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CURE

CITIZENS UNITED FOR RACIAL EQUALITY

3944 ½ Third Avenue, San Diego, California 92103

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San Diego Urban League

A POSITION PAPER ON BUSING

In school districts across this nation, the quality of education in a public school has generally depended upon whose children come each day to warm its desks. The San Diego Urban League believes that this should not be the case.

That this is the case, in most instances, is a direct reflection of the influence class, caste, and race have had on public education. It has been extremely easy for poor people (i.e., Black and other minority people) to fail in the public school system. Efforts to correct this condition have not brought widespread success, though documented evidence supports our contention that a good racial mix usually results in improved academic accomplishment of students when integration efforts are well planned.

Since racially balanced schools with sound academic programs run by competent, sensitive administrators, teachers, and support personnel reflect the ideals of American democracy and the realities of American differences, and provide, perhaps, the best opportunity for American youth to prepare themselves to live and work in a multi-racial world, we feel that, in this pluralistic society, all efforts should be devoted to accomplishing integration of schools by the best means available.

In view of the situation of racial imbalance in American communities—and there is no likelihood that there will be any formidable restructuring of existing communities for racial balance purposes—and since history has proven very vividly the inadequacy of the separate but equal approach to education in this multi-racial society, it is our feeling that busing for racial integration, toward equality of opportunity, is desirable and imperative. We insist, however, that any effort to accomplish busing for integration involves a two-way process.

To understand more clearly our stance on the question of integration might require, for some, an examination of some fundamental principles we espouse.

The term social integration implies a condition in which different racial groups can relate to each other and work together while maintaining their distinctive identities. In an integrated school differences between persons and groups are respected, accepted and used as opportunities for learning and growth.

Practical experience with integration is so limited that most efforts to overcome racial isolation previously have been aimed only at desegregation, not at the easily attainable state of integration. Black, Brown, and White people usually live and work together with disparities in (1) income, (2) treatment, (3) prestige, and (4) power. Whites then tend to tolerate or approve Blacks who fit into the White pattern. The term assimilation in this context means the attempts of the majority to deny, ignore, or change differences which it does not value.

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JESSE PERRY: LANGUAGE ARTS SPECIALIST

by Keith Robinson

Jesse Perry, recently appointed Language Arts Specialist for the San Diego Unified School District, told CURE in an interview that, while he has neither noticed nor experienced overt acts of racism in the schools and San Diego generally, cultural pluralism is not yet a reality.

In response to a question concerning the present state and immediate future of cultural pluralism, Perry said, "I am afraid the state of cultural pluralism, at this moment in history, is one of process rather than product. In other words, the concept of achieving cultural pluralism is not yet an accomplished fact; rather it is a concept in process. It is being born and with all of the pain the metaphor symbolizes."

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POSITION PAPER

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Black and Brown parents who support and fight for desegregation and integration believe that their children receive inferior instructional services in segregated schools. The stigma of segregation corrodes the perspectives, expectation, and in many cases, the achievement of minority students. White students, too, are deprived when they do not attend an integrated school, for they get an unreal version of our society, and they only accumulate rather than confront racial shibboleths.

Desegregation

The quantity and quality of school desegregation directly affects the potential for integration. School systems which "desegregate" by placing a small minority of Black students in a White school may satisfy certain political requirements, but do not create the heterogeneity required for an integrated system. Similarly, desegregation accompanied by a great deal of community and school resistance and strife is unlikely to lay effective groundwork for integration.

Desegregation can only become integration when Orientals, Indians, Blacks, Browns, and students of all racial, class, and cultural backgrounds are in an atmosphere devoid of indigenous group distinctions and barriers. What integration should do is:

* ensure academic growth.
* provide acceptance of individual differences.
* provide time and materials for learning about each other.
* facilitate the establishment of new lesson plans, and
* cause the development of curriculum programs that take into account the interests and needs of diverse racial and ethnic groups.

Such programs require changing the traditional role of the teacher and providing assistance to him while he works with smaller groups. True, they all have to learn, but they do not all have to learn the same things at the same rate. Their individual differences may require different educational programs.

Extra-curricular activities are significant in making an effort to destroy stereotypes, for often these activities are dominated by members of a particular racial or cultural group. It is imperative that clubs be representative of a diverse school population. The components of these clubs symbolize the acceptance or rejection of diversity, both by the faculty and the student body. These activities must not be apart from the school activities, for this experience gives an opportunity for an experiment in social living. Friendly social relations can be supportive of intellectual efforts, and integration enables students to develop strong friendships among ethnic groups.

Paramount to achieving integration is the idea that the faculty and administrators must be of different ethnic groups. The administration and faculty need to develop good relationships in order that they can serve as models for the students.

Values of Integration

Integration can be advantageous to any group of Americans. There are those who feel naive and inept in living, cooperating, or competing with their acquaintances whose values and life styles are different from their own. For example, students need to know how to cope with the bureaucracy, the police, and the life styles of one another in order that they themselves can function more fully. To cite another example, when children have not had the opportunity to compete in the childs world with individuals of different ethnic backgrounds, they are unable to compete in the skills of making a living, for they are fraught with hostility, inadequacies, and prejudices. Thus, integration at an early age reduces barriers that may compel some groups to be unproductive and unable to compete in the labor market.

In other words, segregation which leads to no involvement with other groups, often has a deleterious effect upon the individual. The student is often under-motivated and has no opportunity to realize what economic opportunities may be available to him.

Thus far, the discourse has limited itself primarily to goals that are fairly short range, but there are obvious long range goals that are inherent in integration that are not directed toward courtship and marriage. This specific area is personal and not a significant part of the attempt to assess the importance of achieving integration within the present school situation.

