

**Special Subcommittee on the 50th Anniversary of Public School Closings in Virginia**

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**Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Memorial Commission  
Brown v. Board of Education Scholarship Committee  
General Assembly of Virginia**



[www.loc.gov/exhibits/brown/images/br0057Cs.jpg](http://www.loc.gov/exhibits/brown/images/br0057Cs.jpg)

**STATUS REPORT OF THE STEERING COMMITTEE**

**The Honorable Henry L. Marsh, III, *Chairman*  
The Honorable Rosalyn R. Dance, *Vice Chairwoman***

**Prepared by**

**Brenda H. Edwards  
Senior Research Associate  
Division of Legislative Services**

**September 23, 2009**

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## STATUS REPORT OF THE STEERING COMMITTEE

### Members of the Steering Committee

#### GROUP A

Delegate Rosalyn R. Dance, *Group Leader*  
Senator Harry B. Blevins  
Dr. Rosa S. Atkins  
Ms. Christonya B. Brown  
Mr. Brian Daugherty  
The Honorable Leroy Rountree Hassell, Sr.  
Mr. Andrew I. Heidelberg  
Dr. Tameka Hobbs  
Dr. Louis C. Justis  
Mr. Lacy B. Ward, Jr.

#### GROUP B

Dr. Kirk T. Schroder, Esquire, *Group Leader*  
Mrs. Betsy S. Barton  
The Honorable Dana J. Boente  
Mr. Henry W. Cabarrus, Jr.  
Mr. Henry L. Chambers, Jr.  
Mrs. Barbara N. Howard  
Delegate Daniel W. Marshall, III  
Ms. Ruth S. Murphy  
Mr. Michael A. Turner  
Dr. Robert C. Vaughan, III  
Mrs. Valerie Braxton Williams

#### Ex Officio Members

Senator Henry L. Marsh, III, *Chairman*  
Senator Mamie E. Locke, *Steering Committee Chairwoman*

#### STAFF

Mrs. Brenda H. Edwards, *Senior Research Associate*  
Mrs. Gwendolyn Foley, *Senior Operations Staff Assistant*  
Mr. Benjamin T. Reese, *Fiscal Officer*  
Division of Legislative Services  
Ms. Christine McCormick  
Office of the Clerk, Committee Operations  
Virginia House of Delegates

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### STATUS REPORT OF THE STEERING COMMITTEE

On July 14, 2009, the Special Subcommittee on the 50th Anniversary of Public School Closings in Virginia met for organizational purposes and a Steering Committee was appointed to develop and refine the commemorative programs and activities adopted by the Subcommittee. The first meeting of the Steering Committee was held on August 21, 2009. At the meeting, the Steering Committee was divided into two groups—Group A and Group B—to facilitate dialogue and development of the adopted programs and activities. Group A and Group B were led in their deliberations by Delegate Rosalyn R. Dance and Dr. Kirk T. Schroder, respectively.

#### Recommendations of Group A *Group Leader, Delegate Rosalyn R. Dance*

Group A was assigned the following programs and activities.

**Meetings/Tours of the Subcommittee in Affected Localities.** The group recommends that every locality which experienced school closings should be identified and encouraged to become involved. It was requested that Warren County be toured last in order to combine this event with the Town Hall Meetings referenced below.

**Lacy Ward and Dr. Tameka Hobbs** will co-lead this activity, assisted by Dr. Louis Justis.

**State and Local Exhibits Related to Massive Resistance and *Brown*.** The group recommends making this a traveling exhibit and combining it with (as a backdrop for) the Lecture Series/Book signing. The exhibit would consist of 5 panels, 2-sided – similar to the Chrysler Museum 2008 exhibit on Massive Resistance. [The Lessons of Massive Resistance in Norfolk.mht](#). The group proposes that the exhibit travel to all 5 major locations.

**Christonya Brown** will lead this activity

**Dr. Rosa Atkins** will locate/obtain historic documents

**Dr. Tameka Hobbs** will flesh out the group's recommendations and coordinate with the Library of Virginia Development Division

**Brian Daugherty and Andrew Heidelberg** will also assist with this activity

**Lecture Series and Book Signing.** See State and Local Exhibits above.

**Role of the Actors and Participants in Massive Resistance and *Brown*.** The group recommends the development of a roster of the participants to include attorneys, jurists, etc. Group A views this activity as a significant contribution to the continuation of the MLK Commission's work. The group also proposed the creation of a documentary to connect the voices of all 5 localities. The Chrysler Museum Massive Resistance Exhibit in 2008 was singled out as the template for this activity. However, the cost of this event was questioned.

**Andrew Heidelberg** will lead this activity and will be assisted by Dr. Rosa Atkins and Dr. Tameka Hobbs

**Brian Daugherty** offered his extensive list of participants to the Subcommittee.

**Dan Roberts "A Moment In Time" on Massive Resistance.** Group A noted that this event may possibly have no cost.

**Brian Daugherty** has worked with Dan Roberts in the past will coordinate with him.

**Town Hall: Challenges of the Past/Vision for Future.** Group A recommends that the town hall meetings be combined with and held at the conclusion of the local Meetings/Tours noted above. The group wants to invite the public to talk about this period in their lives and it is recommended that the town halls be videotaped for historic purposes and for use in the public school system. It is suggested that town halls be held and taped in additional locations. It was also suggested that a panel exhibit be included.

