

499 F.Supp. 490
United States District Court, W. D. Louisiana,
Alexandria Division.

Virgie Lee VALLEY et al.
v.
RAPIDES PARISH SCHOOL BOARD.

Civ. A. No. 10946.
|
Aug. 6, 1980.

Synopsis

On motions for additional relief, the District Court, Nauman S. Scott, Chief Judge, adopted school integration plan for Rapides Parish, Louisiana, pursuant to the objective of adopting a plan which achieves the greatest amount of integration with a reasonably assured prospect of success.

Ordered accordingly.

Attorneys and Law Firms

*490 Louis Berry, Alexandria, La., for plaintiff.

John Ward, Baton Rouge, La., for defendant.

Franz Marshall, Civ. Rights Div., Dept. of Justice,
Washington, D. C., for intervenor.

OPINION

NAUMAN S. SCOTT, Chief Judge.

This suit to integrate the public school system of Rapides Parish, Louisiana has been on trial since March 23, 1965. It is before us now on motions by the plaintiff and by the Government (intervenor) for additional relief. This school system is operating presently under our decree dated July 9, 1971, as amended. The decree was agreed to by plaintiffs and defendant. The Government took no appeal.

The issue presented by the motions is whether a unitary system ever was achieved. In our preliminary judgment of June 6, 1980 we recognized that the system was not unitary; that the plan of the Government's expert, Dr. Gordon Foster, was not acceptable and was rejected; that a suggested plan would be drawn by the Court, and that the filling of vacancies in the office of principal at several schools was enjoined pending further orders of the Court. Our suggested plan was filed on July 3, 1980, and comments and alternatives received. A suggested alternative to our original junior high school plan was filed and published on July 30, 1980. The hearing scheduled for August 1, 1980 was converted to a status conference since no additional evidence was offered.

*491 We have considered all of the alternatives to our original plan as well as the responses and comments of the parties and others. Based on this consideration we adopt the following:

PLAN

The expertise of the undersigned consists of almost ten years experience as a Federal District Judge in an area not unfamiliar with the problems of school desegregation. The guidelines utilized are the product of this experience.

I. PREPARATION

The scope of the evidence in the case presented at the hearing beginning April 29, 1980 was limited to that part of the Rapides Parish School system located in Wards 1, 8 and 9 which comprised substantially less than the total Alexandria-Pineville metropolitan area. We have informed the parties that we consider the dimension of the matters at issue to be system-wide. Since the evidence did not contain information sufficient to evaluate the system outside Wards 1, 8 and 9 and since the data on those three wards was incomplete (pupil locator maps, etc.) we have utilized the services of Superintendent Nichols (white), Assistant Superintendent Townsend (white), and Assistant Superintendent Davis (black) to assemble and submit information as it was requested by us. This data can be identified as Court Exhibits 1-20. Court Exhibit 1 was requested by us from the Alexandria Daily Town Talk.

II. GUIDELINES

There is one all-encompassing purpose: the adoption of a plan which achieves the greatest amount of integration with a reasonably assured prospect of success. Our use of all guidelines set out below will be governed by their contribution to this essential purpose. When they fail to contribute they will be discarded.

1. Busing. Busing has been an essential element of our public school systems for many years. A parent will accept extensive busing to achieve an objective which he approves. He will protest busing for purposes which he disapproves even though the distance be short. Hence, it is not the busing itself but the specific purpose which he approves or disapproves. The plan will utilize busing purposefully and constructively. Busing must be racially non-discriminatory.

2. Neighborhood Schools. We recognize that neighborhood schools in metropolitan areas should exist but only to the extent that they do not impair or inhibit the establishment of an integrated school system. They do not exist outside metropolitan areas. We recognize also that the neighborhood concept is fundamental and most important in the early years of school and that it becomes progressively less important as the pupils become more sophisticated in the later years of elementary school and in junior high school and high school. We shall recognize the neighborhood concept but only to the degree that it does not hinder or inhibit the establishment of a unitary system.

