[ms-0087.006.012.036]

CURE

CITIZENS UNITED FOR RACIAL EQUALITY

3944 ½ Third Avenue, San Diego, California 92103

NOVEMBER 1974

Volume 7, Number 5

WHAT IF?
San Diego School Desegregation by Busing

by Shuf Swift

What if San Diego were to desegregate its schools tomorrow, either voluntarily or under a court order? How many pupils would have to move to another school? What pupils would be affected? How long would they have to go to another school? What might be some beneficial side effects of a plan to desegregate?

Up to this time most of the discussion by the supporters of school desegregation has focused on the reasons why the schools should be desegregated. In these discussions a number of ways to desegregate the schools have been suggested: pairing schools, redrawing attendance zones, creating educational parks, and transporting students. The specific effect of any or all of these plans on San Diego has not been presented. This article will discuss in specific detail what would happen if San Diego Unified School District were to desegregate its schools, and decided to do it only by busing students.

DATA AND CRITERION

The data upon which this discussion is based is the Pupil Ethnic Census of the San Diego City Schools taken in October, 1973, the most recent census available. There have been some changes in this census over the last several years. For example, since 1971 the district enrollment has dropped from about 128,327 to 123,566. This change has not involved all ethnic groups equally. Minority student enrollment actually increased by 1,831, while "other white" student enrollment decreased by 6,592. (Since Mexican-Americans are technically classified as Caucasian, the term "other white" is used to designate all Caucasians except Mexican-Americans and others with Spanish surnames.) However, because of the large percentage of "other white," 70.6 percent, there has been little change in the proportions, and little change is anticipated in the new census. Therefore, using the 1973 census data is considered valid.

In this study, a school will be considered to be in balance when the percentages of its ethnic enrollment do not differ by more than 15 percent from the district-wide percentages. This criterion was adopted by the State Board of Education several years ago. It provides for considerable flexibility and thus helps to minimize the number of schools that must move students. For convenience the "other white" enrollment is used in determining balance or imbalance and in calculating how many students must be brought into a school or moved to another. Also, since the percentages differ in elementary schools, junior high schools, and high schools, the percentages for each category are used, rather than the overall percentages for the district. For example, in the elementary schools the district-wide enrollment of "other whites" is 68.8 percent. Therefore, an elementary school will be considered to be in balance if its "other white" population is at least 53.8 percent. For junior high school the district-wide percentage is 71 percent, and a junior high school will be in balance if it has at least 56 percent "other white." Senior high school "other white" enrollment is 75 percent; thus a high school will be in balance if it has 60 percent or more "other white."

continued on page 2

LENDERS TO CHECK FOR DISCRIMINATION

by Joan Bigge

Since June 1, 1974, Federally regulated banks and savings and loans in the San Diego area have been instructed to collect data on the race and geographic location of residential mortgage applications. San Diego is one of eighteen selected metropolitan areas ordered to provide data which may demonstrate whether discriminatory patterns of approving loans exist here.

This pilot program constitutes a response to a petition filed more than three years ago by the Center for National Policy Review on behalf of several civil rights and public interest groups. Agencies participating in the survey are

continued on page 2

LENDERS

continued from page 1

the Federal Home Loan Bank Board, the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation, the Comptroller of the Currency, and the Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System, all four of whom are being asked by the petitioners to enforce the Federal Fair Housing Act's prohibition against discrimination by mortgage lenders.

Data will be collected by providing all mortgage loan applicants with a "Fair Housing Information Statement," which requests the applicant to supply information on his or her race or ethnic descent. The form explains that its purpose is "to protect the civil rights of all borrowers in accordance with Federal law" and that the lending institution will not use the racial or ethnic information in deciding whether or not to grant the loan.

San Diego statistics will also record information on age, sex, and marital status of applicants. The Federal Home Loan Bank Board covers these categories as well as racial and ethnic classifications in its "Guidelines Relating to Nondiscrimination in Lending," issued in December, 1973.

For purposes of this survey, "applicant" is defined to include not only persons who submit formal written applications for a loan, but also those who meet with officials of lending institutions for the purpose of discussing the prospects of filing an application for a mortgage in connection with a specific property. Lenders are also being required to record the number of the census tract in which the property is located.

