[MS-0234.002.011.085]

San Diego/Arizona Regional Office

ANTI-DEFAMATION LEAGUE OF B'NAI B'RITH

7850 MISSION CENTER COURT • SUITE 207 • SAN DIEGO, CA 92108 • 714/293-3770

MEMORANDUM

TO: Harold Brown, Chairman, Minority Education Task Force

FROM: School Survey Subcommittee

DATE: May 29, 1980

SUBJECT: Report on Teacher Responses to the Minority Isolated School Survey

Pursuant to a vote by the Integration Task Force, a subcommittee dealing with school surveys arranged to have 1,050 surveys mailed to those teachers who had previously taught in minority isolated schools as well as those who are presently teaching in those schools. Of the 1,050 surveys sent to teachers, almost 30% were returned to the Integration Task Force office.

The responses were a curious mixture of extreme interest as reflected by in-depth answers juxtaposed by those teachers who seemed to have only a cursory motivation and answered yes or no to many questions which required answers which were descriptive and far more elaborate. A majority of the responses, however, did speak directly to the issues and were open and candid. Many of the responses appeared to reflect a definite frustration held by teachers and, at times, reflected a candid anger. Some teachers were moved to attach additional sheets to the initial survey form and make elaborate personal statements.

Curiously, in many schools, teachers would express entirely opposite opinions about the same issue (for example, while some felt that the educational and physical facilities at their school were more than adequate, others provided a long list of complaints about the same subjects). Most schools, in fact, fell into this mixed-opinion category. In the case of at least one school, Emerson, it appeared that the questionnaires were all turned in to the administrative office and then sent as a group to the Integration Task Force. One might question what effect, if any, this could have had on the nature and content of the responses.

There were an inadequate number of samples returned from the following schools: Logan (2), Burbank (2), Chollas (4). So negative were the responses from the teachers who had served or were serving at some of the schools that the Task Force believes the court should look at these specific problems.

Listed below are the most common responses of the teachers who responded to these surveys; the committee received no responses from San Diego High School.

1. Limit "pull out" programs as they tend to be disruptive and make it impossible to establish a schedule of consistent instruction for the students. Focus on the basics, the three R's.

2. There should be less shifting of students from teacher to teacher especially with those students who have difficulties. It is almost impossible to develop a rapport with students if they are shifted so frequently.

3. "Brain Drain". Many teachers believe that the "cream-of-the-crop" leave the school in VEEP programs with no leaders left for other students to emulate. Such a "brain drain" appears to be discouraging for teachers as they believe they are left to teach only "slower" students.

4. Virtually all teachers agree that class size should be reduced.

5. A majority of the teachers stated that they were overburdened with paperwork which takes valuable time away from preparation and actual classroom teaching.

6. There should be a precise, explicit schoolwide procedure for discipline which should be expounded to all students.

7. Teachers emphasized the problem in dealing with truancy and asked that something be done about the inordinate number of students who are not in school on a regular basis.

8. Troublemakers and disinterested students should be removed from schools and provided with special programs if they cannot function in a regular class.

9. Many students are not ready for grade level material and many teachers strongly urge definite competency requirements for <u>every</u> grade level to ensure that students are not moved to higher grades before they have mastered their present material. The committee finds it impossible to understand why students who are unable to deal with the material they are already studying could be moved to the next grade.(We assign no blame although we find it negligent for teachers either to promote students or for administrators to urge teachers to "move students along" if they are unable to deal with the material they must know in order to function successfully at the next higher grade. The committee urges that the Minority Education Task Force and the Integration Task Force as a whole make a strong statement condemning what is obviously a practice in the minority isolated schools.)

10. Evaluate each child individually as to needs and capabilities. Some children should not be under the pressure of mastering two languages.

11. Stop giving courtesy grades. Fail students if necessary and retain them at their present grade level.

12. There is a need for "good" experienced teachers who are motivated to teach in minority school settings. Teachers who are "concerned" are vital in the motivation of students. Positive incentives should be provided for teachers willing to teach in minority school settings (for example, higher pay).