**Dr. Louis Justis** will lead this activity and will be assisted by Christonya Brown.

*The deliberations of Group A were recorded by Christine McCormick, House Committee Clerk.*

## **Recommendations of Group B** **Group Leader, Dr. Kirk T. Schroder**

In developing the programs and activities assigned to it, Group B determined that a central message must be communicated for the commemoration. It offers the following theme for the Subcommittee's consideration.

### ***"A History That We're Still Living"***

**Theme's Objective.** We cannot forget the past; we recognize that our history is still with us and we live it each day; and we aspire for a world in which all people are "judged by the content of the character and not by the color of their skin."

Group B was tasked as follows:

**Opening Event with President or Other Official.** Group B recommends that an opening event be held at the State Capitol in the House Chamber with a broader audience to include school children. It is recommended that the families of former Delegates Hunt Whitehead and George Cochran, and Senator Kossen Gregory, as well as other relevant persons be invited to attend. The President or other Official should be asked to deliver an address consistent with the Subcommittee's "message."

**Website.** The 50th Anniversary of Public School Closings is posted on MLK Commission website, and the development of the menu is ongoing.

**Preservation of Historical Records and Facilities.** Group B was apprised that existing records pertaining to the desegregation of public schools are scattered throughout the Commonwealth and that there is no consistency among localities and other entities concerning their retention and preservation. Group B recommends that:

- The commemoration should inform and educate citizens concerning Virginia's history during Massive Resistance. Therefore, the target audience for the commemoration should focus on age 9 through adults.
- The Subcommittee, with the assistance of the Governor, should issue a call, via letter, for all records pertaining to desegregation in the Commonwealth and that the records should be sent to the Library of Virginia. The letter should be sent to all broadcast and print media in Virginia, institutions of higher education, local school boards, historical societies, former academies, and the public.
- The Subcommittee should produce a film concerning Massive Resistance in Virginia as a legacy project to inform and educate the public and students, which would be distributed after the commemoration. The medium for delivering the product should maximize available technology to preserve Virginia's history and make the information accessible to all persons, e.g. DVD, PBS, audiovisuals, Internet, etc., including materials that can be placed in public school media centers.
- The legacy film should highlight all localities in which public schools were closed.

- The Subcommittee should engage an appropriate person to research and write the script for the film. It was estimated that this effort could be conducted for \$1,000. Senator Marsh, Chairman of the MLK Commission, under whose authority the commemoration is being conducted, approved the use of an amount not to exceed \$1,000 from Commission funds to undertake the project should the Special Subcommittee adopt the Steering Committee's recommendation.
- The Subcommittee should create a database which would include the complete written historical account, records concerning the public policy, the actors and their respective roles and contributions, (e.g., students and their families, General Assembly, local government and school boards, private law firms, state and federal courts, media, litigants, mentors, NAACP, Quakers, Byrd Machine, religious community, institutions of higher education, etc.), and information regarding highlighted localities and other affected areas, as well as chronicle the human stories of persons and communities affected by Massive Resistance across the Commonwealth. The database should be made available through the Commission's website.

**Guest Editorials and Scholarly Writings.** Members of Group B were requested send their suggestions regarding persons who may be invited to write editorials and other papers to staff. The Group would consider suggested names at its next meeting.

**Public Relations.** Group B deferred discussion of public relations until further deliberations by and direction from the Special Subcommittee at the September 23rd meeting. Nevertheless, any publicity should defer to and must be consistent with the theme and message that the Subcommittee wants to convey.

**Promotion of Localities and Significant Sites Related to Massive Resistance and *Brown*.** The Special Subcommittee has adopted a work plan in which future meetings will be held in each of the localities that closed public schools, and will be coupled with a town hall style meeting for citizens during the evening to address relevant issues to be determined by the Subcommittee. It is recommended that advanced publicity concerning the locality's history during Massive Resistance precede the Subcommittee's arrival and meetings.

**Concluding Event.** The Group discussed some possible venues, such as the Library of Virginia and Center Stage in Richmond. However, the Group determined discussion of a concluding event was premature and elected to defer this item until further direction from the Special Subcommittee.

*The deliberations of Group B were recorded by Brenda Edwards, Staff to the Special Subcommittee.*

### **Considerations for the Special Subcommittee**

1. The Special Subcommittee must thoroughly consider the efficacy and appropriateness of the Steering Committee's recommendations, as well as the fiscal and immediate and long-term effects of recommendations that are adopted for implementation.
2. The Special Subcommittee must meld overlapping recommendations, suggestions, and interests to ensure a cohesive and effective approach to the commemoration.
3. Fragmentation, duplication, and omissions must also be addressed and direction given to the Steering Committee as a whole and not as two independent groups.
4. The Special Subcommittee must establish a budget for all adopted recommendations with a fiscal impact and submit the budget with concrete suggestions for funding the endeavors to the MLK Commission and the *Brown v. Board of Education* Scholarship Committee for consideration and action.
5. It is essential that **all** recommendations be implemented in accordance with the Rules of the Senate of Virginia, the Rules of the House of Delegates, and the Guidelines of the Joint Committee on Rules as they pertain to the governance of legislative commissions, councils, collegial bodies, and their subgroups.
6. The Special Subcommittee must refer all matters and issues arising from the commemoration to the MLK Commission and/or the *Brown v. Board of Education* Scholarship Committee for appropriate follow up.