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**Public Schools: Boston's Busing Battle**

"I believe that little children should go to schools in their own neighbor hoods with the children with whom they play — it's as simple as that."

So says Mrs. Louise Day Hicks 46 chairman of the five-man Boston School Committee, which sets policy for Boston's public schools. For months she has been waging a determined fight to keep Negroes from busing their children out of the black districts into white neighborhood schools, even though the city has an "open enrollment" policy that permits any child to transfer to any school where there is room.

Despite that policy, and thanks partly to Mrs. Hicks, Boston's schools remain racially unbalanced. At least 25 schools have enrollments that are less than 20% white. A new state law (TIME, Aug 27) requires schools to correct imbalance or forfeit state funds; Boston has until October to complete a pupil census, and then must submit plans to redress the balance. And U.S. Commissioner of Education Francis Keppel has begun an investigation to see if Boston's schools can continue to qualify for $2,000,000 in federal aid.

Boos & Catcalls. Notwithstanding the imminent consequences, Louise Hicks last week fought on. On the opening day of school, she journeyed out to Blue Hill Avenue, where a group of Negro mothers and their children were waiting for privately hired buses to take the kids into predominantly white schools. "Yellow slips! Yellow slips!" she yelled, referring to certificates that are required for school transfers. "Without those yellow slips your children will be turned away!" In response, the Negroes shot back boos and catcalls. As it happened, a few dozen Negro kids were turned back until they could pick up their slips, but by last week about 300 had been successfully transferred.

As far as Mrs. Hicks is concerned, yellow slips are not the answer to the Negroes' education problems in Boston. Her solution is to help Negro children with "compensatory education," by which teaching teams give students more individual attention and remedial instruction. Such work has already been begun in some schools, and the results are encouraging.

Says Mrs. Hicks: "I defy any of the civil rights leaders to prove that any of our neighborhood schools are inferior." When Negroes protest that this is the old "separate but equal" argument, she retorts: "Stop banging on our door—the real problem is housing." She feels misunderstood. "In every one of the major cities the civil rights leaders have found a scapegoat. If it has to be me, so be it. My conscience is clear."

Death Threats. As far as Boston's Negroes are concerned, Mrs. Hicks's activities on behalf of neighborhood schools mask an out-and-out segregationist attitude. N.A.A.C.P. Leader Paul Parks contends that despite her "motherly image," she is "tyrannical to the Negro community." Others apparently feel even more strongly than that. Mrs Hicks says that she and her family—her husband, an engineer, and two sons, 18 and 20—have been repeatedly terrorized with death threats. She has taken out a permit to carry a pistol.

She seems like the sort who can take care of herself. A onetime suburban Boston schoolteacher, she served as law clerk for ten years to her father District Judge William J. Day, and got her own law degree from Boston University in 1955. She now runs a law practice with her brother—when she is not running the schools and her household.

Though she has been severely criticized for her militancy on the Negro-school question, it is not Mrs. Hicks herself who stands in the way of the Negro. Most of white Boston is quite content with the neighborhoods. When Mrs. Hicks ran for a second term on the school committee in 1963, she got a bigger vote than the mayor.

* Find this article at:
* <http://www.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,834372,00.html>

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# Public Schools: PUBLIC SCHOOLS Another First for Massachusetts

Massachusetts likes to remind its sister states that it is first in several educational fields. Last week in the Statehouse atop Beacon Hill, Republican Governor John Volpe boasted about some of those historical attainments: first public school (1635), first U.S. college (1636), first state board of education (1837), first state teacher-training college (1839), first compulsory school attendance law (1852). Then he proudly signed a bill making Massachusetts the first state to ban de facto school segregation.

Build or Bus. The bill survived three months of acrid debate in the legislature, and is certain to create even more bitter controversy if lawmakers in other states try to use it as a model. It declares that any school is "racially imbalanced" if more than 50% of the enrollment is nonwhite (but not vice versa), and calls for an annual head count to check the balance. Where an imbalance exists, local school authorities must devise plans to correct it. If they fail to do so, the state not only can, but must cut off state aid to that district.

A district with such an imbalanced school can either redraw its lines to break up neighborhood racial pockets, or build more schools, or bus kids to other schools. A school with a 52% Negro enrollment, for example, could bus enough Negro students to another school to get down to the 50% level, or it could bring in a balancing number of white students, or do a little of both. No family, however, can be compelled to have its children transported out of their neighborhood if the parents object in writing. To help districts expand facilities to correct an imbalance, the state will pay 65%−instead of the usual 40%of construction costs.

A Step in the Drive. The law was proposed in various forms by both Republicans and Democrats, but it was opposed most vociferously by a Democratic bloc of legislators from Boston, the city at which it is mainly aimed. "This bill," cried Boston Democratic Representative Paul Murphy, "is one of the most dangerous pieces of legislation ever considered by this House!"

On the other hand, the state's Republican Attorney General Edward Brooke, a Negro, called the legislation a "dramatic and heartening" step in the drive to "ensure equality in education." Still, the law may have to be harshly applied in Boston, where more than 50% of the enrollment in 45 schools is nonwhite. The city's governing public school committee has refused to admit that segregation exists in its schools. Its chairman, Mrs. Louise Day Hicks, declared last week that "racial imbalance in itself is not educationally harmful." Rather than bus kids, Mrs. Hicks would prefer to get along without state aid.

* Find this article at:
* <http://www.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,828351,00.html>