3. Practicality. We shall use all tools lawfully available for our purposes. We shall not adopt measures which are lawful, but have no reasonable prospect of success. We shall give due recognition to physical circumstance and to

individual interests as they exist which can exert a substantial impact on our prospects of success, and design remedies which will accommodate, where possible, such circumstances and individual interests.

Although we shall carefully balance the equities between the black and white communities, this is not an end within itself and must give way if it constitutes a substantial obstruction to the successful implementation of the plan.

4. School Construction. Construction of new school buildings, disposition of old school buildings and school sites can substantially affect the development of a unitary system.

*492 III. SPECIFIC PROPOSALS

Although revision of pupil assignments was the principal additional relief requested we have restated other elements of the plan which have been established in plans previously approved in these proceedings.

1. Pupil Assignment. At the close of the 1979-80 school year Rapides Parish Public Schools were attended by 25,049 students, 8,942 of whom were black and 16,107 white. This figure includes the enrollment of three schools which are not properly part of the integration plan. Kelso-Twin Cities is an alternative school having a total enrollment of 126 students-36 black and 90 white. Lakeside Elementary is a school for trainable mentally retarded children having 92 black and 61 white. St. Mary's is a Catholic institution for mentally retarded children to which the Rapides system contributes a total of 148 students-21 black and 127 white.

PUPIL MEMBERSHIP AS OF MAY 31, 1980

SCHOOLS	PUPILS			TOTALS
	B	%	W	
Aaron Elem.	279	(100.00)	0	279
Acadian Elem.	273	(100.00)	0	273
Alexandria Jr. High	256	(43.7)	329	585
Alexandria Sr. High	409	(33.2)	820	1229
Barron Elem.	8	(1.5)	523	531
Bolton High	429	(43.4)	559	988
Boyce Elementary	195	(40.8)	283	478
Brame Jr. High	309	(38.4)	496	805
Brasher Elem.	176	(43.0)	234	410
Buckeye Elem.	0		602	602
Buckeye High	0		704	704
Cherokee Elem.	53	(12.0)	385	438
Forest Hill Elem.	26	(8.3)	285	311
Glenmora Elem.	60	(21.4)	220	280

Glenmora High	69	(27.0)	186	255
Mary Goff Elem.	35	(5.0)	669	704
Horseshoe Dr. Elem.	130	(33.8)	254	384
Huddle Elem.	175	(44.6)	217	392
Jones St. Jr. High	779	(93.9)	56	835
Kelso-Twin Cities	36	(28.5)	90	126
Lakeside Elem.	92	(60.1)	61	153
Lecompte Elem.	230	(61.5)	144	374
Lincoln Road Elem.	274	(99.0)	3	277
Lincoln Road Prim.	209	(97.7)	5	214
Martin Park Elem.	125	(27.0)	339	464
Lessie Moore Elem.	108	(28.0)	279	387
Nachman Elem.	74	(17.0)	362	436
N. Bayou Rapides	108	(24.7)	329	437
Oak Hill High	4	(.3)	1004	1008
Paradise Elem.	11	(1.5)	687	698
Peabody Elem.	375	(100.00)	0	375
Peabody Magnet	628	(65.6)	329	957
Pineville Elem.	50	(10.6)	419	469

Pineville High	189	(17.8)	868	1057
Pineville Jr. High	81	(13.7)	508	589
Plainview High	0		357	357
Poland High	30	(9.6)	281	311
Rapides High	138	(44.2)	174	312
Carter Raymond Jr. High	218	(62.1)	133	351
Reed Avenue Elem.	195	(75.8)	62	257
Rosenthal Elem.	154	(49.4)	158	312
Ruby-Wise Jr. High	11	(3.6)	294	305
Rugg Elem.	105	(35.6)	190	295
St. Mary's	21		127	148
Silver City Elem.	423	(100.00)	0	423
Slocum Elem.	117	(33.0)	238	355
S. Alex. Elem.	414	(99.5)	2	416
S. Alex. Primary	249	(99.6)	1	250
Tioga High	240	(23.6)	775	1015
Tioga Jr. High	13	(1.4)	872	885
Wettermark High	174	(49.1)	180	354

Lincoln Williams Elem.	185	(92.9)	14	199
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TOTALS	8,942		16,107	25,049
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Total enrollment of the system, after subtracting those students attending Kelso-Twin Cities, Lakeside and St. Mary's is 24,622 students-8,793 (35.7%) black, and 15,829 (67.3%) white.

