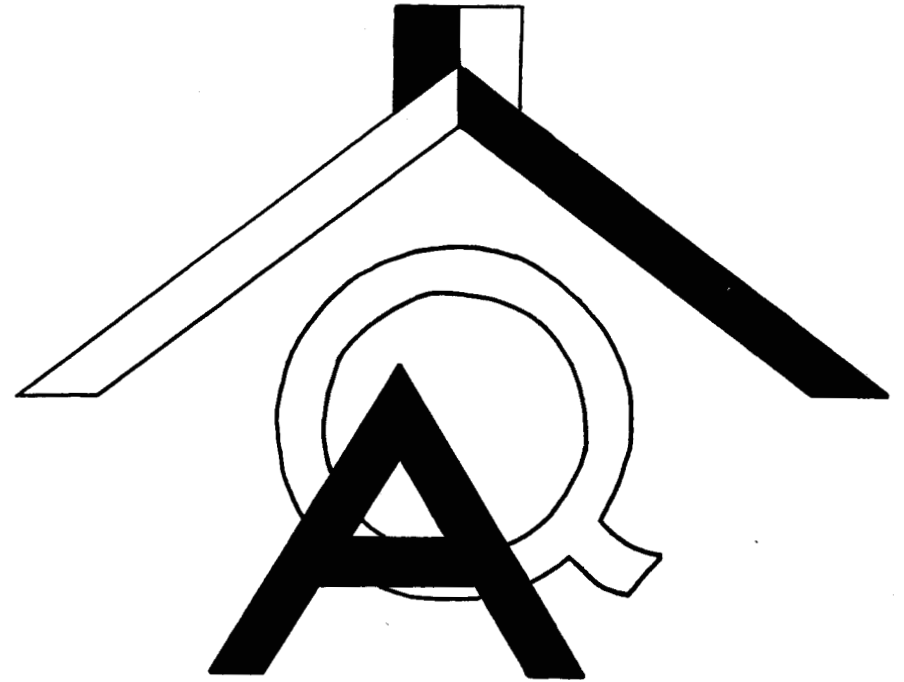


BOSTON DESEGREGATION: QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS



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Researched and Written

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Q. What is the Racial Imbalance Law?

A. The Racial Imbalance Law, passed in 1965, provides for the elimination of imbalanced schools. An imbalanced school is defined by the law as any school with a non-white population over 50%. Under the law, if a city is found to have imbalanced schools, the school committee is required to submit a plan to balance them.

Q. What is a desegregated school?

A. A desegregated school is a school with an equal enrollment of white and non-white students.

Q. What is an integrated school?

A. An integrated school, on the other hand, is a school which reflects Black and White cultures equally. Not only is there a racially balanced student enrollment but teachers and staff are racially balanced, books and classroom materials show both Black and White cultures and Black and White communities participate equally in making decisions about the education of their children.

Q. Why did the State Board of Education make up a racial balance plan for Boston?

A. Under the Racial Imbalance Law, it is the responsibility of local school officials (in Boston, the Boston School Committee) to draw up a plan to balance its schools. However, in Boston, the School Committee was not able to come up with a plan acceptable to the Supreme Judicial Court. The result was that the State Board of Education was ordered by the Supreme Judicial Court to draw up a plan for Boston.

Q. What limitations or boundaries were placed on the State Board of Education in drawing new school districts in order to create balanced schools?

A. According to the Supreme Judicial Court, which defined the Racial Imbalance Law in the case of School Committee of Boston v. Board of Education, the balance plan had to take into consideration the safety of children traveling from home to school and school to home on an equal basis with balancing schools. Specifically:

- a) School districts could not be so large that time or distance of travel was so great as to risk the health or safety of children or to in any way stop the education of those children.
- b) School districts could not be "non-contiguous". Non-contiguous means "not touching". That is, the State Board was prohibited from drawing school districts which were not of one piece. They could not identify separate areas of the city, add them together, and call all these separate areas one school district.
- c) Districts were also required to look as much as possible like districts already established.

Q. How did the State meet these limitations or restrictions?

A. a) Size of School districts: On the elementary and intermediate levels 3500 was set as the number of students which could be placed in any one school district.

b) On the elementary level, 2 miles was set as the farthest distance that elementary students would have to travel. (There are some pupils—about 1% of those who are traveling—who will be traveling over this distance in Mattapan area).

c) For safety, the district boundaries were drawn whenever possible along major streets.

