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# SCHOOL DESEGREGATION IN WATERLOO, IOWA

A STAFF REPORT OF  
THE UNITED STATES COMMISSION  
ON CIVIL RIGHTS

August 1977

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## U.S. COMMISSION ON CIVIL RIGHTS

The U.S. Commission on Civil Rights is a temporary, independent, bipartisan agency established by Congress in 1957 and directed to:

- Investigate complaints alleging that citizens are being deprived of their right to vote by reason of their race, color, religion, sex, or national origin, or by reason of fraudulent practices;
- Study and collect information concerning legal developments constituting a denial of equal protection of the laws under the Constitution because of race, color, religion, sex, or national origin, or in the administration of justice;
- Appraise Federal laws and policies with respect to equal protection of the laws because of race, color, religion, sex, or national origin, or in the administration of justice;
- Serve as a national clearinghouse for information in respect to denials of equal protection of the laws because of race, color, religion, sex, or national origin;
- Submit reports, findings, and recommendations to the President and the Congress.

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SCHOOL DESEGREGATION IN  
WATERLOO, IOWA

A Staff Report of the  
U.S. Commission on Civil Rights  
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## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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At the appointment of the Staff Director of the Commission, all activities that contributed to this report were under the general supervision and coordination of William T. White, Jr., Assistant Staff Director, Office of National Civil Rights Issues.

## PREFACE

The United States Commission on Civil Rights released on August 24, 1976, its report to the Nation: Fulfilling the Letter and Spirit of the Law: Desegregation of the Nation's Public Schools.

The report's findings and recommendations were based upon information gathered during a 10-month school desegregation project. This included four formal hearings (Boston, Massachusetts; Denver, Colorado; Louisville, Kentucky; and Tampa, Florida); four open meetings held by State Advisory Committees (Berkeley, California; Corpus Christi, Texas; Minneapolis, Minnesota; and Stamford, Connecticut); a survey of nearly 1,300 local school districts; and 29 case studies of communities which had difficulties with desegregation, had moderate success with desegregation, or had substantial success with desegregation.

Subsequent to the report's release, considerable interest was generated concerning the specifics of the case study findings, which, owing to space limitations in the national report, were limited to a few brief paragraphs. In an effort to comply with public requests for more detailed information, Commission staff have prepared monographs for each of the case studies. These monographs were written from the extensive field notes already collected and supplemented, if needed, with further interviews in each community. They reflect, in detail, the original case study purpose of finding which local policies, practices, and programs in each community surveyed contributed to peaceful desegregation and which ones did not.

It is hoped that the following monograph will serve to further an understanding of the school desegregation process in this Nation.

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## I. BACKGROUND

Waterloo, in northeastern Iowa, is the county seat for Black Hawk County. The city's 1970 population was 75,523;<sup>1</sup> of that total nearly 9 percent were black and approximately 1 percent Hispanic.

The Cedar River divides the city into an eastern section containing the city hall, downtown stores, railyards, and older industrial plants, and a western section with hotels, residential areas, and the John Deere tractor plant. With more than 11,200 employees, the John Deere Company is the principal local employer.<sup>2</sup> Industry is important in Waterloo: only 3 percent of the city's labor force makes its living from agriculture.<sup>3</sup> (For a statistical profile of Waterloo's population, see table 1.)

### The Roots of Segregation

Until 1910, when the Illinois Central Railroad brought several hundred black workers to Waterloo as strikebreakers, no more than three or four black families lived in the city. The new arrivals settled around the railroad's shopyards in east Waterloo. Few additional blacks settled in the city until the Second World War created job opportunities in the local factories. Since the war, migration has doubled Waterloo's black population to the current figure of nearly 9 percent of the total.

The settlement pattern established early in this century has led to severe housing segregation. Waterloo's west side is 99.9 percent white, and most blacks live in five east side neighborhoods. In 1967 the local human rights commission reported that:

...Negro housing, mostly in an old part of the city, is a highly segregated affair. It has been quite impossible for any family to move into a good housing district although many have made such attempts.<sup>4</sup>

TABLE 1

## Waterloo Demographic Data: 1970

Total Population	74,545
Level of Education	
Median years of schooling	12.3
Graduated high school	60.1
Graduated college	8.2
Families	
Total	18,949
With female heads	140
Employment	
Total	28,688
By principal occupations (some occupations have been omitted)	
Construction	1,224
Manufacturing	9,327
Wholesale	1,304
Eating and Drinking Places	1,162
General merchandise	1,205
Other retail trade	1,652
Entertainment	1,379
Schools	1,036
Poverty	
Percent receiving public assistance	5.4
Percent families below poverty line	7.6
Movement into the county	
Percent who were born outside the State	18.6
Percent blacks	61.0
Proportion of population which is black	8.5

SOURCE: U.S., Bureau of the Census.

Waterloo has suffered poor race relations for years. In addition to housing problems, blacks tend to hold low-paying, low-status, blue-collar jobs and few white-collar positions.<sup>5</sup> In the summer of 1967, black youths demonstrated to protest their parents' acceptance of segregated housing and education in exchange for "good" jobs.<sup>6</sup> As the result of these demonstrations, the Waterloo Human Rights Commission held a hearing which revealed the extent of segregation and lack of opportunity for blacks in Waterloo.<sup>7</sup>

According to a former member of the city council, the black community views the council as particularly hostile to measures to improve the lot of minorities.<sup>8</sup> One member of the council serves as president of the Neighborhood School Association (NSA), a group opposed to busing for desegregation. The council abolished the low-rent housing commission when it persisted in proposals to establish such housing, which might be occupied by blacks, on the predominantly white side of town. Also, the black community has expressed concern about the distribution of community development funds, alleging insufficient benefit to minorities and the poor.<sup>9</sup> Charges of inequity first made in 1969 were repeated in 1971 by the director of the Waterloo Commission on Human Rights.<sup>10</sup>

Some community leaders, including the heads of larger organizations and businesses, are reportedly determined that greater opportunities for minorities be made available in Waterloo. For example, business groups grew concerned about the racial situation after the 1967 disturbances when they found that white managers and professionals were reluctant to move to Waterloo, a problem that continues.<sup>11</sup>

This long and growing frustration over racial tension and related problems appears to have been an important inducement for civic leaders and the general public to work seriously for the success of school desegregation when the time arrived.

