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"The pursuit of excellence—implies a striving for the highest standards in every phase of life. We need excellence in all the forms—in every kind of creative endeavor, in political life, in education, in industry—in short, universally," states John Gardner in his book "Excellence".

Achieving excellence in education is a challenging task. In a very real sense, it is a climate, a state of mind, a commitment, a pursuit by all who play a part in its development—citizen, parent, pupil, teacher, Board of Education member and administrator.

- Some of the elements which help to describe its pursuit in Birmingham include:
- Goals which guide the efforts of citizens and professionals.
 - Citizens interested in and informed about their schools.
 - Broad participation in school affairs, including studies in depth by citizens of various parts of the school program.
 - A willingness to follow through and financially support recommendations.
 - Competent and dedicated Board of Education members who secure and support the —
 - Best possible leadership for the schools.
 - A professional teacher in each classroom attracted by and supported by —
 - Reasonable working conditions, personnel policies, opportunities for professional growth, tools and services to do the job, and salaries.
 - A curriculum responsive to constructive change and requirements of all students.
 - Parents who value a good education.
 - Students who do likewise.

Most will probably agree that whatever measure of excellence our schools have achieved is a reflection of all of these.

In our efforts to provide good schools, our citizens have made outstanding contributions. Since 1954, they have completed two studies of our building needs, a personnel study, a study of our secondary school curriculum. Most recently, they have completed a study of the elementary school curriculum.

In 1961 and again this spring they have assisted the Board and Administration in arriving at financial proposals to support the school program desired by the community. Countless others have helped to inform the community about them.

With such assistance, we can be confident that our schools—and our students—will be equal to their future tasks.

The challenges are formidable: knowledge explosion, automation, a rapidly growing enrollment, heightened competition for college admissions and jobs, new teaching methods and materials, shrinking distances, increased urbanization, selective migration, inflation, obsolescence and more.

A continuation of cooperative problem solving by citizens, the Board of Education and professionals will help to insure timely and appropriate solutions for Birmingham.

This report is an attempt to indicate in some detail where the schools are going, how far they have recently come and what some next steps seem to be. The goals featured in this report are those adopted by the Board of Education.

We would encourage you to take an active and positive part in the affairs of your schools—Board of Education meetings, PTA, conferences with school personnel.

Accurate information is also as near as your telephone at MI 4-9300.

Dr. John Blackhall Smith,
Superintendent of Schools

E. Ross Hanson, President
Birmingham Board of Education

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