13. Train teachers in multiracial and multicultural philosophy and methods. (This factor leads to a conclusion which I have considered for some time, i.e., we are making a mistake in assuming that all teachers can be trained in the same way. Teachers going into minority school settings should receive more intensive and specific training to prepare them for the environment in which they will work.)

14. There appears to be general concern regarding personal safety and the safety of teachers' possessions, especially automobiles in parking areas. There is a desire for greater overall security.

15. Many teachers expressed unhappiness with their respective principals and recommended removal in a number of cases. There is a desire for firm, consistent direction and support from school administrators. On a number of surveys, teachers clearly felt isolated and alone in dealing not only with students but with parents and community groups.

16. Many teachers requested more aides. However, there were a number of complaints that aides were unskilled, unprofessional and there were even complaints that aides used school almost as a social club. Some teachers complained that aides "put children down" calling them "stupid" as opposed to providing positive feedback and encouragement.

17. There is a definite need for more parental involvement and support. Teachers clearly seem to want greater parental involvement but are frustrated in knowing how to motivate parents to become interested in the educational process. Many teachers believe children are receiving little positive encouragement and motivation in the home. Many are coming to school not ready or willing to learn. There were comments from a number of teachers that students apparently stay up late, don't have breakfast and some appeared to be abused in the home. Teachers have mentioned that education apparently is not a priority for many parents. Some children, teachers have stated, work and have little time for school. Some students have to go home to babysit for younger brothers and sisters. In addition, many parents lack the skills and confidence with which to assist their children with homework.

18. Teachers urge that parents be involved in the school process and that some training be conducted to educate parents in how to assist their children to do better in school.

19. An overwhelming number of teachers seek increased contact with parents and urge that individuals in the community become involved with schools.

Within this survey there seems to be a great deal of frustration on the part of teachers. There are no villains in this story of frustration. Teachers are not consciously seeking to adversely affect the education of their students. Teachers apparently want to do well for their students but they also wish for students who are interested and committed to learning. That obviously will not always be the case. The frustration one feels in reading these surveys is that the teachers simply do not seem to know what additionally they must or should do to improve the educational process in their respective schools.

Attached is a school-by-school listing of the major comments provided by teachers in the survey.

This report could not be concluded without thanking Ms. Madelyne Sandler and Ms. Leila H. Pravorne who charted the responses and helped immeasurably in this report. We also wish to thank Morris Casuto's secretary, Ms. Dianne Berger who typed the initial drafts and final version of this report.

Respectfully submitted,

Morris S. Casuto
Ann Hunsaker
Napoleon Jones

San Diego / Arizona Regional Office

ANTI-DEFAMATION LEAGUE OF B'NAI B'RITH

7850 MISSION CENTER COURT • SUITE 207 • SAN DIEGO, CA 92108 • 714/293-3770

w/ Hals

B

REPORT ON MORSE HIGH SCHOOL

Morse is a lovely, well run facility which is doing a great deal to educate its varied student body to understand and accept differences. Its ethnic awareness seminars, around-the-world dinners and the booklet which is in the process of completion showing the achievements of former Morse students are good and practical ideas which appear to be effective.

The teachers at Morse seem to have good morale and most feel the principal is effective and supportive of their needs. Most faculty, students and administrators feel Morse has had an unjustified reputation as a "dangerous" school and believe that if visitors spent a day at Morse reality would clearly be apparent. Morse is no more dangerous a place than any other school in San Diego and its students and faculty appear to have good morale and school spirit.

I and my monitors, Terry Baur and Froebel Brigham, visited a large number of classes and most believed that teachers offer a quality educational product to their students. On only one occasion did a monitor report to me that she encountered a teacher who appeared to have already given up on her students.

