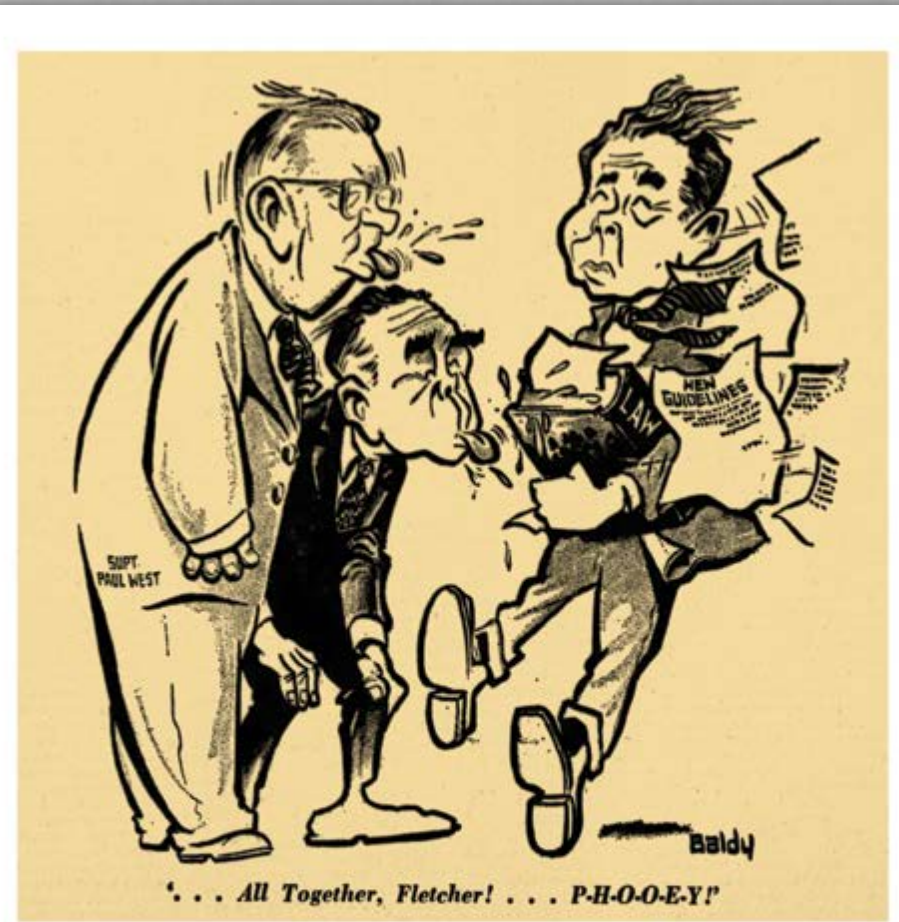


A PUBLIC WAR OF WILLS

Between 1965 and 1968, the Fulton County Board of Education submitted several plans for desegregation to the U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare (HEW), each rejected as too gradual and ineffective to eliminate the dual school system. Finally—under the advice of US Congressman Fletcher Thompson (Rep.-GA)—Superintendent of Fulton County Schools, Paul D. West, decided to cease offering any future timetable for integration.

Facing an imminent cutoff of federal funds, the Fulton County School System was given one last chance by HEW to desegregate the two high schools in the town of College Park. The Office of Civil Rights for HEW allowed the Board to choose from three paths to desegregation, one of which was to close Eva Thomas High.

On July 24, 1969, the Fulton County Board of Education met in special session, deciding unanimously to close Eva Thomas High School. Students, parents and teachers were caught totally by surprise.



Superintendent Paul D. West and Congressman Fletcher Thompson defy the federal government.
Atlanta Constitution, April 4, 1969.

Idea to Close Eva Thomas High
Didn't Come From HEW Office

*Fulton Bows to HEW,
To Close High School*

The Board would lay blame for the closure of Eva Thomas High School on the federal government, represented by its Director of the Office of Civil Rights, Leon Panetta.

Above Top
Atlanta Constitution,
August 24, 1969.

Above
Atlanta Constitution,
July 30, 1969.

Right
Leon Panetta, 1970.
AP Wire photo



Background Image
Eva Thomas High School, c.1965.
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