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EQUALITY OF EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

IN THE

SAN DIEGO PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Statement by
David H. Thompson, President
Citizens Interracial Committee
of San Diego County, Inc.

before the
Equal Education Committee of the
San Diego Unified School District
Hearings on February 15, 1966
San Diego, California

CITIZENS INTERRACIAL COMMITTEE OF SAN DIEGO COUNTY
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Mr. Chairman and members of the Equal Education Committee. The Citizens Interracial Committee of San Diego County, Inc., was designed to function as the human relations agency for the city and county of San Diego. One of its major functions is that of making analysis of problem-areas, interpreting their implications, and suggesting directions and submitting recommendations to the proper authorities for possible solution and/or corrective action. This presentation is the exercising of this function.

Because of the time limit, this presentation shall be only a summary of the many pages of materials which are presently being prepared for your committee. It is significant to point out at this time, however, that all CIC's observations are based upon and drawn from the following sources;

1. The hundreds of conversations and interviews with persons officially associated with the San Diego school district.

2. The more than thirty complaints officially filed with CIC by teachers of the San Diego school district.

3. The more than sixty specific complaints filed with CIC by parents and other residents of the San Diego school district.

4. The more than forty such complaints by students of the San Diego school district.

5. And from the detail analysis of documents and other materials published by the San Diego school district, and other personal observations by the CIC staff and board.

Most of the presentations before this committee have centered around the operations of the local school units: the teachers, the counselors, the principals and their attitudes as these latter affect teaching and the learning by the students. Such emphasis is rightly place. These presentations have therefore delt primarily with the direct interaction of student and local school personnel. But equal educational opportunities do not begin and end at this local level. These opportunities must exist throughout the district; and the local school plants are but one

segment of the total district.

For the school district is more than its buildings, more than its teachers, its principals, its counselors, and its students. It is all of these, to be sure. But it is made up also of its VISITING TEACHERS, RESOURCE TEACHERS, NURSES AND DOCTORS, PSYCHOLOGISTS, LIBRARIANS: INSTRUCTIONAL CONSULTANTS, CURRICULUM SPECIALISTS, THE SUPERINTENDENT, THE ASSISTANT SUPERINTENDENTS, SUPERVISORS, COORDINATORS, REGIONAL DIRECTORS, and other administrators.

Then there is another group of over three thousand employees on what is called a "classified schedule." In this latter category are the custodians, clerks, bus drivers, carpenters, secretaries, groundsmen, and many others. It is to the operation of these other divisions of the school district and the staffing pattern within them that we now direct your immediate attention.

Everyone is generally agreed that segregated communities will also have segregated schools, segregated churches, and segregated activities in all major affairs. But the San Diego Unified School District administration--education center--is not within any de facto segregated community; and its concern is with the total school population, unbounded by optional zones, or attendance or district lines. It is outside of these physical restrictions.

And yet, analysis of the total S.D. school district with reference to the areas and divisions listed immediately above indicates that for all practical purposes, minority groups do not exist in the staffing pattern; and this is true even for those jobs which have traditionally been "reserved for them." An examination of just four categories will suffice to illustrate this problem. (In this instance, the minority group referred to is that of the Negro. In other instances, both the Negro and the Mexican-American are included).

Of the 84 classified as doctors and nurses - one is Negro

Of the 295 "" as Maintenance-custodian - three are Negro

Of the 881 " as Secretarial-technical - five are Negro

Of the 467 " as Cafeteria helpers,etc. - seven are Negro

Thus out of a total of over 3400 employees under the classified schedule, fewer than eighteen are Negro. It is important to point out at this time that on a national basis, when considering all school districts with a total minority population of ten per cent or over, the S.D. school district ranks lowest in the number of minority group persons hired for non-teaching positions.

We are quite aware of recent appointments of members of minority groups made by the district. But it must be born in mind that one of those persons appointed to positions classified as "administrators" since Sept. 1965, have been described publicly by the district as coming under "compensatory education." Are we to assume, on the basis of these facts, that were the S.D. school district not

participating in the state compensatory education programs, those minority group persons, both the Mexican-American and the Negro, would not now be holding positions classified as "administrators"? For even with this program, only three Negroes and one Mexican-American are holding positions classified as "administrators."

Before leaving this particular section, we might also raise some questions regarding a few specific positions. Is it co-incidental that there is no Negro counselor at Lincoln High School? Or, no Mexican-American and Negro full-time counselors at schools not located in the Southeast S.D. community, especially in the high schools? Is it co-incidental that few minority persons are ever appointed as counselors or as visiting teachers in the S.D. district? Is it co-incidental that most minority group teachers teach in predominantly minority populated schools? And in this report, we of course include the junior colleges also.

CIC is quite concerned and raises these important questions. Is the question before all of us at this time one solely of de facto segregation of students and instructional personnel? Or, is it one also of racial discrimination with reference to non-teaching personnel? From the foregoing facts presented in this observation, both problems do in fact exist.

In summary, CIC has tried to focus your attention for a short while on the total system and on the "message" that this system as it now operates "gives out" to all its students and others of this S.D. school district. It seems reasonable to state that what the students see "as the system," and "hear" as the "system," are just as important as what they are taught in the more formal atmosphere of a classroom. It is a known and accepted fact of life that we all "believe what we live." And the students and others within the San Diego school district are being taught by the "manner of the operation" of the school district, as well as by the way the local school unit operates. And in the materials that you will receive from us, analysis is made of the adjustment school and its operations, the special classes, compensatory education, and the underlying assumptions.

And finally, despite all that comes to your attention as a committee, and despite the fact that hereafter no one in San Diego can truthfully say that he does not know that there are problems in San Diego similar to those of all other major cities, despite these facts, it is the responsibility of the San Diego Unified School District, through its Board of Education and its Administration to act with speed to correct those conditions needing correcting, eliminate those needing eliminating, add those needing adding, and creating the kind of atmosphere that is conducive to making equal education a reality in San Diego. For regardless of the number of words spoken or written, until and unless the District <u>acts</u> to do <u>something positive</u> about these many evils, San Diego, too, will follow in the footsteps of most of the other urban centers. We strongly urge the Board to expeditiously consider your recommendations for corrective action and to act soon. Thank you for your attention.

bm
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