

DETROIT SCHOOLS DECENTRALIZATION COMMITTEE COLLECTION

Paper0s, 1969-1978  
(Predominantly, 1977-1978)

2 1/2 linear feet  
1 storage (Paige) box

Accession Number 882

The papers of the Detroit Schools Decentralization Study Committee were deposited in February 1978 in the Wayne State University Archives. The collection was transferred to the Archives of Labor and Urban Affairs the following May.

On 17 December 1976, the Detroit Central Board of Education had officially requested "a management audit" of the decentralized school system from its establishment in 1970. An outline of a proposed "task force" was discussed on 7 March 1977. Three weeks later, State Representative Stopczynski introduced House Bills 4401 and 4466 respectively proposing greater parental control over school curricula and abolition of the Detroit Regional School Boards.

The Decentralization Study Committee was appointed by Governor Milliken and Mayor Young on 5 May. It had eleven members (five of them women), with Mr. Walter Douglas and Dr. Keith Goldhammer as Co-Chairmen. The first meeting was held on 3 June, and a staff led by Mrs. DeLois Robison as Project Coordinator was quickly organized. The Committee had been instructed to evaluate three principal issues. Had greater community participation and enhanced cooperation in education been achieved under decentralization? How had it affected both administrative and educational efficiency? What had been the administrative costs before and during decentralization? How did the latter figures compare with other Michigan and U.S. cities?

These questions were assigned to four sub-committees, who chose four broad methods of evaluation. Selected experts were invited to make "presentations". The views of community members were solicited through several publicized "Open Meetings". Questionnaires were devised for School Board and staff members, as well as a random sample of local citizens. Finally, the Committee's staff collected official information and academic studies about the school system, together with comparative materials from other cities.

Despite pressure to complete its work by 1 September 1977, the Committee obtained a postponement until the year's end. Their report of 1 January 1978 offered ten conclusions. Pupils in Detroit schools were about two years behind their counterparts in comparable state and national cities. Yet the available data could not "pinpoint what ... goes wrong with the [Detroit] system". The costs of decentralization did not appear to be a significant consideration. But "Community involvement [was] ... a wholesome, positive concept." It was vital in establishing and administering "effective educational programs." Detroiters "must have the opportunity to determine ... whether or not the[ir] ... Schools should be decentralized."

School decentralization still remains in force throughout the city.

Some important subjects covered in this collection are the following:

Community participation in city government  
Detroit politics, 1969-1978  
Open Hearings on education in Detroit, 1977  
School board and staff and community surveys on education in Detroit, 1977  
The struggle for civil rights  
Urban education  
Women in education administration and community affairs

Among the correspondents are the following (an index to the location of these letters will be found on the last page of the guide):

Dr. F.W. Bertolaet  
Dr. D. Delia-Dora  
Mr. John G. Gist  
Dr. Arthur Jefferson  
Governor W.G. Milliken  
Mr. Horace K. Sheffield  
Mr. Darneau V. Stewart  
Dr. Clifton K. Wharton

#### Contents

6 manuscript boxes  
1 storage (Paige) box

#### Series I. Boxes 1-2

Members' list, project tasks, staff roster, correspondence, media information, memoranda, agenda, minutes, staff reports, presentations, working papers, and reports of the Committee. Similar materials exist for the various sub-committees.

#### Series II. Box 2

Correspondence and publicity information, staff reports, and presentations concerning the Committee's four Open Hearings on decentralization. There is also material regarding several scheduled "rap-sessions" on the issue for high school students.

#### Series III. Boxes 2-4

Correspondence, papers, community lists, completed and "keyed" questionnaires, and computer printouts of school personnel and of statistical analyses of the questionnaires, all of which relate to the Committee's community and school officials surveys.

#### Series IV. Boxes 4-6

Academic and political reports on decentralization, official information on the Detroit school system, with pertinent legislation, articles, and press cuttings. There are also personnel lists, correspondence, by-laws, meeting notices, achievement plans and



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Series I  
Boxes 1-2

This series consists of the Committee's central policy and operations files. There are lists of members and their staff, project tasks, general correspondence, and contact information on the local media. Records of the Committee's meetings include memoranda, agenda, minutes, attendance rosters, correspondence, staff reports, presentations, and working papers. Similar material exists to a lesser extent for the various sub-committees. A series of the Committee's staff, progress, draft, and final reports is also present.

Box 1

- 1-3. Committee: Members, project tasks, and staff list
- 4. : General correspondence, 1976-1978
- 5. : Media contact information
- 6-10. Committee Meetings: Memoranda, agenda, and minutes;  
correspondence; staff reports;  
presentations; and working papers
- 11-15. Sub-Committees: Members, project tasks, meetings,  
correspondence, and working papers

Box 2

- 1-4. Committee Reports: Staff, progress, draft, and final

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Series II  
Box 2

This series concerns the Committee's four scheduled Open Hearings on decentralization. Present here are correspondence, publicity material, staff reports, presentations, and miscellaneous group presentations. The Audio-Visual Collection has tape cassettes with portions of three hearings, as well as part of a similar open hearing conducted earlier on 7 May 1977 by Senator Jack Faxon. (See "Non-manuscript materials" above.) There are also records concerning the Committee's organized "rap-sessions" on decentralization for high school students. (Tape cassettes with portions of two sessions are available in the Audio-Visual Collection. See again "Non-manuscript materials" above.)

Box 2

5. Correspondence and publicity
6. Staff reports
7. Presentations
8. Miscellaneous group presentations
9. Correspondence re: students' "rap-sessions"

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Series III  
Boxes 2-4

This series pertains to the Committee's two surveys on the decentralization issue. A random sample of the community and a select group of school board and staff members received questionnaires to complete. Herein contained are the correspondence, working papers, nominal community sample, and some completed and decoded or "keyed" questionnaires. Computer printouts of school board and staff personnel lists, as well as analyses of both the community and the board & staff surveys are located in the storage box. (See "Non-manuscript materials" above.)

Box 2

10-12. Correspondence and papers: General, re: interviewers,  
and re: student aides 13.  
Community sample list

Box 3

1-2. Completed questionnaires: Community and school board &  
staff samples

Box 4

1. Decoded questionnaires

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Series IV  
Boxes 4-6

This series comprises the Committee's collection of academic reports, pertinent legislation, general publicity, and official materials on the Detroit school system. Considerable attention was paid to regional activities, including correspondence, personnel lists, parents and community lists, central-regional administrative relationships, by-laws, board meetings, achievement plans, school support activities, and miscellaneous materials.

Box 4

- 2-6. General Information: Smith Report (1973), League of Women Voters Report (1976), Detroit Schools Fact Sheets (1976), Schools' Achievement Data (1972-1977), and pertinent legislation (1969, 1975, 1977)
- 7-8. General Publicity: Articles and press cuttings (1969, 1977)
- 9-14. School Regions Information: Personnel lists, correspondence parents and community lists, central-regional administrative relationships, by-laws, and board meetings

Box 5

- 1. School Regions Information: Region 1 Achievement Plan
- 2. : Region 1 School Support Activities
- 3-4. : Regions 2 and 4 Achievement Plans

Box 6

- 1. School Regions Information: Region 5 Achievement Plans
- 2-3. : Regions 5 and 8 miscellaneous materials

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