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ABSTRACT OF DISSERTATION

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The Graduate School
University of Kentucky

2003

EACH CHILD, EVERY CHILD -
FROM EQUITY TO ADEQUACY IN KENTUCKY'S SCHOOLS:
THE LEGACY OF THE COUNCIL FOR BETTER EDUCATION

ABSTRACT OF DISSERTATION

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of Doctor of Education in the
College of Education
at the University of Kentucky

By
Richard Elliott Day

Lexington, Kentucky

Director: Dr. Susan Scollay, Associate Professor of Administration and Supervision
Lexington, Kentucky
2003

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ABSTRACT OF DISSERTATION

EACH CHILD, EVERY CHILD - FROM EQUITY TO ADEQUACY IN KENTUCKY'S SCHOOLS: THE LEGACY OF THE COUNCIL FOR BETTER EDUCATION

Support for an efficient system of common schools has been a serious problem throughout Kentucky's history. The General Assembly has long been content to allow Kentucky's schools to rank among the lowest in the nation. This study attempts to put the current struggle for adequately funded public schools into an historical context, focusing on the Kentucky Supreme Court's landmark decision in *Rose v. Council for Better Education*. The study examines this decision in light of present efforts to define and assure a proficient education for each and every child.

The activities of the Council for Better Education were part of a national effort to determine a set of judicially manageable standards for equitable and adequate school funding. This study chronicles the activities of the Council for Better Education from its inception in 1984 through 1993 as Kentucky sought to implement a new system of common schools. This study provides some insight into the effort required to bring about this historic result and reveals the legislature's adoption of the Kentucky Education Reform Act as the singular event it is – a true exception in Kentucky's long history of modest support for its schools.

Chapter One provides contextual information, and the author’s perspective, while introducing related topics of law, racial inequality and political culture. Chapter Two examines the history of school funding and equity in Kentucky. Chapter Three chronicles Council for Better Education activities. Chapter Four outlines the legal strategy employed by the attorneys. Chapter Five looks at the case from the point of view of Chief Justice Robert F. Stephens and explores legislative reaction to the *Rose Opinion*. Chapter Six looks at the impact of advocacy groups, the Press, and Council efforts during the early days of KERA. Chapter Seven is an analysis of critical factors that contributed to the Council’s success including case law, judicial activism, political culture, advocacy coalitions, the press and governmental branches. The Epilogue is a reflection on the potential implications of *Rose v. Council* to Kentucky’s public schools today.

Rose v. Council for Better Education can best be seen as a pioneering effort to alter Kentucky’s history, and as a move toward more social justice and economic prosperity for all children of the Commonwealth.

(Student’s Signature)

(Date)

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DEDICATION

To all of Kentucky's children
and those educators
who have dedicated themselves to
the proficient education of each and every child.