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November 29, 1937

S. D. McGill, Esq.  
P. O. Box 702  
Jacksonville, Florida

Dear Friend McGill:

I noted with great interest your letter of November 27. Please be assured that we will be only too glad to go over the petition and to cooperate with you to any extent. Anything that we have in the office available is at your disposal. My associate, Thurgood Marshall, is handling the matter of equalization of teachers' salaries and I am referring your letter to him on his return to the office from the Virginia State Teachers' Association.

It will interest you to know that 1) a new suit has been filed for equalization of salaries in Calvert County, Md.; 2) that out of 30 Negro teachers in Harford County, Md., all 30 signed a petition to the County Board of Education asking for equalization of salaries; 3) that 200 Delaware teachers have petitioned for equalization of salaries; 4) that the Virginia State Teachers Association has decided to proceed with a suit for equalization of salaries. I think this is very encouraging as it shows the wide-spread interest.

One thing that I noted in your letter is that you are going into court as soon as the County Board denies your petition. If you have any doubt about whether any administrative authority higher than the County Board has jurisdiction to grant equalization of salaries, I suggest that you resolve the doubt in favor of the administrative authority and petition that authority also by way of appeal before going into court. You can expect the Florida court to throw all sorts of technicalities in your way and if it is possible for the court to throw the case out on the ground that you have failed to exhaust your administrative ~~limitation~~, the court will be sure to do so.

*Administrative*

May I also suggest that you try to control the publicity in regard to the case. Make contact with the newspapers, issuing prepared statements if necessary, to make sure that the press does not go off on the wrong angle and create unfavorable public reaction. ~~Wathree~~ followed the policy in all of our educational cases of trying to control the publicity just as much as the actual proceedings in court.

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A point to be emphasized is that the equalization of teachers' salaries does not mean a financial drain on the county because what really happens is an increase in purchasing power and the general prosperity of the county is advanced. I suggest that pending further proceedings that you quietly circulate a questionnaire among the teachers with a view of determining how much money and property they have invested in Brevard County and how much percentage of their earnings is spent in Brevard County. The purpose of this, of course, is to prove that equalization of salaries will benefit the public at large rather than become a hardship.

With best wishes and congratulations, I am

Yours sincerely,

CHH:DV

Charles H. Houston,  
Special Counsel.