## Notes to Chapter I

1. U.S., Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, 1970 Census of Population, General Social and Economic Characteristics, Iowa, PC 1-C17.
2. Waterloo Chamber of Commerce, Community Quick Reference (October 1974).
3. Ibid.
4. Waterloo Commission on Human Rights, Hearing, Sept. 7, 1967, p. 14 (hereafter cited as 1967 Hearing)
5. 1967 Hearing, p. 62.
6. Ibid., p. 44.
7. See 1967 Hearing.
8. Mary Berdell, former member of the city council, telephone interview, Sept. 16, 1976.
9. Ibid.
10. Willie L. Mosley, former director, Waterloo Commission on Human Rights, letter to staff, Mar. 30, 1971.
11. B.J. Ferguson, director, Waterloo Commission on Human Rights, telephone interview, Sept. 13, 1976.

## II. SCHOOL DESEGREGATION IN WATERLOO

### Desegregation before 1972-73

In 1976 student enrollment in Waterloo public schools was slightly over 16,000.<sup>1</sup> Of this total, over 15 percent were black and less than 1 percent Hispanic. Of the total faculty of 938, 56 (6 percent) were black, 5 were Asian American, and 5 were Hispanic. The district's 36 schools included 27 elementary, 6 junior high, and 3 senior high facilities.

Segregated housing and school attendance boundaries contributed to significant racial segregation in Waterloo's public schools. In 1967, 81 percent of white students attended schools that were at least 90 percent white, and 30 percent of the black students attended schools at least 90 percent minority. Although 11 of the 33 Waterloo schools had black students (see table 2), 66 percent of the black students attended schools with black majorities.<sup>2</sup>

The average academic performance of students in Waterloo was better than the national norm. However, test scores for 1966-67 suggested that students in predominantly black schools were not learning at the same rate as students in other Waterloo schools.<sup>3</sup>

Waterloo's four black elementary school teachers also taught in predominantly black schools; there was one black teacher in each of the two high schools. Although Waterloo had first hired a black teacher in 1952, its six black teachers in 1966 constituted only 0.8 percent of the faculty.<sup>4</sup>

In response to the demonstrations of 1967, the Waterloo School Board issued its first statement of support for school desegregation. The board followed this announcement with a series of experiments in limited desegregation; these modest initiatives continued until the school board--at the behest of the

TABLE 2

Racial Distribution at the 11 Waterloo Schools  
With Minority Enrollment, 1967

East High	18.5 percent
Logan Junior High	29.0
McKinstry Junior High	36.0
City View Heights Elementary	83.2
Grant Elementary	99.7 (1 white pupil)
Frances Grout Elementary	22.0
Hawthorne Elementary	36.0
Lafayette Elementary	0.0 (1 black pupil)
Longfellow Elementary	63.8
Maywood Elementary	9.1
Roosevelt Elementary	41.2

SOURCE: Waterloo Human Relations Commission.

Iowa State Department of Public Instruction (DPI)-- developed a comprehensive desegregation plan in 1973.

In fall, 1968, the school board proposed open enrollment (allowing children to attend any school with space) as the principal means to desegregate. In effect, however, this only permitted the more daring black parents to send their children to predominantly white schools in other attendance areas.<sup>5</sup>

A school board member observed at the time:

The intent of the school administration and the school board is to proceed very gradually and with great caution. The Waterloo school district will probably do only a little more than it is forced to do to achieve desegregation of its schools. The school system has no plan for desegregating its schools, nor is it trying to develop one. At the present time this system buses something less than 300 children to white schools in what is called "voluntary open enrollment": the children only go to schools where there is available space--and only those who volunteer to participate.<sup>6</sup>

Two other desegregation efforts initiated in 1968-70 involved the Price Laboratory School (of the University of Northern Iowa in Cedar Falls) and the more complex and imaginative Bridgeway magnet school project.

In the 1970 Bridgeway project, the poorly designed, predominantly black (99.9 percent) Grant Elementary School, located in the heart of a black residential district, became the Waterloo system's school for educational innovation. An experienced principal was assigned to oversee the transition and was provided with \$120,000 to make the needed alterations and given the authority to recruit a staff from the entire district.

According to school officials, Grant (Bridgeway) now has a balanced enrollment (half white, half minority), a superior staff, and committed parents. While it offers such innovations as open classrooms,

learning centers, ungraded classes, and team teaching, traditional elements remain. The qualities of Grant School--desegregation among them--are evidently attractive to white parents: the school board president, who was a leader of the antibusing Neighborhood Schools Association, sends his child to Grant School.

### **Secondary School Realignment**

In the fall of 1972, the school board and administration took additional limited desegregation steps with the opening of the new Central High School. Intended to replace a rural high school and to realign attendance at the two existing segregated city high schools (East and West), Central would include portions of both existing high school attendance zones and would therefore be desegregated.

Through this realignment, school authorities desegregated all three high schools. When Central opened, the river was crossed, through open enrollment, by black students going to Central and West and by a few white students going the other way to attend East. West's minority enrollment grew to 4.3 percent. At East the figure was 21.9 percent and at the new school (Central) blacks composed 11.4 percent of enrollment.<sup>7</sup> The black percentage at East has since been reduced to 19.0 while the percentage at West has climbed to 9.2 and at Central to 16.2.

There has been no attempt to deal with segregation on the junior high level. Plans are being readied to possibly eliminate this problem through magnet schools, middle schools, and 4-year high schools.