While it is important that teachers do a good job it is also vital to consider the skill level of the students coming to Morse High School. In effect then there are parallel educational tracks offered at Morse High School. While it appears that teachers and administrators try their best to educate their students, the reality is that a large number of Morse students simply do not do grade level work.

We believe that it would be useful for employers in the area to allow their employees some time off to visit Morse to see the reality of the school.

In addition, we believe it is important for either the Chamber of Commerce or the major businesses in the community to adopt minority isolated schools.

I also believe that monitors should be given not only a minorty isolated school but also a VEEP school so that a comparison might be made. Finally, I believe that more recognition should be given to people who are doing things right. At Morse, students, faculty and administration are working hard to improve the quality of education at their school and to improve race relations. They seem to be doing a good job and should be recognized for it.

San Diego/Arizona Regional Office

ANTI-DEFAMATION LEAGUE OF B'NAI B'RITH

7850 MISSION CENTER COURT • SUITE 207 • SAN DIEGO, CA 92108 • 714/293-3770

MEMORANDUM

TO: Harold Brown, Chairman, Minority Education Task Force

FROM: School Survey Subcommittee

DATE: May 29, 1980

SUBJECT: Report on Teacher Responses to the Minority Isolated School Survey

Pursuant to a vote by the Integration Task Force, a subcommittee dealing with school surveys arranged to have 1,050 surveys mailed to those teachers who had previously taught in minority isolated schools as well as those who are presently teaching in those schools. Of the 1,050 surveys sent to teachers, 305 were returned to the Integration Task Force office.

The responses were a curious mixture of extreme interest as reflected by in-depth answers juxtaposed by those teachers who seemed to have only a cursory motivation and answered yes or no to many questions which required answers which were descriptive and far more elaborate. A majority of the responses, however, did speak directly to the issues and were open and candid. Many of the responses appeared to reflect a definite frustration held by teachers and, at times, reflected a candid anger. Some teachers were moved to attach additional sheets to the initial survey form and make elaborate personal statements. In a surprising number of the questionnaires poor spelling and grammar was in evidence. This can be explained either by the haste with which the surveys were completed or may, in fact, reflect a problem some teachers have in dealing with written English.

Curiously, in many schools, teachers would express entirely opposite opinions about the same issue (for example, while some felt that the educational and physical facilities at their school were more than adequate, others provided a long list of complaints about the same subjects). Most schools, in fact, fell into this mixed-opinion category. In the case of at least one school, Emerson, it appeared that the questionnaires were all turned in to the administrative office and then sent as a group to the Integration Task Force. One might question what effect, if any, this could have had on the nature and content of the responses.

There appeared to be inadequate samples returned from the following schools: Logan (2), Burbank (2), Chollas (4). Those schools which seemed to have the greatest problems as manifested by the responses of the teachers were Lincoln High School, Morse High School, Chollas Elementary School and Sherman Elementary School. In fact, so poor were the responses from the teachers who had served or were serving at Lincoln High School that I believe the Minority Education Task Force should look at that problem specifically and deal with Lincoln High School as a special and immediate problem.

Listed below are the most common responses of the teachers who responded to these surveys; We received no responses from San Diego High School.

1. Limit "pull out" programs as they tend to be disruptive and make it impossible to establish a schedule of consistent instruction for the students. Focus on the basics, the three R's.

2. There should be less shifting of students from teacher to teacher especially with those students who have difficulties. It is almost impossible to develop a rapport with students if they are shifted so frequently.

3. "Brain Drain". Many teachers believe that the"cream-of-the-crop" leave the school in VEEP programs with no leaders left for other students to emulate. Such a "brain drain" appears to be discouraging for teachers as they believe they are left to teach only "slower" students.

4. Virtually all teachers agree that class size should be reduced.

5. A majority of the teachers stated that they were overburdened with paperwork which takes valuable time away from preparation and actual classroom teaching.