In addition to serving as a basic tool for enforcement of Federal law, the process of collecting the data may serve to help educate and sensitize officials of lending institutions as to their responsibilities under the law. Among other things, these data could be used to help determine whether or not the lenders are "redlining" certain neighborhoods, thereby restricting certain areas to specific ethnic groups.

The Center for National Policy Review recognizes that because of past discrimination many minorities may have been discouraged from applying for a loan, but it sees the present program as a good opportunity for such applicants to explore possibilities and thus help provide data that will help define the extent of the problem.

Interested readers are invited to make further inquiries about the program to The Center for National Policy Review, School of Law, The Catholic University of America, Washington, D. C., 20017. Reports of noncompliance may be made directly to any of the four Federal agencies conducting the program or indirectly through CURE. (F.D.I.C. may be contacted by calling 234-7941.)

CURE

Office 295-5800

Published by Citizens United for Racial Equality, Inc. 3944½ Third Ave., San Diego, CA 92103

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.

Board of Directors

Pat Backman, Loudin Beam, Richard Berry, Joan Bigge, Bertha Crowell, Jane Emerson, Virginia Gilloon, Helen Halyburton, Joe McGuire, Viola McKern, Mary Eunice Oliver, Verna Quinn, Jane Senour, Shuf Swift.

WHAT IF?

continued from page 1

ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS

Using these standards and these data, there are 28 elementary schools out of 126 with less than 53.8 percent "other whites." By checking the data school by school, it is found that to balance these 28 schools it would be necessary to bring in 5,138 "other white" students and move 5,138 minority students to schools with too many "other whites." This would mean moving a total of 10,276 elementary students.

Where would the white students come from to provide the balance in those schools with too few whites? Using a strict interpretation of the criterion, they would come from each elementary school with more than 83.8 percent of "other whites." However, it seems reasonable, and it would save money, if white students were taken only from those schools with over 85 percent of "other whites." In this situation there would be 56 elementary schools from which whites would have to be bused. There would be 42 schools which would not have to move any students.

There are about 26,000 white students in the elementary schools from which the 5,138 white students must be bused. Thus, a white student in such a school could anticipate being bused two or three semesters out of the fourteen spent in kindergarten through the sixth grade. Since there are about 16,000 minority students in the elementary schools from which the 5,138 minority students must be bused, minority students could anticipate being bused from one to seven semesters out of the fourteen in the elementary grades. The wider variation for minority students results from the wider variations in racial imbalance in schools with too many minority students. For example, a school with 98 percent minority students would have to move approximately 50 percent of its students in order to meet the 53.8 percent "other white" criterion. In contrast, a school nearly in balance, with a 49 percent minority population would have to move as few as 25 students in order to bring about balance.

JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOLS

Of the 18 junior high schools, four are out of balance with too many minority students, that is, over 56 percent minority, while five are out of balance with over 86 percent "other whites." To bring the junior high schools into balance would require busing 1,832 minority students and 1,832 "other whites," for a total of 3,664 students. In the case of the minority students this would mean being bused from one to four semesters out of the six semesters of junior high school. As in the case of the elementary school students, the variation is caused by the wide variation in racial imbalance in schools with heavy minority populations. Bell Junior High School, for example, has 57.2 percent minority students, while Gompers Junior High School has 98.6 percent minority students.

The five junior high schools with an imbalance of white students would have to bus students from one to two semesters out of the six semesters of junior high school. The average would be only 1.2 semesters. There would be nine junior high schools that would not have to bus students. If white students from junior high schools with over 80 percent "other white," rather than 86 percent, were included in the busing program, no white student would have to be bused more than one semester. However, four more schools would be included in the busing program.

HIGH SCHOOLS

Three of the twelve high schools—Lincoln, Morse, and San Diego—are out of balance with too great a minority population. Four—Clairemont, Patrick Henry, La Jolla, and Mission Bay—are out of balance with too great a white population. One, Madison, with 89.2 percent "other white," is just barely in balance. The high schools could be brought into balance by busing 1,432 minority students and 1,432 white students, a total of 2,864 students. In the minority schools this would mean busing students from two to four semesters out of six. In the high schools with too great a white population it would be necessary to bus students one semester at most, if Madison is included as a school to participate in the busing. Four high schools—Crawford, Hoover, Kearny, and Point Loma—would not have to participate in busing because they fall well within the guidelines for being balanced.