### **Further Desegregation Pressures**

Meanwhile, many in the black community in Waterloo were not satisfied with these limited desegregation measures. In January 1972 Dr. Robert Harvey, a black dentist and member of the school board, recommended the hiring of more black teachers and administrators, the use of texts that met minority needs, and the establishment of an inservice training program. The board was not receptive.<sup>8</sup>

At Hawthorne School in March 1972, there were protests that the school had too few minority staff persons and insufficient resources for the needs for black students.<sup>9</sup>

In April 1972 Dr. Harvey objected that the plan to desegregate the high schools would only involve a one-way movement of students. Black demonstrators also protested that the plan served white rather than black students.<sup>10</sup> A Coalition of the Black Community demanded an end to open enrollment because it placed all the burden of desegregation on black students.<sup>11</sup> Dr. Harvey further argued that the realignment of high school boundaries should have been accompanied by desegregation at the junior high and elementary school levels.

In the same month, the League of Women Voters circulated a petition and obtained 900 signatures in support of desegregation of the high schools. The league urged that further measures be taken to desegregate.<sup>12</sup>

Black groups supporting more extensive desegregation then began a boycott of stores in a local shopping center. The boycott, which attracted national attention,<sup>13</sup> was triggered by the use in a junior high school class of a text that was considered extremely derogatory toward blacks.<sup>14</sup>

Black students walked out of predominantly white schools in protest against the alleged insensitivity of their teachers and fellow students and conducted a sit-in at the superintendent's office. Several principals urged that schools be closed so calm could be restored.<sup>15</sup> Although the boycott had little immediate effect,<sup>16</sup> it was followed in June by a public endorsement of desegregation by the local chamber of commerce.

In July 1972 a local group called Concerned Parents of Waterloo protested to the Iowa State Department of Public Instruction about the absence of equal educational opportunity in Waterloo and asked the State to obtain further desegregation and the elimination of racist teaching materials.<sup>17</sup> Also in July, the local chapter of the NAACP filed a suit

against the Waterloo schools, charging that they were segregated. (The suit was later dropped when the desegregation plan was implemented.)<sup>18</sup>

In November 1972 the Iowa State Board of Education issued nondiscrimination guidelines that called for ending racial isolation in Iowa's public schools. These guidelines required any district in which individual schools exceeded by 20 percentage points the percentage of minority enrollment in the district generally to submit reports detailing efforts to reduce minority isolation. In Waterloo, the guidelines thus affected all schools more than 34 percent black. One black member of the State board criticized these guidelines as too weak.<sup>19</sup>

The accompanying policy statement from the Iowa DPI noted:

In this State there should be no barrier to education based on the fact that a child may be the member of any minority group. Segregation deprives all segments of society, both the minority and the majority, of the vital life experiences without which they are culturally and educationally disadvantaged.<sup>20</sup>

The statement called for "an explicit, unqualified commitment by the local board" to use all possible methods to end discrimination.<sup>21</sup>

In February 1973 the department of public instruction reported that eight Waterloo schools did not meet the criteria set out in the guidelines.<sup>22</sup> The district was ordered to submit a report by May 31, 1973, indicating what it proposed to do.<sup>23</sup> The State education staff was, however, hopeful: one staff member commented at the time that, in all Iowa, only Waterloo had already exhibited "measurable change."<sup>24</sup>

### **Waterloo Responds**

On February 14, 1973, James Sage, president of the Waterloo School Board, asked the superintendent to develop a set of comprehensive proposals either for or against desegregation efforts, school closings, and fiscal economies.<sup>25</sup> The board then decided to develop a

desegregation plan under Title VII of the Emergency School Aid Act (ESAA).<sup>26</sup>

This decision resulted from several conditions. In October 1972 the school board faced the inevitability of school closings. Serious consideration of this problem began in 1973 with the realization that enrollment had dropped and would drop by another 1,600 pupils by 1976. The president of the school board reported that "in a few years we may not need 50 or 60 of our present elementary classrooms."<sup>27</sup> The superintendent pointed out that the closings would save money, ranging from a high of \$363,500 from closing two schools to a low of \$327,200 from closing one school and transporting pupils.<sup>28</sup>

By March 1973 the superintendent and the president of the board were making clear that along with the school closings would go a realignment of elementary school boundaries--a natural outgrowth of the previous readjustment of high school boundaries. Superintendent George Diestelmeier pointed out that the district could use Federal funds to close its schools and to comply with State regulations if it developed a comprehensive desegregation effort under Title VII. He also stressed that the loss of Federal funds for even such a limited program as the lunch subsidy because of failure to desegregate would be a tremendous blow to the district.<sup>29</sup>

By March 11, 1973, preliminary proposals had been drafted that would comply with ESAA Title VII the desegregation guidelines.<sup>30</sup> The next day it became public that the proposals called for the closing of some primary schools.<sup>31</sup> When some school board members protested the closing of certain schools, Superintendent Diestelmeier urged that the board either accept these recommendations or indicate new priorities to be used in determining school closings.<sup>32</sup>

### The Plan

School authorities attempted to prepare a detailed desegregation plan that would answer the concerns of Waterloo's citizens, while satisfying the standards set by the State. The board quickly rejected two proposed desegregation plans that would have involved only east

side schools. It gave more attention to two proposals, Plans A and B, which centered on the Emerson, Lafayette, and Maywood Elementary Schools.

Plan A involved the closing and pairing of schools in 13 of 35 attendance areas. These included the principal minority attendance zones and the contiguous white zones. This arrangement would provide considerable desegregation but also would for the most part preserve neighborhood schools. On the other hand, the plan did not involve every elementary school and could not therefore achieve total desegregation.