Q. Does the State Plan meet the requirements of the Racial Imbalance Law?

A. Not completely. There are still schools in Lower Roxbury, Washington Park and Mattapan which are left imbalanced under the plan. However, the State Plan does reduce the number of non-white children in racially imbalanced schools from about 30,000 to about 10,000.

Q. Are all-white schools legal under the Racial Imbalance Law?

A. Yes. The Racial Imbalance Law only forbids schools over 50% non-white.

Q. What areas of the city are least touched by the State Plan?

A. All areas of the city are touched somewhat by the plan because of changes in the grade structure. However, some areas are touched very little by the plan.

On the elementary level (grades 1-5) these include East Boston, Charlestown, Allston, Brighton, West Roxbury, most of Hyde Park, most of South Boston, lower Roxbury, Washington Park, and a segment of Mattapan along Blue Hill Ave.

On the intermediate level (grades 6-8): Most of West Roxbury, East Boston and Charlestown.

On the high school level (grades 9-12): East Boston.

In general, it is the areas in the very center of the city which are Black and the areas on the outside edges of the city, which are mainly White, which are least affected by the Plan.

Q. Why are schools in Lower Roxbury, Washington Park and parts of Mattapan left imbalanced?

A. Because it was impossible for the State Board of Education to meet the above-mentioned guidelines of the Supreme Judicial Court in drawing school districts and still balance these schools. These schools are located in the center of the city so far from white neighborhoods that it was impossible to draw balanced school districts including these schools without making the districts too large and the travel distance of the children too great.

- Q. Why do many school districts remain all white under the plan?
- A. Because it was impossible to include Black children in these districts without making the districts too large or travel distance for the children too great.
- Q. Why is the State Plan called a "short-term" plan?
- A. A "short-term" plan deals with the problem of desegregation by redistricting only. A long-term plan, on the other hand, would include plans for new school buildings and the changes in district lines that would be necessary when these new schools were built.
- Q. Why are they changing the grade structure in the schools?
- A. In 1967 the Boston School Committee decided to change the grade structure from K-6 (Elementary), 7-9 (Intermediate), 10-12 (High School), to K-5 (Elementary), 6-8 (Intermediate), and 9-12 (High School). They changed most of the schools in the Black Community to the new grading structure and then stopped. The result was a dual (double) structure. Recently, the federal government has found the Boston Schools in violation of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 because of this dual grade structure and has, therefore, cut off federal money to Boston for new programs. The State Plan solves this problem of dual grade structures by changing all schools to the new system originally adopted by the Boston School Committee in 1967.
- Q. Why are elementary schools being closed?
- A. Under the State Plan, elementary schools will go up only to the 5th grade and 6th graders will go into intermediate schools. This change from K-5 to K-6 has created extra space in the elementary schools and has made it possible to close several elementary schools and still accommodate all elementary pupils. Some elementary schools will be used as high school annexes this fall to accommodate the 9th graders who will now be going to high school under the State Plan.
- Q. What schools are unaffected by the Plan?
- A. The Latin Schools and Technical High School.
- Q. What Programs are unaffected by the Plan?
- A. Vocational programs, bilingual programs and special education programs. If a student is in one of these programs now or plans to be in one next year, he will go to the school where that program is offered and not to his regular district school.
- Q. Are kindergarten children included in the Racial Balance Plan?
- A. No. Kindergarten children will attend the school nearest their home unless a parent chooses to have child attend school with older brothers or sisters.

- Q. Will Advanced Classes continue under the plan?
- A. Yes. However, fifth graders will be in elementary schools and 6th graders in intermediate schools. Advanced classes will also be added for 4th graders.
- Q. What is a geocode?
- A. A geocode is a small grouping of streets designated as a police reporting area. There are 800 geocoded areas in the city of Boston and they are used for taking census and for identifying the location of fires, crimes and other emergencies. State Planners used geocoded information in drawing new school districts and assigned children to school according to their geocode areas.
- Q. How many children are there in the Boston Public Schools?
- A. 93,647
(W) 57,623
(NW) 36,024 38.5%
- Q. How many children will be bussed?
- A. According to the Boston School Department, 17,400 children will need transportation to school for distance and safety reasons. Here is the breakdown:
- | | |
|--------------|------|
| Elementary | 5472 |
| Intermediate | 6006 |
| High School | 5922 |
- 3500 students who are assigned to special education classes, to magnet schools or the subsystem will also be provided with transportation by the School Department.
- Q. How did the Boston School Department decide who would be assigned for transportation?
- A. For grades 1 to 8, all children traveling over a mile to school will be provided with transportation. Some children within walking distance of school (less than one mile) were also assigned to transportation if it was considered unsafe for them to walk to school because of dangerous streets, railroad tracks, etc.
- All high school students traveling over 1½ miles will be provided with transportation. In the past high school students have taken the MBTA to school. They have now been assigned to regular school buses for safety reasons, i.e. to avoid possible student trouble at MBTA transfer points (Andrwe Square, Dudley Station, Etc.)
- Q. How many children take the bus to school now?
- A. It is impossible to give an exact figure, but former Director of Safety, Louis DeGiacomo of the Boston School Department, thinks that about 31,000

take the bus to school already.