6. There should be a precise, explicit schoolwide procedure for discipline which should be expounded to all students.

7. Teachers emphasized the problem in dealing with truancy and asked that something be done about the inordinate number of students who are not in school on a regular basis.

8. Troublemakers and disinterested students should be removed from schools and provided with special programs if they cannot function in a regular class.

9. Many students are not ready for grade level material and many teachers strongly urge definite competency requirements for every grade level to ensure that students are not moved to higher grades before they have mastered their present material. (As a personal note, I find it impossible to understand why students who are unable to deal with the material they are already studying could be moved to the next grade. I assign no blame although I find it negligent for teachers either to promote students or for administrators to urge teachers to "move students along" if they are unable to deal with the material they must know in order to function successfully at the next higher grade. I urge that the Minority Education Task Force and the Integration Task Force as a whole make a strong statement condemning what is obviously a practice in the minority isolated schools.)

10. Evaluate each child individually as to needs and capabilities. Some children should not be under the pressure of mastering two languages.

11. Stop giving courtesy grades. Fail students if necessary and retain them at their present grade level.

12. There is a need for "good" experienced teachers who are motivated to teach in minority school settings. Teachers who are "concerned" are vital in the in the motivation of students. Positive incentives should be provided for teachers willing to teach in minority school settings (for example, higher pay).

13. Train teachers in multiracial and multicultural philosophy and methods. (This factor leads to a conclusion which I have considered for some time, i.e. we are making a mistake in assuming that all teachers can be trained in the same way. Teachers going into minority school settings should receive more intensive and specific training to prepare them for the environment in which they will work.)

14. There appears to be general concern regarding personal safety and the safety of teachers' possessions, especially automobiles in parking areas. There is a desire for greater overall security.

15. Many teachers expressed unhappiness with their respective principals and recommended removal in a number of cases. There is a desire for firm, consistent direction and support from school administrators. On a number of surveys, teachers clearly felt isolated and alone in dealing not only with students but with parents and community groups.

16. Many teachers requested more aides. However, there were a number of complaints that aides were unskilled, unprofessional and there were even complaints that aides used school almost as a social club. Some teachers complained that aides "put children down" calling them "stupid" as opposed to providing positive feedback and encouragement.

17. There is a definite need for more parental involvement and support. Teachers clearly seem to want greater parental involvement but are frustrated in knowing how to motivate parents to become interested in the educational process. Many teachers believe children are receiving little positive encouragement and motivation in the home. Many are coming to school not ready or willing to learn. There were comments from a number of teachers that students apparently stay up late, don't have breakfast and some appeared to be abused in the home. Teachers have mentioned that education apparently is not a priority for many parents. Some children, teachers have stated, work and have little time for school. Some students have to go home to babysit for younger brothers and sisters. In addition, many parents lack the skills and confidence with which to assist their children with homework.

18. Teachers urge that parents be involved in the school process and that some training be conducted to educate parents in how to assist their children to do better in school.

19. An overwhelming number of teachers seek increased contact with parents and urge that individuals in the community become involved with schools.

Within this survey there seems to be a great deal of frustration on the part of teachers. As I have mentioned on a number of occasions at Task Force meetings, I do not believe there are any villains in this story of frustration. Teachers are not consciously seeking to adversely affect the education of their students. Teachers apparently want to do well for their students but they also wish students who are interested and committed to learning. That obviously will not always be the case. The frustration one feels in reading these surveys is that the teachers simply do not seem to know what additionally they must or should do to improve the educational process in their respective schools.

Attached is a school by school listing of the major comments provided by teachers in the survey.

This report could not be concluded without thanking Ms. Madaline Sandler and Ms. Leila H. Pravorne who charted the responses and helped immeasurably in this report. We also wish to thank Morris Casuto's secretary, Ms. Dianne Berger who typed the initial draft and final version of this report.

Respectfully submitted,

Morris S. Casuto

Ann Hunsaker

Napoleon Jones