The tables immediately below demonstrate that integration of the black student population in Alexandria has no reasonable prospect of success (it is overwhelmingly black) unless the entire metropolitan area of Alexandria-Pineville-Tioga and Ball is incorporated into the plan.

The evidence establishes that there is no concentration of white students available in the Cheneyville area to integrate Lincoln Williams Elementary (92.9% black). Consequently Lincoln Williams (K-8) must be closed and its student body must be assigned to other schools in the Lecompte area.

B		W	TOTAL
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Alexandria

Elementary	3,791	(59.9%)	2,541	(40.1%)	6,332
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Jr. High	1,344	(60.4%)	881	(39.6%)	2,225
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High	1,466	(46.2%)	1,708	(53.8%)	3,174
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TOTALS	6,601	(56.3%)	5,130	(43.7%)	11,731
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Pineville-Tioga

Elementary	3 3 9	(8.8%)	3,503	(91.1%)	3,842
Jr. High	9 5	(8.8%)	986	(91.2%)	1,081
High	4 2 9	(20.7%)	1,643	(79.3%)	2,072
TOTALS	8 6 3	(12.3%)	6,132	(87.7%)	6,995

Lecompte Area

Elementary	4 6 8	(45.5%)	561	(54.5%)	1,029
Jr. High	1 4 2	(47.0%)	160	(53.0%)	302
High	2 1	(41.2%)	310	(58.8%)	527

TOTALS	8 2 7	(45.5%)	1,031	(55.5%)	1,858
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***493** We have previously declared our intention to resolve the student assignment problems of the entire parish. The two areas discussed above are the only remaining problem areas. The schools in all other parts of the parish have been successfully integrated and where racially identifiable schools remain, their existence is

easily justified. Consequently, the following plan is proposed for student assignment in the metropolitan and the Lecompte areas:

	1979 80		1980 81		
GROUP I	W	B	W	B	T
S. Alexandria Primary					
(K 2)	1	249(99.6%)	1	297(99.6%)	298
Nachman Elementary					
(K 5)	362	74(17%)	315	162(33.9%)	477
Rugg Elementary (K 5)	190	105(35.6%)	171	93(35.2%)	264
Huddle Elementary (K 5)	217	175(44.6%)	193	132(40.6%)	325
Rosenthal Elementary					
(K 5)	158	154(49.4%)	163	104(38.9%)	267
Lessie Moore Elementary					
(K 5)	279	108(28%)	234	155(39.8%)	389

Ruby-Wise Elementary

(K 5)	294	11(3.6%)	221	110(33.2%)	331
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S. Alexandria Elementary

(6)	2	414(99.5%)	189	149(44%)	338
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GROUP II

Lincoln Road Primary

(K 2)	5	209(97.7%)	5	226(97.8%)	231
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Martin Park Elementary

(K 5)	339	125(27%)	297	173(36.8%)	470
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Horseshoe Drive Elementary

(K 5)	254	130(33.8%)	217	140(39.2%)	357
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North Bayou Rapides

(K 5)	329	108(24.7%)	218	169(43.7%)	387
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Brasher Elementary

(K 5)	234	176(43%)	199	156(43.9%)	355
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Cherokee Elementary

(K 5)	385	53(12%)	325	170(34.3%)	495
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Lincoln Road Elementary

(6)	3	274(99%)	202	162(44.5%)	364
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GROUP III