- Q. Is bussing unsafe?
- A. According to a 6 year report of the Pennsylvania Department of Education, children who ride busses are safer than children who walk. The report found bus riding three times safer than walking - one accident for every 200 pupils who walked to school, as compared to one for every 898 who rode to school on a bus.
- Q. How far will elementary children be traveling?
- A. No farther than 2 miles. (1% of elementary school children will travel farther than 2 miles.)
- Q. What about transportation for students who stay after school to participate in school activities?
- A. The School Department is planning to provide transportation for these students.
- Q. What plans is the School Department making for the safety of children in September?
- A. The School Department plans to hire bus monitors and "transitional aides" from all sending school areas (areas from which children are bussed). Bus monitors will ride the buses with the children in the mornings and afternoons. Transitional aides will also ride the buses, but they will then remain in school during the day to help with school activities and assist if a child becomes sick. These aides will also serve to keep sending communities informed about the school and school officials informed of parents and community concerns.
- Q. How do I apply for a job as a bus monitor or transitional aide?
- A. Freedom House Institute is assisting the School Department by helping interested persons to make out applications for these jobs. (Applicants must be at least 21 years of age). Interested persons may also contact the School Department directly or the City-Wide Education Coalition.
- Q. What happens if a child gets sick at school and the parent is either not at home or unable to come to pick up the child at school?
- A. The School Department has recommended that community residents be hired as transitional aides (school aides). If a child gets sick in school, this person could provide transportation home for the child. If neither parent was at home, he/she could find another place for the child to spend the day.
- Q. What plans is the Mayor's Office making for safety?
- A. The Mayor's Office has set up 11 neighborhood teams to plan for safety. Each team includes a representative from the Police Dept., the Fire Dept., the local Little City Hall, the School Dept., and the Youth Activities Commission.

The Police Department has also set up a special task force on safety and is working with the School Department to make certain that children walking or taking the bus to school will be safe at all times. In addition, since a large number of children will be walking to school, the Police Department plans to hire 124 more traffic supervisors to help children cross dangerous streets and intersections.

- Q. How do I apply for a job as a traffic supervisor?
- A. Freedom House Institute is assisting the Police Department by helping interested persons to make out applications for these jobs. (Applicants must be at least 21 years of age). Interested persons may also contact the City Hall Personnel Office or the City-Wide Education Coalition.
- Q. If a parent would like to suggest a traffic light, traffic sign or policeman at a dangerous crossing, or if a parent has other safety suggestions, whom should he contact?
- A. The local Little City Hall.
- | | | | |
|---------------------|----------|--------------------|----------|
| Roxbury..... | 442-3510 | Dorchester..... | 288-3710 |
| Franklin Field..... | 287-0172 | Jamaica Plain..... | 522-3720 |
| Mattapan..... | 298-0290 | South End..... | 267-4010 |
| Uphams Corner..... | 287-1641 | | |
- Q. If a parent has a child assigned to a segregated school under the plan and would like his child to go to a desegregated school, what can he do?
- A. He should contact the principal or headmaster at the school his child now attends to find out about the Controlled Transfer Policy
- or
Exodus
1260 Blue Hill Ave., Roxbury
298-0330
or
Bureau of Equal Educational Opportunity
Department of Education
182 Tremont St., Boston
727-5881
or
Freedom House Institute on Schools and Education
14 Crawford St., Roxbury
440-9704
- Q. What is Controlled Transfer?
- A. Under controlled transfer a child may transfer from a school in which over half of the students are his same race, to a school in which the students of his race represent less than half of the total number of students in that school, provided that there is space available. For this year, the School Committee has said that they will not accept applications for controlled transfer until after school starts.

The control transfer policy replaced the open enrollment policy in 1970, which allowed students to transfer into any school where there was extra space. Under open enrollment many white students moved out of schools with Black populations, causing some of these schools to become imbalanced schools.