It should be noted that there were already about 2,000 students, mostly minority students, being bused as part of the voluntary ethnic transfer program. This program permits a student to transfer to another school when that transfer will improve the racial balance of the affected schools. The census figures already reflect the transfer of these 2,000 students. The numbers to be bused to bring the schools into balance as given in this article are in addition to the 2,000 already being bused as part of the voluntary ethnic transfer policy.

DESEGREGATION ALONE NOT THE ANSWER

The objective of desegregation is equal access to educational opportunity. Experience in other districts indicates that this objective is not likely to be achieved by busing alone. Where busing has been accompanied by a variety of supporting programs desegregation has been successful. This article has not discussed the educational aspects of desegregation, but it is recognized that busing alone is not a sufficient means to the goal of equal education.

BENEFICIAL SIDE EFFECTS

In addition to the direct benefit of equal access to educational opportunity, busing could have several beneficial side effects. Parents, minority or white, who want their children to go to a neighborhood school could realize this desire by moving into a neighborhood which is balanced,

ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP FEES For Fiscal Year June 1, 1974 to May 31, 1975
(includes a newsletter subscription)

Student . . $2 Contribution . $25 Donation . $____
Individual . $5 Sustaining. . . $100
Family . . . $8 Organization. . $15

NAME . . . . . PHONE . . . . . .

STREET ADDRESS . . . . . .

CITY . . . . . ZIP . . . . . .

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?

WHAT IF?

continued from page 3

or in which they would be the minority. Whites could move to Encanto, for example. Minority families could move almost any place outside of Southeast San Diego.

A white community which was busing children out of the community, but which did not like busing, could develop an outreach program into the minority community—encouraging, welcoming, facilitating the movement of minority families into the community in order to bring the schools into balance. Once in balance, busing would stop. There are about twelve elementary schools with too great a white population that could be brought into balance if that community would, through their welcome, encourage eight to ten families with elementary school children to move into that neighborhood.

Minority communities could develop the same types of outreach programs to encourage white families to move into their neighborhoods. There are about three schools with too great a minority population (about the same proportion as white schools), which could be brought into balance if a dozen white families with elementary school children were to move into those schools' attendance zone.

SUMMARY

If busing alone were used to balance the schools racially, it would require busing a total of 16,804 students: 10,276 elementary children, 3,664 junior high school students, and 2,864 senior high school students. It would involve about 84 elementary schools out of 126, nine junior high schools out of 18, and eight out of 12 senior high schools. White elementary pupils would have to be bused about three out of the fourteen semesters. For minority elementary students busing would be between one and seven semesters out of fourteen. In junior high school whites could expect to be bused one semester in six, while minority students could anticipate between one and four semesters out of the six. A white senior high school student would have to be bused one semester at most, while a minority senior high school student could expect from two to four semesters out of the six.

It should be pointed out again that these figures are based on desegregating by busing only. There are other measures available which would reduce the number of students who would have to be bused. It is possible to pair some schools. It might also be possible to realign some attendance areas or reduce the need to bus by careful consideration of sites on which new schools will be built. However, such measures have a limited potential. This is because in San Diego the minority population is heavily concentrated in Southeast San Diego; it is surrounded by a band of schools which are generally balanced; then at the outer edges of San Diego are found the schools with too great a white population. Nevertheless, if the community were faced with the reality of busing, it is anticipated that a number of creative alternatives would be found.

It is tempting to look back at the Lindsley Report of 1966 (a study of segregation in the San Diego Schools by a citizens' group appointed by the Board of Education) and point out that if action had been taken on the thirty-two recommendations accompanying the report, then we would not have these problems today. However, we are not in 1966. Nevertheless, it is considered fair to suggest that the problem will be easier to solve today than it will be in another eight years, just as it was an easier problem eight years ago.

Once again, the purpose of this article is to give some idea of exactly what busing might mean. It is suggested that it would involve less busing than most people anticipate; it would involve busing for a much shorter period of time than most people expect; it would encourage the movement toward balanced communities which could quickly reduce the need for busing and in the not too distant future eliminate it, and that the cost would not be prohibitive. History and court decisions, including those of the Nixon Court, indicate we are moving inexorably toward desegregation. The quicker we get at it the better.

CURE
CITIZENS UNITED FOR RACIAL EQUALITY
3944 ½ Third Avenue, San Diego, California 92103

Bulk Rate
U.S. Postage
PAID
Permit No. 714
San Diego, CA.

ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED
RETURN POSTAGE GUARANTEED