Silver City Primary (K 2)	0	423(100%)	0	323(100%)	323
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Mary Goff Elementary

(K 5)	669	35(5%)	469	180(27.7%)	649
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Paradise Elementary

(K 5)	687	11(1.5%)	399	108(21.3%)	507
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Pardue Road Elementary

(K 5)			435	234(35%)	669
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Ball Elementary (K 5)			481	119(19.8%)	600
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Peabody Elementary (6)	0	375(100%)	245	159(39.3%)	404
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GROUP IV

Pineville Elementary

(K 5)	419	50(10.6%)	370	139(27.3%)	509
Barron Elementary (K 5)	523	8(1.5%)	447	131(22.7%)	578
Slocum Elementary (K 5)	238	117(33%)	210	149(41.5%)	359
Reed Avenue Elementary					
(K 5)	62	195(75.8%)	111	104(48.4%)	215
Acadian Elementary (6)	0	273(100%)	172	114(39.8%)	286

GROUP V

Poland Elementary (K 6)	281	30(9.6%)	150	137(47.7%)	287
Lecompte Elementary					
(K 3)	144	230(61.5%)	223	185(45.3%)	408
C. Raymond Jr. High					
(4 8)	133	218(62.1%)	282	256(47.5%)	538
Rapides High (9 12)	174	138(44.2%)	310	217(41.1%)	527

GROUP VI

Alexandria Jr. High (7-8)	329	256(43.7%)	389	288(42.5%)	677
Brame Jr. High (7-8)	496	309(38.4%)	497	339(40.5%)	836
Jones Street Jr. High					
(7 8)	56	779(93.3%)	422	313(42.6%)	735
Tioga Jr. High (7 8)	425	11(2.5%)	342	237(40.9%)	579
Pineville Jr. High (7 8)	508	81(13.7%)	364	262(41.9%)	626

Note: It is also part of the plan that white principals be appointed by

defendant School Board at Acadian, Lincoln Road, Peabody and South

Alexandria elementary schools and Jones Street Junior High School and

that black principals be appointed at Ball, Mary Goff, Lessie Moore

elementary schools and at Pineville Junior High School.

Note: See Appendix "A" for description of school zones.

This plan achieves our sole purpose, the greatest amount of integration with a reasonably assured prospect of success.

a. We have utilized our equitable tools to the fullest extent.

b. Dr. Foster's rejected plan described 21 elementary schools in the metropolitan area. Of these, 18 had a black population in excess of 48.7%. Twelve were majority

black. It is our experience that racially identifiable schools located in underprivileged (black) portions of the metropolitan area have no reasonable prospect of successful integration with student ratios shown in the Foster plan. Much of this was induced by limitations placed on Dr. Foster. By comparison, the prospects for successful integration under this plan are dramatic.

c. 100% of the black student population in the parish will attend integrated schools for ten of the thirteen years of

their education. 90.4% will attend fully integrated public schools for the entire thirteen years of their public education. Any one of the 9.6% may attend integrated schools for the entire thirteen years by exercising his right of transfer under the majority to minority rule. Thus all black students in the metropolitan area may attend integrated public schools for the entire thirteen years of their public education if they wish to do so. 100% of the black students outside the metropolitan area are assigned to integrated *494 schools for the entire thirteen years of their public education.

d. The method used to integrate the elementary schools in Groups I-IV is generally the same. In Group I, for instance, grades 3-5 in Nachman, Rugg, Cherokee and South Alexandria Elementary were clustered. Thus each school would ordinarily become a one-class school with students from all schools in one class attending one school, and the entire class (from all four schools) bused to a different school each year. We determined that better attendance by whites would be assured if schools in the black area became 6th grade schools, each integrated class having attended school together in grades 3, 4 and 5. We were also aware that busing the entire class to a different school in the white area for grades 3, 4 and 5 would accomplish nothing for integration and that both blacks and whites would be better served if the class from the school in the black area were split in three sections with each section attending one school in the white area for a period of three years. Blacks and whites alike would benefit from attending the same school for 3 out of the 4 years during which the class was clustered. It would also reduce the busing of whites. All students, whether clustered or not, attend the 6th grade in one of the four 6th grade centers in the black area.

