[ms-0436.004.012.002]

Board Assailed on Integration

Task Force Also Raps Goodman, Questions District Commitment

By TED VOLLMER, *Times Staff Writer*

The San Diego city school board and Supt. Thomas Goodman lack the commitment and interest to achieve meaningful integration of the district, a court-appointed integration task force charged Thursday.

"Unfortunately," a blistering 44-page report concluded, "by whatever standard one wishes to utilize, the goal of integration is not within sight . . ."

The 22-member task force's report to San Diego Superior Court Judge Louis M. Welsh also assailed a controversial race/human relations program and the district's bilingual education efforts. Both were pronounced ineffective.

Noting that in five years only 2 of 23 minority isolated schools had been integrated under an all-voluntary program, the task force concluded, "The responsibility for this lack of progress must rest fully with the school board."

Labeled Irresponsible

"The board has apparently not demanded measurable results from the superintendent (Goodman) and his staff, and their performance in relation to integration has not been critically evaluated by the board," the task force report said. "The board's approach has been irresponsible and a disservice to all parents and children of San Diego."

Board President Yvonne Larsen denied that the district has shirked its integration responsibilities and then suggested the critical task force report may have been politically motivated.

"I think some members of the task force were extremely disappointed that their candidate was not selected as a member of the Board of Education," Larsen said. "I think the task force report was due two weeks ago."

"We received a lot of lobbying from some of the task force members . . . a majority would have been very happy with Tom Johnson," Larsen said.

Johnson, a former member of the task force, was one of five finalists seeking the board seat vacated last month by the appointment of Joe Littlejohn to the San Diego Municipal Court. Johnson, the most visible of the five finalists and the one with the most outspoken support, ultimately lost out to college English instructor Dorothy L.W. Smith.

Task force Chairman Harold Brown was one of the most active Johnson supporters but he could not be reached for comment on Larsen's assertions that Thursday's report may have been politically motivated.

But Vice Chairman Judy McDonald, who also supported Johnson, denied there was any political backdrop to the task force report to Welsh.

"I can assure you that as far as I'm concerned the selection of the candidate (Smith) had absolutely nothing to do with the tone of our letter," McDonald said.

McDonald conceded that the report had been due May 4 — the same day Smith was chosen — but added, "The letter was in draft form by then."

Report Called Whitewash

"Board Vice President Philip Halfaker responded angrily to the report, calling it a "whitewash."

"Their conclusions are not substantiated," Halfaker said. "I don't know where they're coming from. It overlooks the fact that we have 40,000 students involved in integration programs.

"I think the report is irresponsible."

Board member Bob Filner said he welcomed the report and said it accurately pinpointed the problems facing the integration program.

"As individual people on the board I think everyone is committed," Filner said. "But as a structure we have diluted that commitment.

"We haven't found a way to force accountability," Filner added. He said that the board should first devise clear-cut objectives for the integration of the schools and then require the district staff to meet those objectives.

The lengthy report to Welsh was the third annual evaluation of the district's integration program and by far the most critical.

Please see SCHOOLS, Page 2

OTHER SAN DIEGO COUNTY NEWS
Part I, Pages 2, 21.
Part III, Pages 1, 8, 9, 14.
Part IV, Page 1.