

### Order dated March 25, 1970

In the original order of April 23, 1969, and in the order of August 15, 1969, the projected time for completion of desegregation of the schools was set for September 1970. The court did not then consider and never has at any time considered that wholesale mid-year or mid-term transfers of pupils or teachers were desirable. Furthermore, it was contemplated by all parties that this time table would allow time for orderly development of plans as well as for appeal by all who might wish to appeal.

On October 29, 1960, in *Alexander v. Holmes County*, the Supreme Court ordered the immediate desegregation of schools involving many thousands of Mississippi school children. In *Carter v. West Feliciana Parish*, — U. S. — (January 14, 1970), the Supreme Court reversed the Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals and set a February 1, 1970 deadline to desegregate schools in Gulf Coast states involving many thousands of children. In *Nesbit v. Statesville*, 418 F.2d 1040, on December 2, 1969, the Fourth Circuit read *Alexander* as follows:

“The clear mandate of the Court is immediacy. Further delays will not be tolerated in this circuit.”

In *Whittenburg v. Greenville County, South Carolina*, — F.2d — (January 1970), the Fourth Circuit Court of Appeals read *Alexander* to say that

“. . . general reorganization of school systems is requisite now, that the requirement is not restricted to the school districts before the Supreme Court in *Alexander*, and that Courts of Appeals are not to authorize the postponement of general reorganization until September 1970.

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*"The District Court's order shall not be stayed pending any appeal which may be taken to this court, . . . (Emphasis added.)"*

On January 26, 1970, on re-hearing, the Fourth Circuit Court of Appeals said:

"The proper functioning of our judicial system requires that subordinate courts and public officials faithfully execute the orders and directions of the Supreme Court. . . . no member of this court can read the opinions in *Carter* as leaving any room for the exercise by this court in this case of any discretion in considering a request for postponement of the reassignment of children and teachers until the opening of the next school year."

The petition of Greenville for a stay of the order was again denied, and the Greenville schools were desegregated as of February 16, 1970.

The last *Greenville* decision was ten days old at the time of this court's order of February 5, 1970. These were the mandates under which it was ordered that the Charlotte-Mecklenburg schools should be desegregated before the end of the spring term, and that the mandate should not be stayed pending appeal.

Since that time, several suits have been filed in state court seeking to prevent implementation of the February 5, 1970 order, and decision by the three-judge court now considering the constitutionality of the "anti-bussing" law, North Carolina General Statutes, §115-176.1, does not appear likely before April 1, 1970. The appeal of the defendants in the *Swann* case to the Fourth Circuit Court of Appeals is not scheduled to be heard until April 9,

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1970, and there is no way to predict when a decision on that appeal will be rendered. There is also no way to predict when a final decision by the Supreme Court will be made on any of these issues, nor what the final decision may be.

Furthermore, notwithstanding the *Holmes County, Greenville, Carter* and *Statesville* decisions, the Fourth Circuit Court of Appeals has now rendered a stay as to certain portions of the February 5, 1970 order, and a petition to vacate that stay has been denied by the Supreme Court. The Fourth Circuit Court of Appeals and the Supreme Court have now demonstrated an interest in the cost and inconvenience and disruption that the order might produce—factors which, though bussing was not specifically mentioned, appear not to have been of particular interest to either the Fourth Circuit Court or the Supreme Court when *Holmes County, Carter, Greenville* and *Statesville* were decided.

The only reason this court entered an order requiring mid-semester transfer of children was its belief that the language of the Supreme Court and the Fourth Circuit above quoted in this order, given its reasonable interpretation, required district courts to direct desegregation before the end of this school year.

The urgency of “desegregation now” has now been in part dispelled by the same courts which ordered it, and the court still holds its original view that major desegregation moves should not take place during school terms nor piecemeal if they can be avoided.

Therefore, IT IS ORDERED, that the time table for implementation of this court’s order of February 5, 1970 be, and it is hereby modified so that the implementation of the various parts of the desegregation order will not be

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required until September 1, 1970, subject, however, to any different decisions that may be rendered by appellate courts and with the proviso that the school board may if they wish proceed upon any earlier dates they may elect with any part or parts of the plan.

This is the 25th day of March, 1970.

/s/ JAMES B. McMILLAN  
James B. McMillan  
*United States District Judge*