e. Neither the plaintiff nor the government has objected to the proposed student assignment plan except as follows:

The plaintiff has reurged the pairing alternative suggested in the August 25, 1970 decree of the Court of Appeals. However, plaintiff has submitted no evidence, no authorities in support of this alternative. We have examined this plan. It is fragmentary, out of date, and uses schools which no longer exist. It is incomplete and deficient in that it does not mention the following elementary schools: Acadian, Silver City, Aaron Street, Horseshoe, Cherokee, Nachman, Huddle, Brasher, North Bayou Rapides or any of the schools in Pineville or Tioga. We reject this alternative.

The Government objects to the transfer of black students in grades 1 and 2 from Acadian, Peabody, and Aaron to Silver City and Lincoln Road Primary. We have adopted, reluctantly, the Government's suggestion that these

students be transferred to majority white schools because this transfer will increase materially the ratio of black students in Wards 9 and 10.

We have adopted the Government's suggestion that the Ruby-Wise 6th grade be sent to one of the 6th grade centers, but have rejected the Government's suggestion that Ruby-Wise grades 1-5 be paired with Reed Avenue. Although the present ratio of Reed (75.8% black) must be relieved, we are opposed to the pairing with Ruby-Wise if any other viable alternative will serve. Such pairing will render the role of Ruby-Wise far more burdensome than any of the other elementary schools north of Red River.

In lieu of the pairing suggested, we converted Reed into a majority white (48.4% black) school. To accomplish this we assigned Old Karst Park No. 1 to Ruby-Wise. These students previously were being bused to Reed and Rosenthal. We assigned to Reed students (white) from the area lying between Highway 1 and the river north of the present Reed Zone. In addition we assigned to Rosenthal that portion of the present Reed Zone lying east of Monroe Street.

f. All of the objections made by the Board have received our serious consideration. Those alternatives relating to grades 6-8 in the metropolitan area are unacceptable for one of two reasons. Either they abolish Jones Street as a junior high school or they utilize some schools for special purposes. Both alternatives are unfair to the black community.

However, the suggested alternatives for Group V have compelled changes in our original plan. We are impressed by and have given very careful consideration only to those objections pertaining to the closure of Lincoln Williams (Cheneyville), Poland and Forest Hill. We have now decided that the campus of Carter Raymond (Lecompte) *495 is insufficient to accommodate the student population previously assigned it. We determined that Poland should be reopened for grades K-6, assigned to it those same grades in Lincoln Williams. This brought a heavy black ratio to Poland which we reduced by allowing a number of Lincoln Williams students (64 blacks and 12 whites) to remain at the Lecompte Elementary Schools. Poland grades 7 and 8 will attend Jones Street and Poland grades 9-12 will attend Rapides High.

We rejected the suggestion that Lecompte Elementary be closed and replaced by Forest Hill. Although the Forest Hill plant is more modern, Lecompte Elementary is very well maintained, and a very adequate educational facility. It has much the better location for the purposes of integration. Forest Hill draws the bulk of its population

from the area between Forest Hill and Lecompte. They bus almost as far to go to Forest Hill as they would to Lecompte. Woodworth students have bused voluntarily to Lecompte for many years and their bus routes are much more arduous than those from Forest Hill will be. For these and other reasons Forest Hill should remain closed.

g. As we informed all persons who have conferred with us since the publication of our original plan, we were not satisfied with the alternative (closing Tioga Junior High) or any of our other alternatives regarding junior high schools. We have considered all of the many alternatives submitted. Some of them, as we have stated previously, closed Jones Street as a junior high school, others involved one grade schools, or the substitution of special purpose schools in the black area in lieu of general purpose schools. Our original plan had the very objectionable feature of closing Tioga Junior High

School, making the role of that single community far more burdensome than the other junior high schools in the metropolitan area. Consequently, we have adopted our own alternative published July 30, 1980. Although this plan also has deficiencies, it is far better than any of the alternatives suggested. It relieves Tioga of the inequities of the original and spreads the burden of busing far more evenly in other areas.