Plan B called for the joining of groups of schools with contiguous boundaries. It too would involve minimal transportation, and it would meet Federal requirements. Plan B, however, would not have satisfied the State guidelines,<sup>33</sup> might have allowed resegregation, and provided for only limited involvement of the elementary school attendance areas within West High School's attendance zone.<sup>34</sup>

The school board began preparations for the implementation of Plan A, though the program had not yet been officially adopted. Although legally mandated transportation under the plan would be minimal (Iowa recommends 2 miles as the maximum distance for school busing), the plan proposed as a matter of convenience and safety six new bus routes costing a total of \$49,500.<sup>35</sup> The increased busing would result from the proposed blending of City View Elementary School, which had a high minority concentration, with nonminority schools on the west side. Also, students in Lafayette Elementary would be reassigned to Hawthorne, Grout, Lowell, and Jewett; those in Emerson would be assigned to Longfellow, Whittier, Irving, Lowell, or City View; and Greenbrier and Lincoln were to be paired with Krieg and Van Eaton.<sup>36</sup>

In preparation for desegregation, the school board appointed an advisory committee to help prepare the Title VII ESAA proposal. The committee included representatives of the Waterloo Education Association, human rights commission, Waterloo Chamber of Commerce, University of Northern Iowa, the Center for Urban Education, NAACP, African Palace, East Side Citizens' Committee, Neighborhood Schools Association, PTA,

parochial schools, League of Women Voters, SHARE, and parent representatives from all of the schools in the district.<sup>37</sup> The Waterloo Commission on Human Rights was designated as the proposed recipient of the Title VII funds. A community organization, "the consortium," was also formed with representation from most of the above groups as well as Catholic charities, YMCA, United Services, American Association of University Women, and the Welfare Rights Organization.<sup>38</sup> These two committees overlapped to allow development of a thorough proposal.<sup>39</sup>

The Title VII proposal outlined the services and personnel the district believed necessary to provide effective implementation of Plan A. These included remedial services beyond those conducted under other programs, enlarged libraries with increased services, recruitment of desegregation experts, additional teacher aides, and desegregation training for all staff. An important segment of these efforts was to be a contract for inservice faculty and staff training. The contract provided for 5 days of training before the beginning of the school year and another 36 days during the school year. The program would include simulations, group dynamics, minority language differentiation, and discussions. At least 2 days of inservice training during the year were to be given to staff in every school--not only to teachers and substitute teachers, but also to supervisors, custodial and cafeteria workers, and typists.<sup>40</sup>

### Debate and Decision

Most groups that had been involved with the desegregation struggle backed Plan A. Many had representatives on the ad hoc bodies that developed the Title VII proposal for funds to end desegregation.

Although the Neighborhood Schools Association was also represented on the advisory committee, it announced its opposition to the Title VII application.<sup>41</sup> Its opposition centered on busing, although the proposal required the busing of only about 1,000 more pupils than were being bused at that time.<sup>42</sup> At a March 1973 meeting of the school board, several NSA speakers attacked the administration proposals as unnecessary and unreasonable.<sup>43</sup> The Waterloo Courier

reported on April 1 that the NSA appeared to have wide support at community meetings sponsored by the school district. The NSA benefited from the hostility of parents whose children attended schools scheduled to be closed under the plan.<sup>44</sup>

The NSA position was stated at the April meeting by its attorney, Hugh Fields. He denied that there was a dual school system in Waterloo or that there had been segregation in the past. He protested that the courts had not yet ruled on de facto desegregation (the U.S. Supreme Court had not yet ruled on the Keyes case in Denver). Mr. Fields argued that, because there was no segregation, there was no need to desegregate.<sup>45</sup>

In April 5, 1973, the school board met to vote on the official adoption of Plan A. Writing to the president before the meeting, one board member noted his concern about the problems of desegregation but concluded:

If some form of integration of the schools in Waterloo causes me trials and yet will help insure this city for my children's children, let's get on with it.<sup>46</sup>

However, opinion was not united: the motion to implement Plan A passed by a 4-3 vote. One board member who voted against the plan told Commission staff that she favored desegregation but wanted a year of inservice training first.

NAACP spokesperson Joy Lowe, present at the meeting, commended the board for its choice.<sup>47</sup>

## Notes To Chapter II

1. Data on school enrollment and faculty obtained from the Waterloo School District (hereafter cited as WSD).
2. Waterloo Commission on Human Rights, Hearing, Sept. 7, 1967, p. 26 (hereafter cited as 1967 Hearing).
3. Ibid., pp. 33ff.
4. Ibid., pp. 30ff.
5. Iowa Advisory Committee to the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, Walk Together Children (May 22, 1971), p. 7.
6. Ibid., p. 8.
7. Data obtained from the U.S., Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, Office for Civil Rights.
8. Waterloo Daily Courier, Jan. 25, 1972.
9. Ibid., Mar. 23, 1972.
10. Ibid., Apr. 25, 1972.
11. WSD.
12. Waterloo Daily Courier, Apr. 11, 1972.
13. New York Times, June 29, 1972.
14. Ibid., May 30, 1972.
15. WSD.
16. Waterloo Daily Courier, May 31, 1972.
17. Waterloo Daily Courier, July 21, 1972; see also New York Times, Sept. 3, 1972.
18. WSD.
19. Des Moines Register, Feb. 25, 1973.

20. Ibid.
21. Ibid.
22. Ibid.
23. Waterloo Daily Courier, Apr. 17, 1973.
24. Jess High, head of the Urban Education Section, Iowa Department of Public Instruction, quoted in Waterloo Daily Courier, Apr. 18, 1973.
25. James Sage, president, Waterloo School Board, letter to George H. Diestelimer, Waterloo superintendent of schools, Feb. 15, 1973.
26. Under this program Federal funds are available to school districts provided that nondiscrimination assurances dealing with faculty assignments and hiring, student extracurricular activities, student discipline, and class assignment practices are filed with the administrating agency, the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare (HEW).
27. WSD.
28. Waterloo Daily Courier, Jan. 23, 1973.
29. Ibid., Mar. 18, 1973.
30. Ibid., Mar. 11, 1973.
31. Ibid., Mar. 12, 1973.
32. WSD.
33. State guidelines state that Waterloo's minority percentage in any school could not be 20 percentage points over the district's total minority percentage. Waterloo's minority percentage is 16 percent, therefore, a 36 percent limit in any school would be maximum. Federal guidelines are at 50 percentage points. Plan B would have allowed some schools to be over 56 percent.
34. Waterloo Daily Courier, Mar. 13, 1973.