As a long range goal, where there is no desegregation and integration, it often has political and moral consequences, for obviously the nation's chance to survive as a democracy is contingent upon its ability to act on ideals of equality and the extending of advantages to all ethnic groups and all economic groups without regard to geographic location.

Integration provides an opportunity for understanding and accepting one's self and others; therefore, this may enable individuals, at any age, to have positive relationships with others rather than a background in conflict or fear of confrontation which results often in feigned affections for the sake of their own safety in today's world of conflict and chance.

Integration must be planned systematically to the extent that it involves and utilizes the skills of each teacher, administrator, parent, and student. Behavioral scientists have suggested several plans, and we subscribe to the following plan:

(1) Identification of goals.
(2) Diagnosis of current situation.
(3) Development of and testing of new instructional program.
(4) Preparation for change.
(5) Evaluation of change.
(6) Maintaining of change and reconsideration of goals.

Principals and teachers begin with an honest inquiry of their own attitudes and behavior. The Superintendent must be more than politically and administratively responsible. He must be supportive and reinforce the total staff with his energy and skill.

In an integrated classroom, there is opportunity for testing new learning by creating opportunities for different members of the class to pursue different approaches to similar situations. This approach eliminates much rote, useless learning. School districts have traditionally avoided dealing with controversial issues by denying them or refusing to discuss them; therefore, students may learn material from the textbook, but they do not learn how to define alternatives and to reach decisions through intelligent deliberation and discussion. The integrated classroom provides for meaningful questions on students' beliefs, whether they be based on ignorance, prejudice, or lack of knowledge and experience.

Finally, the integrated school, classroom, and community enable all who are involved to engage in a learning experience that may be of inestimable value. An atmosphere with an integrated situation negates the idea of the "right" position on dress, behavior, community values, social and cultural traditions that stultify. Without different opinions, students drift into what seems to be an unreal valueless world where personal, group, community values do not allow for effective learning and evaluation.

In conclusion: the integrated school and classroom necessitate thought, planning, reasoning, and the making of choices and finding of alternatives. This learning process, in the integrated school, requires that the teacher and staff learn with the students the art of exploration rather than conformity at any price, which may offer other alternatives that reduce conflict and anxiety-producing confrontation. Integrated schools make choices necessary and they demand that everyone be subjected to the painful process of the challenge to change.

CURE

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The purpose of this newsletter is to provide a forum for the dissemination of information and the expression of opinions among those concerned with combating racism. CURE believes the opinions herein need to be expressed, although they may not represent official policy of CURE.

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I am unable to send money now, but want to remain on the mailing list. ____
Sometimes CURE receives requests for use of its open mailing list from groups dealing with solutions to racial problems. Should your name be included on the ____ open list or ____ restricted list?

FOLLOW UP

The article "What If?" in the last newsletter used the 1973 Pupil Ethnic Census of the San Diego City Schools and suggested there would be little change in 1974. Here is the 1974 census and the comparable 1973 figures:

	Total Enrolled	Other White	Black	Spanish Surname
1973	123,566	70.6	13.7	11.7
1974	123,114	69.7	13.7	12.0

JESSE PERRY:

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Mr. Perry, whose most recent experience in a wide-ranging career included lecturing, teaching, and administrative duties in the schools and colleges of the Oakland/San Francisco area, feels that hope exists for true cultural pluralism in practice as well as in fact. However, he said, "In order for a culturally pluralistic society to become a reality, there must be a total acceptance of and an appreciation for the unique differences that exist in this country among the various ethnic, cultural, and religious groups. If, in fact, this concept can be brought to fruition, we then have produced a collage of great beauty and strength which might help in saving us from destruction.

Since one of CURE's major interests is the desegregation of schools, Mr. Perry was asked for an opinion on the importance of this task. He replied, "School desegregation, from a personal perspective, is a desirable goal. For it is through this process that students from different ethnic and socio-economic backgrounds can begin to gain some insight about each other. If there is genuine concern for the development of a society where all persons are accepted on the basis of worth rather than on superficialities of ethnicity and culture, then the concept of desegregation is a viable one."

In a job whose duties include the overall supervision and coordination of the language arts curriculum and materials, Mr. Perry may be in a position with a unique opportunity to promote the positive aspects of desegregation and to help the school district avoid negative aspects. "If physical desegregation perpetuates cultural and racial isolation, then I see desegregation working in a negative way," he said. "There must be a coming together in meaningful ways where all can experience and share what is commonly known as the human condition, because all persons experience what William Faulkner calls 'those eternal verities—love, truth, beauty, and pain.'"

CURE welcomes Jesse Perry to the school district and the community, and we wish him success and satisfaction in his new job.

H R C RECOMMENDS

The San Diego Human Relations Commission recently reviewed the U. S. Commission on Civil Rights Report, Twenty Years After Brown: Equality of Educational Opportunity, and endorsed the following recommendations from that report:

*Immediate steps should be taken to develop a uniform national school desegregation standard. The Commission will take the initiative in developing this standard and will later make specific recommendations to the President and Congress.

*School districts should receive increased financial assistance as an incentive to meet this uniform desegregation standard.

*The Internal Revenue Service and the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare (HEW) should ensure that private segregated schools receive no tax benefits or public funds.

*The Department of Health, Education, and Welfare should increase enforcement of its school desegregation guidelines. If voluntary compliance is not achieved within 90 days, HEW should complete procedures leading to fund termination within an additional 90 days.

*HEW should require school districts to meet the needs of students whose primary language is not English and should use fund termination as an enforcement measure.

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