

Federal Judge Approves New Placement Policy

Federal District Judge Oren R. Lewis yesterday approved the State Pupil Placement Board's new policy for the assignment of Virginia's public school children.

On its face, Judge Lewis said in a five-page opinion involving desegregation efforts by eight Loudoun county Negroes, the Placement Board's plan "Meets all constitutional requirements. . . ."

He noted that the board had assured him at a hearing earlier this month that the "plan will be administered without regard to race, color or creed. No evidence was offered to the contrary."

Judge Lewis directed the board "to make all assignments to the public schools of Loudoun county in strict accordance" with the policy.

The board has abolished criteria that in the past have tended to restrict the number of Negroes admitted to white or pre-

viously segregated schools. Specifically, the board no longer will consider the academic qualifications of a Negro seeking a transfer, or the distance a Negro lives from the white school to which he seeks admission.

If the applicant lives within the geographic zone served by the white school and there is room for him in the facility, he will be admitted.

This new state-wide policy will be in effect for all Negroes seeking admission to white schools in the 1963-64 school year. The board will begin considering these applications next month.

Judge Lewis ordered the board to publish its new plan in a publication having general circulation in Loudoun county "at least once a week for two successive weeks prior to June 1, and to publicize the same by such other means as it deems proper."

He also extended to June 15 the deadline for seeking transfers in Loudoun county. The

deadline elsewhere in Virginia is May 31.

The eight Negroes involved in the litigation were denied admission to the Loudoun County High School in the current academic year because they lacked the academic qualifications set by the Placement Board.

The children were assigned instead to the Douglas School for Negroes. Instead of following the board's appeal procedures they filed suit in the Federal District Court at Alexandria.

Judge Lewis prohibited county school officials and the Placement Board from refusing to admit the children to the white school on account of their race or color, providing they apply before the board's deadline.

It was the second time the board's new policy has been approved. Federal District Judge Walter E. Hoffman upheld the plan earlier in litigation involving Negro children in York county.

Student Placement Policy. also indigent

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