35. WSD.
36. Waterloo Daily Courier, Mar. 13, 1973.
37. Ibid., Jan. 31, 1973.
38. Ibid., Jan. 29, 1973.
39. WSD.
40. Ibid.
41. Des Moines Register, Mar. 20, 1973.
42. WSD.
43. Waterloo Daily Courier, Mar. 28, 1973.
44. Ibid., Mar. 26, 1973; Mar. 29, 1973.
45. Hugh Fields, attorney for Neighborhood Schools Association, statement to board of education, Apr. 4, 1973.
46. Ibid., Apr. 5, 1973.
47. Ms. Joy Lowe, interview in Waterloo Daily Courier, Apr. 7, 1973.

### III. DESEGREGATION IN RETROSPECT

Despite the longstanding racial tensions in Waterloo and opposition to desegregation that would involve busing, Plan A was implemented in district elementary schools in September 1973 without violence or disruption. Commission staff interviews with numerous individuals involved in the desegregation effort revealed a number of factors responsible for this positive development.

First, widespread support for desegregation was evident in key elements of the community. The leadership of these elements was of paramount importance in encouraging peaceful desegregation in the community.

For example, the media supported desegregation strongly, and many letters to the Waterloo Daily Courier and its staff complained of noncoverage of the activities of local antibusing groups and their leaders.<sup>1</sup> Both Robert Buckmaster, chairman of Black Hawk Broadcasting, and Robert J. McCoy, executive editor of the Waterloo Daily Courier, told Commission staff that they and their media arms supported desegregation actively. Both believed that had they not done so, desegregation could not have occurred as smoothly as it did.

Station KWVL-TV editorialized on March 20, 1973:

We are going to have to close some schools one of these days, and we will certainly have to integrate those that are left. The only question is can the transition be made in an adult fashion with sober thought and honest concern on both sides?

On April 2, 1973, KWVL declared:

The board should adopt a plan which would accomplish that objective [reduction of

racial isolation] or at least make a significant start on it. We do NOT think that 'Plan E' [one of several being considered by the board at that time], which would simply transfer students to the nearest building...is the way to go about it.

Similar support came from the Waterloo Daily Courier,<sup>2</sup> and the Des Moines Register, the principal paper in the State, commented:

School boards cannot undo the discrimination that causes all-black neighborhoods, but they can see to it that segregation is rooted out of educational systems that are expected to teach children about such democratic values as equality, tolerance and justice. The Waterloo school board's stand deserves support.<sup>3</sup>

The Waterloo Defender, the principal black newspaper, was somewhat skeptical, noting that past efforts to obtain change had been ignored by the school board.<sup>4</sup>

Rev. Wayne Hoffman, chairman of the Waterloo Human Relations Commission, complained in March 1973 that the board had been moving too slowly to end desegregation.<sup>5</sup> The commission had become active in supporting desegregation as had several biracial and predominantly white groups.

Industrial, commercial, and media leaders in Waterloo generally supported desegregation efforts during this period. Some business leaders paid for advertisements supporting desegregation. Business leaders perceived their peers as moderately supportive of the changes.

As for other community groups, most political leaders remained neutral, reluctant to become involved one way or the other in the desegregation issue. Support from the Catholic Archdiocese was particularly useful: the head of the parochial schools not only vocally supported desegregation, but also took steps to ensure that his schools would not serve as havens for fleeing whites.

Many teachers in Waterloo also supported the desegregation measures. President David Miller of the Waterloo Education Association said officially that the savings from school closings, the funds that could be used to improve programs, and the opportunity to develop flexible and innovative programs were important to teachers.

He added:

But more important than saving money would be the opportunity to take another necessary step toward ending racial isolation. This isolation leads to misconceptions, misunderstandings and even fear of other human beings.<sup>6</sup>

Another teacher told the school board at its April 5 meeting that he was:

...tired of hearing parents pretend to be so concerned about having their child go to the school close to home so they know they are safe, and who, at the same time, often have no idea where their child is at night, or who he is with, or what he does at school when he is there....<sup>7</sup>

Some key school officials in Waterloo, notably George Diestelmeier, superintendent of the Waterloo schools, responded to the intensifying pressure to desegregate with strong leadership. Commenting on his role, the Iowa Department of Public Instruction observed:

Diestelmeier rather modestly attributes some of the success of Plan A to "luck." But it is rather obvious that a massive desegregation program with strong opposition cannot be instituted without a strong commitment by the district. In order to be successful, certain elements have to be present: strong leadership and careful planning by the administration and the school board, teacher dedication and human relations training, and parental involvement at every stage in the planning process.<sup>8</sup>

Other key members of the administrative team in desegregation planning were the director of school-community relations, the assistant superintendent in charge of the division of personnel, and coordinator of program planning. All supported the desegregation efforts.

The administration could not have planned or implemented desegregation without the support of the school board. The strongest support came from James Sage, then president of the board. On February 13, 1973, he wrote to his fellow board members:

My personal feelings at this time lead me to believe that we must make a strong and concerted effort to make our schools and hopefully the community a better place in which to live.

We cannot continue to rear our children in a community which has so much distrust and fear between races. You may say why should the school district attempt to make progress in this area? My answer is, who else, who has, or who will attempt to lead the way.<sup>9</sup>

Mr. Sage pointed out that desegregation was necessary if people and industry were to be attracted to Waterloo. He argued that whites were already fleeing the city, but contended that "they cannot continue to run forever." He concluded: "I feel we must develop a strong, positive, and constructive statement, and back it up to the people in the community, which will state our school system must be integrated on all levels."<sup>10</sup>

The groups that supported desegregation and worked hard to ensure successful implementation made the task of the schools that much easier. The fact that many of the leading proponents of desegregation had already placed their children in Bridgeway was powerful testimony to their commitment.