Q. What is Exodus?

A. Exodus, founded in 1965, is Roxbury's first grassroots education organization. Under the Exodus Program about 800 children are transported voluntarily out of schools in Roxbury and Mattapan and into other schools in the City of Boston under the Controlled Transfer Policy. Exodus children attend schools in Hyde Park, Roslindale, West Roxbury, Brighton, Back Bay, and Dorchester.

Q. If a child was enrolled in Exodus last year, will he be able to return to his same school next year?

A. No one can say for sure. The School Committee has said that students in the Controlled Transfer Program last year will be considered first for the Controlled Transfer Program next fall. Since Exodus students are transferred under the Controlled Transfer Policy, their applications for controlled transfer will be given first consideration next fall. (Of course, Exodus students who will be 6th graders next year will be going into new intermediate schools next fall.)

Q. If a parent wants his child to go to school in the suburbs, whom should he contact?

A. METCO, 55 Dimock Street, Roxbury, Massachusetts, 427-1545.

Q. What is METCO?

A. METCO is a state funded program under which inner-city children are transported voluntarily into the suburbs to go to school. METCO staff provides services to help children adjust to their new schools and to help the new schools meet the needs of their new students. At present there are about 1900 children in METCO.

Q. What is a magnet school?

A. A magnet school is a school that tries to attract a racially mixed group of students by offering educational programs of unusually high quality. Examples are the Haley in Roslindale, the Ohrenberger in West Roxbury, the Bancroft in the South End, Trotter in Roxbury, the Hennigan (Intermediate Section) in Jamaica Plain, and the Copley Square High School. Children are not assigned to these schools. Instead, any child who wishes to go to one of these schools in the city applies directly to that school.

Under the State Plan, the Trotter and the Ohrenberger are exceptions. The only new Black pupils who will be allowed to attend the Trotter next year are those living in a special district in Roxbury. The only new White pupils allowed to attend the Ohrenberger next year are those who live in a

special attendance district in West Roxbury. The remaining spaces in the Trotter are reserved for new White pupils enrolling in the school and the remaining spaces in the Ohrenberger are reserved for new Black pupils enrolling in that school. (All children who already attend the Trotter or the Ohrenberger will be allowed to stay in those schools)

Q. There is something called the Subsystem. What is it?

A. The Subsystem includes three special magnet schools, the Trotter (Elementary), The Hennigan (Intermediate), and the Copley Square High School. These are the schools where new methods of teaching are tried and new materials are used which the School Department thinks will help children learn better. The Lewis School, which used to be the intermediate school for the Subsystem will be a regular intermediate school under the plan and part of the Hennigan will serve as a regular elementary school for Jamaica Plain children.

Q. Will the Trotter School be balanced next year?

A. Last year the Trotter School was slightly imbalanced (52.63% non-white). Next fall it is expected to be about two-thirds non-white. State planners and Boston School Department officials are now working to see if they can balance the Trotter School.

Q. What is the "Garrity decision"?

Last year the NAACP, on behalf of a group of Black parents, filed a suit in the United States District Court, charging the Boston School Committee with intentionally running a segregated school system. On June 21, 1974 Judge Arthur Garrity ruled that the School Committee was guilty as charged, and he ordered the School Committee to desegregate the Boston Public Schools.

Q. How will Judge Garrity desegregate the schools?

A. Judge Garrity has ordered that the State Plan be put into effect in September as the first step toward desegregating the schools.

Q. Can Judge Garrity use the State Plan now that the Racial Imbalance Law has been repealed?

A. Yes. Judge Garrity can order any plan he thinks will best desegregate the schools.

Q. Will the State Plan be used again in September, 1975?

A. For September, 1975 Judge Garrity has ordered the School Committee to prepare a plan which balances all the schools in Boston. (The State Plan leaves some schools imbalanced).

Q. The U.S. Congress has passed a bill banning bussing farther than the next nearest neighborhood school. Does this affect Boston's desegregation plan?

A. No, because this bill also says that a Judge, such as Judge Garrity, may

order bussing if he thinks it is necessary in order to desegregate the schools.