It should also be noted that Jones Street Junior High School would have a total population of 735 students, 313 (42.6%) of whom are black. The population assigned to Jones Street Junior High is drawn from the following areas:

WARD 1:	Jones Street Area (Zone A)	313
WARD 9:	Down-Town Pineville (Zone D)	53
	Holiday Park Area (Zone C)	47
WARD 10:	Kingsville Area (Zone G)	83
	Village Green (Zone C)	34
WARD 11:	Libuse to Holloway (Zone B)	87
	Lake Hills (Zone C)	12
	Ruby-Wise (Zone F)	53
WARD 2:	Poland (Zone E)	53

Although this parish first encountered integration problems in 1965, and has had an active history of integration endeavor since that time, the Buckeye schools have shouldered no responsibility. Out of a combined population of 1306 students, 87 are being assigned to Jones Street. They, like all the other students so assigned are already bused, their buses simply are being turned in another direction. They are the students in each ward that are nearest to Jones Street. We find this alternative to be the most equitable at our disposal.

h. The record discloses that all high schools in the metropolitan area are well integrated. The intervenor complains that the attendance figures in Peabody Magnet School are misleading because many of the white students, because of courses requiring them to spend a substantial amount of time off-campus in offices and shops, are not full-time students. The school system has lost many white students in the past through unsuccessful efforts to integrate Peabody High School by student assignment. Any method of clustering or pairing is educationally destructive and would jeopardize progress at the other high schools which are well integrated. The alleged deficiencies can be remedied by additional effort within the magnet school concept. The School Board cannot effectively begin this task while implementing the balance of this plan prior to the commencement of the 1980-81 school year. Appropriate plans *496 and recommendations should be submitted by the School Board prior to January 1, 1981.

A committee to commence these activities will be appointed, after consultation with the Board, on or before October 1, 1980.

Mr. Eugene Millet has just been appointed assistant superintendent for instruction. We intend to appoint him chairman of the committee. As a member of the staff, and as a specialist, he is uniquely qualified to act. Other members of the committee will be appointed after we have consulted Mr. Millet. Annual progress reports will be submitted by the committee.

None of the parties have opposed this plan.

i. In order to make the plan more acceptable to blacks and whites alike it is required that the principals in Ball, Mary

Goff and Lessie Moore Elementary Schools and Pineville Junior High School be black and that the principals in South Alexandria, Lincoln Road, Peabody and Acadian Elementary be white. This policy shall be maintained unless waived by special order of this Court.

2. School Construction. The construction of new schools in outlying portions of the metropolitan area hinders and inhibits integration. No school site shall be selected, no school construction begun, no school facility disposed of (including leased) and no school facilities shall be enlarged (by portable classrooms or otherwise) without the express approval of this Court.

3. Designation of Faculty and Other Staff. The Singleton ratio of faculty and staff (31.5) as stated in our previous decrees is confirmed and shall be maintained. More specifically, the ratio of black principals shall be filled by priority at the beginning of each school year unless waived by special order of this Court. It has come to our attention that the ratio is one short, so that the first principal now to be appointed must be black.

The current policy that a minority assistant principal must be appointed as soon as the number of minority students in a school reaches 20%, is now rescinded. This policy, though helpful in the past, has resulted in over-staffing in some instances, and under the plan now adopted, is no longer necessary. It is now ordered that in each school the assistant principal be of the race other than that of the principal of that school.

4. Enforcement. We shall use every means possible to assure that students in the system attend only those schools to which they have been assigned.

5. Policy. Policies previously adopted by this Court (Transportation, Majority-to-Minority Rule, etc.) are hereby reaffirmed unless specifically rescinded (Student Assignment) by this plan.

All Citations

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