Along with this support, of course, there was steady opposition to Plan A from the beginning. The Neighborhood Schools Association (NSA) organized in 1972 to oppose the high school realignment claimed to

have 7,000 predominantly white members in March 1973. The appearance of an NSA advertisement asking parents to cast straw ballots "against forced busing of our children" and "in favor of the neighborhood school concept," was followed by a turnout of more than 400 persons at a school board meeting. Harold Getty, the organization's president, stated that the association favored desegregation but opposed busing to achieve it.<sup>11</sup> In addition, individual white parents sent letters to the Daily Courier opposing "forced busing," school closings, and similar desegregation measures, as well as desegregation, per se.<sup>12</sup>

NSA appealed the decision of the school board to implement Plan A to the Black Hawk County Board of Education. The appeal was based on Chapter 290 of the Iowa Code, which describes appeals procedures for public school transportation disputes. It was denied. The county board rejection was appealed to the State board of education; this was also denied. The NSA also proposed to obtain a temporary injunction prohibiting the school closings and transfers,<sup>13</sup> but did not have the necessary funds to pursue a court action.

The Neighborhood School Association, despite these losses, remained a potent political force. In the 1973 school board elections, the pro-Plan A majority of four lost one member and became the minority. The majority was again reversed in the September 1976 elections, when an NSA board member was defeated.

Despite the shifting political tides, desegregation has occurred. The NSA-majority board did not try to turn the clock back. In interviews during February 1976, four board members expressed a range of opinions. One member supported what had happened; another was neutral. Some complained that the quality of education had dropped but offered no proof; others believed that the quality, at least of achievement, was better. Some thought white flight had occurred and was quite noticeable. Although not completely hostile to desegregation, several expressed the simple conviction that nothing much had been accomplished and that a lot of money had been spent for nothing. In 1975 the board vented its frustration by refusing to renew its Title VII application.

In general, community leaders interviewed reported themselves to have been initially more favorable to desegregation than the community at large. Most reported that public support increased after implementation. This may be due to the exertions of the department of community-school relations, which has promoted community contact in a variety of ways. Its newsletter, The Red Apple, encourages active parent participation in the schools.<sup>14</sup>

Only a few opponents of the effort still perceived massive community hostility. Most of those questioned believed that Waterloo would continue to desegregate its schools regardless of what transpired nationally (for instance, antibusing amendments).

### Quality of Education

Few of the changes brought about by Plan A bore directly on the quality of education. There was general agreement that race relations had improved, if only because white and black children now interacted where in the past they had not. It was difficult to determine whether several instances of interracial fighting were actually racially inspired, for schools around the Nation were experiencing higher levels of student violence generally.

The staff inservice training component of the plan has been judged by inhouse evaluation to be generally successful. The department of school-community relations retained the services of nationally known desegregation experts until 1975-76, at which time it began to rely on local consultants and its own staff. The programs were judged particularly helpful in training white middle-class teachers, many of whom had never met a black person, to teach black working-class pupils. There was little evidence, however, of black materials and the black experience being incorporated naturally into the teaching.

The department continues an active inservice program that includes training of cadres in the schools, developing new curricula, and textbook selection. The annual reports of the department reveal increases in the number of schools participating in such programs and the range of activities provided.<sup>15</sup>

## Iowa Department of Public Instruction Reports

The Iowa Department of Public Instruction's urban education section issued reports in 1975 and 1976 on progress toward desegregation in the State's public schools.

While the 1974-75 report provided data concerning racial and ethnic distribution generally and in special classes, suspension, and retention,<sup>16</sup> the 1976 report made specific recommendations. The 1976 report indicated that, although further study is necessary in Waterloo,<sup>17</sup> in most of the 13 elementary schools affected by the plan the minority proportions had stabilized. The report found at Hawthorne Elementary and Logan Junior High Schools that minority enrollments had declined between 1974-75 and 1975-76, but that at four other schools (Longfellow, City View, and Grant Elementaries, and McKinstry Junior High) racial isolation had increased.<sup>18</sup> Longfellow, City View, McKinstry, and Logan were thought to show no signs of coming within the State's desegregation guidelines (no minority concentration in excess of 35 percent).<sup>19</sup> The high schools, however, were judged fully desegregated.<sup>20</sup> Complete statistics on changes in both the faculty and student racial composition of Waterloo's public schools for the period of 1970-76 appear in tables 3 and 4.

The DPI noted with approval that the inservice human relations program for school staff was continuing despite the loss of Title VII funding (owing to the school board's decision not to apply for 1975-76 aid). It also noted that cadres of human relations facilitators had been trained in each school.

In addition to its desegregation guidelines, the Iowa Department of Public Instruction later issued guidelines on affirmative action and multicultural curricula.<sup>21</sup> The DPI's 1976 report noted that the Waterloo district had appointed a full-time coordinator of multicultural education and was providing inservice training in the use of the materials the district had purchased. The district also issued a monthly multicultural newsletter. The DPI commented that the district seemed committed to equalizing minority staff

