in accordance with a proposal made by us for doing this work and accepted by you under date of May 10, 1955.

May we take this opportunity of expressing appreciation for the cooperation we have received from each member of your Board, your Superintendent, his Secretary and the various school authorities whom we have consulted.

Respectfully submitted on this 2nd day of May, 1956.

ASSOCIATED CONSULTANTS IN EDUCATION

H. M. Ivy
H. M. Ivy
Director

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ATTENDANCE CENTERS

With the density of the White and Colored population as shown above, the more nearly satisfactory answer to the reorganization problem is to reduce the number and increase the size of the attendance center. The 30 ADA basis now stipulated in our laws practically compels two types of centers: a. one for pupils in grades 1 - 8, inclusive, or 1 - 6, inclusive; and, b. one for pupils in grades 9 - 12, inclusive, or 6 - 12, inclusive.

A. Elementary Attendance Centers

Approximately 600 - 800 pupils in average daily attendance appears to be the optimum figure for an elementary center. The minimum of 600 should be achieved if possible but that number is not always available within transportation distances in rural areas.

Due to migration towards urban centers, it becomes quite risky to build extensively at a rural school center unless there is a substantial background of land-owning families to support the enrollment it is built to accommodate.

The limits on distances which a pupil should be transported are still a matter of opinion. It would appear that thirty minutes on a bus should be the maximum for a young pupil while an older pupil under special circumstances might suffer no damage from sixty minutes spent on a bus.

Under our new laws an average daily attendance of 240 children will be required in grades 1-8, inclusive, unless state funds are supplemented. (See Section 8 (a) Chapter 14, laws 1953.)

In a center containing grades 1-12, inclusive, 360 pupils in ADA is a requirement unless combination grades are used and unless state funds are supplemented.

1. White Elementary Centers

On reference to Table III - A, page 8, it will be noted that this county had four elementary centers in 1954 - 55, two of which are also high school centers. These centers have evolved from experienced needs and careful study must be given each before being changed.

On further reference to Table III - A, it will be noted that two of the present attendance centers meet the minimum of 240 children in grades 1 - 8. These centers are Maben and Sturgis.

When one or more centers have quite satisfactory housing and teaching conditions it would appear best to retain these centers as long as financial arrangements can be made. When the financial problems get more difficult, as many grades should be maintained at each center as possible. See Table IX.

2. Colored Elementary Centers

As shown in Table IV - A, pages 11 - 12, there were during 1954 - 55 thirty one elementary centers for colored pupils, four of which are also high school centers. Only one of these centers meets the minimum of 240 ADA in grades 1 - 8. This center is Oktibbeha-Webster. Pleasant Grove (209), Rock Hill (149), Ebenezer (106), Liberty Hill (92), Sand Creek (89), and Moon Farm (89) with the next largest attendance become potential attendance centers around which the smaller schools may be grouped.

Satisfactory physical facilities as well as good teachers are essential to good schools. It will be most desirable to eliminate every school now being taught in unsatisfactory buildings and in other sub - standard conditions including more grades per teacher than the state standard calls for.

As shown in Table IV - A, page 11 - 12, grade one has a very heavy retardation, there being only 56% as many pupils in the second grade as there are in the first grade. This is a somewhat better percentage than the state at this point which is 42.1%. See Table VII.

With elementary attendance centers set up at the points already demonstrated as population centers so as to provide a minimum of 600 children in average daily attendance, where possible, the progress of the colored children in this county will become much more normal than the present figures indicate. Until the centers are in operation and at least one teacher provided for each grade section, there will be no consistent increase in proportionate attendance above grade 8. The immediate need is the development of the optimum elementary school centers as rapidly as the buildings can be provided. The proposed grouping of the colored attendance centers is shown on Table IX.

THE HIGH SCHOOL CENTERS

The State Educational Finance Commission recommends 250 pupils for the organization of a new high school. A recent study made at the University of Mississippi indicates that graduates from high schools with more than 200 in average daily attendance made distinguishably better records at the University than those coming from high schools with less than 200. The law apparently contemplates a minimum of 120 in grades 9 - 12 or 180 in grades 7 - 12.

FOR WHITE PUPILS. Either of these standards can be met by the Sturgis School which had 388 in ADA in 1954 - 55 of which 131 were in grades 9 - 12. The high school attendance in Maben in 1954 - 55 was below either of these standards. The total ADA was 310 of which 96 were in grades 9 - 12. With the Self Creek School discontinued and these pupils transferred to Maben the elementary grades will be strengthened by 59 which should within a few years bring the high school attendance up to the minimum standard. Maben is a line school serving Oktibbeha and Webster Counties. Maben and Sturgis are the only high school centers operated in Oktibbeha County outside of the Starkville Municipal Separate School District.

FOR COLORED PUPILS. In 1954 - 55 there were four high school centers operating for colored pupils: Liberty Hill, 32; Oktibbeha-Webster, 73; Pleasant Grove, 98, Rocky Hill, 59, are all below the minimum standards. The total high school ADA in 1954 - 55 was 262 which is not more than sufficient for two high school centers.

WHAT SCHOOL PLANT FACILITIES ARE IN USE?

While the school buildings, grounds, furniture and instructional equipment and materials are of secondary importance as compared with good teachers, capable administrators and cooperative board members and patrons, the best educational developments generally come when these desirable factors function in suitable, adequate and attractive buildings.

WHITE FACILITIES

Most of the school plant for white pupils in this county show planning, are well adapted to the needs of the school and community, and have been erected with local district funds. The need for repair is evident in many places and several buildings have outlived their economic usefulness.

COLORED FACILITIES

Due to inadequate financing the colored school buildings are generally small, the furniture and other equipment obsolete and the surroundings unattractive. An extensive program of consolidation with the erection of suitable buildings is indicated and the State expects to provide most of the funds.