- Q. How many non-white teachers are there in the Boston School System?
- A. Out of a total of 5,215 teachers, 462 are non-white (7.2%).
- Q. How does the percentage of non-white teachers compare with the percentage of non-white pupils?
- A. 7.2% of Boston teachers are non-white, but 38.5% of Boston school children are non-white.
- Q. How do these figures compare with other cities in the United States?
- A. Figures of the United States Office of Civil Rights show that Boston had the worst record among major US cities for hiring non-white teachers in proportion to its non-white students.
- Q. How many non-white teachers would there be in the Boston schools if minority teachers were hired in proportion to non-white students?
- A. 2007. (There are now 462 non-white teachers.)
- Q. How many non-white teachers are provisional teachers?
- A. Out of a total of 600 provisional teachers, 140 are non-white.
- Q. What is a provisional teacher?
- A. A provisional teacher is a teacher who is hired for one year only. At the end of that year, the School Department decides whether or not to rehire that teacher for another year. A permanent teacher, on the other hand, is automatically rehired from year to year provided that his/her teaching is satisfactory. Provisional teachers are also paid less than permanent teachers.
- Q. Will more Black teachers be hired next September?
- A. Yes. Judge Garrity has ordered the School Committee to hire one Black teacher for every White teacher hired.
- Q. How many positions will be available next Fall for teachers?
- A. A total of 601 positions will be available. 51 of these will go to Spanish-speaking teachers. Of the remaining 550 positions, 280 will be for permanent teachers and 270 for provisional teachers. Following Judge Garrity's one to one rule, this means that a total of 275 Black teachers will be hired this fall.
- Q. How does a Black teacher qualify for a teaching job in Boston next September?

- A. To be considered for a permanent position, a Black teacher must have Massachusetts certification. To be considered as a provisional, a Black teacher must have a college degree.
- Q. Where does someone apply for certification?
- A. At the Division of Teacher Certification and Placement, Massachusetts Department of Education, 11th floor, 182 Tremont Street, Boston.
- Q. Will Black teachers be recruited for Boston?
- A. Yes. Judge Garrity has ordered the School Committee to hire three (3) full-time Black recruiters, with power to hire Black teachers on the spot. However, hiring decisions can be vetoed by the School Committee.
- Q. If a Black wants to apply to teach in Boston in September, whom should he/she contact?
- A. Mr. Richard Brown
Coordinator, Minority Recruitment
Boston Public Schools
1453 Dorchester Ave.
Dorchester, Mass. 02122
or
Mrs. Esther Williams
NAACP Positive Program
792 Tremont Street
Boston, Mass.
261-1790
- Q. Are teachers segregated in the Boston School System?
- A. Yes. About three out of every four Black teachers are teaching in Black schools.
- Q. Will teachers be desegregated in September?
- A. Yes. Judge Garrity has ordered that Black teachers be reassigned so that there are equal numbers throughout the school system. The Martin Luther King Intermediate School, however, will keep most of its Black teaching staff.
- Q. Who will pay for transportation?
- A. The State will reimburse Boston for all transportation costs. This includes the cost of bus monitors.
- Q. Will federal money be available for desegregation?
- A. After Judge Garrity makes a final ruling, federal money should be available for pay for desegregated items other than transportation, such as human relations workshops for teachers and students and a rumor-control center.

INSTITUTE SERVICES

1. AID (Assistance in Desegregation) hotline (440-9704). AID is in operation daily from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. to answer questions on desegregation plans and activities.
2. General information on schools and educational services. (440-9704)
3. Speakers Bureau - speakers are available to speak to community groups on desegregation plans and other educational topics. Speakers use projectuals of the State Plan which show the new school districts and which give factual information about the schools.
4. Recruitment of minority persons - for School Department jobs related to desegregation: bus monitors, transitional aides and traffic supervisors.
5. Advocacy- a staff member is available to help parents deal with teachers, principals and school administrators to solve school-related problems.
6. Special Education Workshops - weekly meetings for parents with children with special problems are being held at Freedom House with the assistance of the Greater Boston Regional Education Center. Referral forms will be available for parents who wish to have their children evaluated for placement in special school programs.
7. Workshops - for teachers, parents and students on racism, desegregation and other educational topics.
8. Guidance Counseling - for South Boston and Roxbury High School students. Students who need assistance in filling out their class schedules should contact the Institute.
9. Educational Counseling Service/Talent Search - formerly a part of Model Cities, has recently joined the Institute. Talent Search counsels high school juniors and seniors who want to continue their education after high school. Information on scholarships and financial aid is available at their resource center. (442-6602 ext. 346)
10. Writing and Clerical Services - for community child advocacy groups.
11. Freedom House Institute Radio Show - From the Black Perspective. Every Sunday night from 11:00 to 11:30 p.m. on WRKO AM-FM, Ellen Jackson moderates a radio show dealing with educational issue as they relate to the Black community. Public service announcements are aired on the show and community participation is welcome.

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INSTITUTE ON SCHOOLS AND EDUCATION

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