**TABLE 3**  
**Minority Faculty Distribution in**  
**Waterloo Schools**

School	School Year						
	1970-71	1971-72	1972-73	1973-74	1974-75	1975-76	1976-77
Central High	-	-	4	4	5	6	6
East High	10	10	13	9	9	5	5
West High	2	2	3	2	3	2	1
Bunger Jr.	1	1	-	-	1	1	1
Logan Jr.	1	2	1	3	4	5	4
McKinstry Jr.	2	4	5	5	4	5	5
West Jr.	-	-	-	2	2	3	4
Castle Hill	-	-	-	2	2	2	2
City View	1	2	2	2	3	1	1
Cresthaven	1	2	1	1	2	1	1
Grout	-	-	1	2	2	2	2
Grant	5	6	5	4	6	5	3
Hawthorne	1	-	3	6	7	7	6
Irving	-	-	-	3	1	1	1
Jewett	1	4	5	2	3	3	3
Kingsley	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Longfellow	3	5	5	3	3	6	5
Lowell	-	-	-	-	1	2	1
Roosevelt	1	-	1	1	1	1	1
Orange	1	-	-	-	-	-	1
Washburn	-	-	-	-	1	1	1
Westridge	-	-	1	1	1	1	1
Expo	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
Follow-Through	-	-	-	1	-	1	1
Hoover	1	-	-	-	-	-	1
Central Admin.	1	1	2	3	3	3	3
Revonshire	1	1	-	-	-	-	-
Krieg	-	1	1	-	-	1	-
Elk Run	-	-	1	1	-	-	-
Van Eaton	-	-	1	-	-	-	-
Hoover	-	-	-	-	1	-	-
Greenbier	-	-	-	-	2	-	-
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>56</b>	<b>58</b>	<b>68</b>	<b>66</b>	<b>62</b>

TABLE 4

Minority Enrollment 1970-76

	Black Hawk	Castle Hill*	Cedar Terrace	City View*	Cresthaven*	Devonshire	Edison Elem.*	Elk Run	Emerson*	Garvey
1970										
Total	606	445	142	119	306	211	471	505	341	107
Minority	3	1	0	108	42	0	0	0	15	5
Min. %	0.5	0.2	0.0	90.8	13.7	0.0	0.0	0.0	4.4	4.7
1971										
Total	546	456	127	121	298	237	446	473	358	127
Minority	5	6	0	112	38	0	0	0	26	3
Min. %	0.9	1.3	0.0	92.6	12.8	0.0	0.0	0.0	7.3	2.4
1972										
Total	529	422	133	110	252	238	392	428	347	175
Minority	5	7	1	101	34	0	0	0	37	3
Min. %	0.9	1.7	0.8	91.8	13.5	0.0	0.0	0.0	10.7	1.7
1973										
Total	487	406	137	90	274	234	371	393	-	151
Minority	3	31	4	48	62	0	27	6	-	3
Min. %	0.6	7.6	2.9	53.3	22.6	0.0	7.3	1.5	-	2.0
1974										
Total	457	402	120	104	262	221	250	341	-	138
Minority	4	41	0	41	53	0	25	3	-	3
Min. %	0.9	10.2	0.0	39.4	20.2	0.0	10.0	0.9	-	2.2
1975										
Total	461	395	95	92	248	219	254	324	-	148
Minority	12	47	1	51	38	0	34	2	-	0
Min. %	2.6	11.9	1.1	55.4	15.3	0.0	13.4	0.6	-	0.0
1976										
Total	386	389	96	85	267	212	270	306	-	135
Minority	8	65	0	37	36	0	35	1	-	2
Min. %	2.1	20.1	0.0	43.5	13.5	0.0	13.0	0.3	-	1.5

\*Denotes schools affected by 1972-73 and 1973-74 boundary changes.

Source: Waterloo School District.

TABLE 4--Continued

	Grant	Green- brier	Frances Grout*	Hawthorne*	Irving	Jewett*	Kingsley	Kittrell	Krieg*	LaFayette*
<b>1970</b>										
Total	424	228	345	430	526	741	398	746	178	230
Minority	232	4	111	223	17	48	51	27	41	1
Min. %	54.7	1.7	32.2	51.9	3.2	6.4	12.8	3.6	23.0	0.4
<b>1971</b>										
Total	426	234	317	354	514	649	367	679	165	204
Minority	223	10	121	175	37	45	35	19	39	0
Min. %	52.3	4.3	38.1	49.4	7.2	6.9	9.5	2.8	23.6	0.0
<b>1972</b>										
Total	451	217	309	328	501	623	352	644	155	204
Minority	222	10	106	180	37	37	36	24	47	0
Min. %	49.2	4.6	34.3	54.9	7.4	5.9	10.2	3.7	30.3	0.0
<b>1973</b>										
Total	455	257	291	314	528	672	367	621	169	-
Minority	230	20	22	144	37	36	27	21	45	-
Min. %	50.6	7.8	7.6	45.9	7.0	5.4	7.4	3.4	26.6	-
<b>1974</b>										
Total	430	243	281	270	496	660	354	560	175	-
Minority	225	25	24	105	42	29	22	19	38	-
Min. %	52.3	10.3	8.5	38.9	8.5	4.4	6.2	3.4	21.7	-
<b>1975</b>										
Total	420	243	297	277	457	598	353	523	181	-
Minority	239	30	32	107	33	22	19	12	44	-
Min. %	56.9	12.3	10.8	38.6	7.2	3.7	5.4	2.3	24.3	-
<b>1976</b>										
Total	428	227	295	273	421	613	339	503	164	-
Minority	233	31	34	114	36	28	16	11	39	-
Min. %	54.4	13.7	11.5	41.8	8.6	4.3	4.7	2.2	23.8	-

\*Denotes schools affected by 1972-73 and 1973-74 boundary changes.

TABLE 4--Continued

	Lincoln*	Longfellow*	Lowell*	Maywood*	Orange	Roosevelt*	Van Eaton*	Washburn	Westridge	Whittier
1970										
Total	400	512	568	132	298	473	147	580	181	391
Minority	2	333	0	25	0	216	2	0	0	13
Min. %	0.5	65.0	0.0	18.9	0.0	45.7	1.4	0.0	0.0	3.3
1971										
Total	386	545	544	125	268	453	163	557	182	369
Minority	8	372	3	9	0	235	24	0	0	4
Min. %	2.1	68.3	0.6	7.2	0.0	51.9	14.7	0.0	0.0	1.1
1972										
Total	388	484	532	122	256	410	159	462	187	368
Minority	3	329	2	7	0	224	22	0	0	3
Min. %	0.8	70.0	0.4	5.7	0.0	54.6	13.8	0.0	0.0	0.8
1973										
Total	329	475	529	-	296	401	135	432	205	334
Minority	112	234	151	-	3	131	35	0	3	5
Min. %	34.4	49.3	28.5	-	1.0	32.7	25.9	0.0	1.4	1.5
1974										
Total	315	440	489	-	295	367	132	394	225	312
Minority	110	205	135	-	9	139	31	0	4	7
Min. %	34.9	46.6	27.6	-	3.1	37.9	23.3	0.0	1.8	2.2
1975										
Total	287	411	476	-	312	361	115	386	211	282
Minority	100	192	130	-	10	126	28	2	4	7
Min. %	34.8	46.7	27.3	-	3.2	34.9	24.3	0.5	1.9	2.5
1976										
Total	282	362	432	-	355	374	100	346	217	300
Minority	102	149	123	-	16	142	36	1	7	14
Min. %	36.2	41.2	28.7	-	4.5	38.0	36.0	0.3	3.2	4.7

\*Denotes schools affected by 1972-73 and 1973-74 boundary changes.

TABLE 4--Continued

	Bunger	Middle Edison	Hoover	Logan	McKinstry	West Jr.	Central*	East*	Orange*	West*
1970										
Total	514	531	740	681	628	1,164	-	1,556	465	2,048
Minority	0	2	24	241	215	26	-	361	0	30
Min. %	0.0	0.4	3.2	35.4	34.2	2.2	-	23.2	0.0	1.5
1971										
Total	502	550	754	724	575	1,193	-	1,535	459	2,148
Minority	12	0	41	255	224	46	-	404	0	35
Min. %	2.4	0.0	5.4	35.2	39.0	3.9	-	26.3	0.0	1.6
1972										
Total	506	562	832	653	572	1,091	992	1,363	-	1,698
Minority	0	2	26	253	248	43	113	299	-	73
Min. %	0.0	0.4	3.1	38.7	43.4	3.9	11.4	21.9	-	5.2
1973										
Total	472	587	893	709	519	1,034	1,005	1,179	-	1,623
Minority	7	4	28	290	253	55	144	237	-	118
Min. %	1.5	0.7	3.1	40.9	48.8	5.3	14.3	20.0	-	7.3
1974										
Total	486	703	822	751	524	1,042	967	1,105	-	1,574
Minority	14	33	19	324	264	57	171	190	-	134
Min. %	2.9	4.7	2.3	43.1	50.4	5.5	17.7	17.2	-	8.5
1975										
Total	463	698	785	729	525	1,084	1,045	1,020	-	1,537
Minority	11	49	43	303	270	64	154	200	-	145
Min. %	2.4	7.0	5.5	41.6	51.4	5.9	14.7	19.6	-	9.4
1976										
Total	429	650	760	706	527	1,062	1,091	999	-	1,570
Minority	9	50	70	287	240	51	166	190	-	173
Min. %	2.1	7.7	9.2	40.7	45.5	4.8	15.2	19.0	-	11.0

\*Denotes schools affected by 1972-73 and 1973-74 boundary changes.

as well as enrollment, having hired additional minority teachers during the past year.<sup>22</sup>

### **Prospects**

There is still pressure to turn back from desegregation, but there appears to be little prospect of such a development. The superintendent and his staff appear committed to further efforts to ensure effective school desegregation. The school board now has a pro-desegregation majority. The desegregation process has produced institutional arrangements that are likely to lead to further progress in the provision of equal educational opportunity for all Waterloo's school children. As Waterloo's families become accustomed to desegregated education and students live with it from the earliest grades, the prospects of successfully improving race relations in the school and the community increase.

### Notes to Chapter III

1. Waterloo Daily Courier, Apr. 13, 1973.
2. Ibid., Mar. 4, 1973; Apr. 4, 1973; Apr. 15, 1973.
3. Des Moines Register, Apr. 12, 1973.
4. Waterloo Defender, Mar. 23, 1973.
5. Waterloo Daily Courier, Mar. 2, 1973.
6. David Miller, president, Waterloo Education Association, letter to George Diestelmeier, Superintendent, Waterloo School District, Apr. 5, 1973.
7. Waterloo Daily Courier, Apr. 6, 1973.
8. Iowa Department of Public Instruction, Urban Education Section, A Challenge to Change (Fall 1974) p. 2.
9. James Sage, president, Waterloo School Board, letter to the board, Feb. 13, 1973.
10. Ibid.
11. Waterloo Daily Courier, Mar. 13, 1973.
12. Ibid., Mar. 20, 1973; Mar. 22, 1973; Mar. 25, 1973; Mar. 28, 1973; Apr. 4, 1973; Apr. 5, 1973.
13. Waterloo Daily Courier, Apr. 12, 1973; Des Moines Register, Apr. 13, 1973.
14. Information supplied by Waterloo School District.
15. Ibid.
16. Iowa Department of Public Instruction, A Report on Race, Ethnicity, and Sex Characteristics of Iowa's Public Schools, 1974-75 (undated).
17. Iowa Department of Public Instruction, Iowa School's Progress Reports on Desegregation, August 1976, Xerox.

18. Ibid. See section entitled "Summary of Waterloo Community School District Desegregation Status Report: July 1976" (hereafter cited as Waterloo Summary).

19. Ibid.

20. Ibid.

21. Iowa Department of Public Instruction, Two Procedural Models for Affirmative Action in Iowa's Schools (undated) and Multi-Cultural, Non-Sexist Curriculum Guidelines for Iowa Schools (undated).

22. Waterloo Summary.

#### IV. CONCLUSIONS

•Support by crucial elements of the business community and the media as well as pressure by the minority community, helped make desegregation possible.

•Without commitment to desegregation by the superintendent and his staff, desegregation would have been impossible.

•The Iowa Department of Public Instruction provided a catalyst that speeded the process of change.

•Opposition was strong but stayed within the legitimate avenues of dissent. As desegregation proved less negative than those opposed to it expected, hostility declined.

•A successful human relations training program helped reduce tension and prevented hostile encounters that might have sabotaged the effort.

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