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REPORT OF THE MINORITY EDUCATION TASK FORCE

In the fulfillment of the charge to "monitor, analyze and evaluate the quality and methods of education in all minority isolated schools and recommend steps that should be undertaken to make certain that in all such schools, the quality of education is at a superior level and that all children are inspired to achieve", we have spent this year gathering information and doing the analysis and evaluation that would lead to the recommendations the Court requested. This report contains those recommendations. We want it to be clear to the Court that embodied in each recommendation is the feeling of optimism and confidence that the task of improving the image of the minority isolated schools relative to quality education can be achieved. We also want it to be clear to the Court that the METF feels that the focus on the quality education issue is a necessary and important step, but only a step in the process of integrating San Diego's schools.

It is important to note that the METF describes quality education somewhat differently from what is normally heard. It is our conclusion that the staffs at the minority isolated schools are doing just as good a teaching job as staffs at non-isolated schools; in some instances they are probably doing a better job. However, the needs of the students at the minority isolated schools differ from the needs of students at the non-isolated schools. We find that it is the needs that must be identfied and clarified and the teaching process directed toward thoses needs. Therefore, we describe quality education in the context of the curriculum, teachers, teaching methods and other resources, and their use in meeting the needs of the students. We are making reference to students' readiness level when they enter school - the amount of exposure to materials and situations during the pre-school years that prepare some children for school better than others.

We find that in measuring quality education in a given school, the achievement test score is much too narrow a measure of staff competence and commitment. The most competent and committed school staff could be producing a majority of students who achieve low test scores if the majority of students attending that school need to develop the fundamental skills of reading, math and communications. The reason we are so upset with the low test scores is because they reflect the failure of our schools to adequately address the needs of the students who are scoring low.

Our statement earlier in reference to improving the image of the minority isolated schools relative to quality education was phrased in that manner intentionally. We purposely avoided language which spoke to the improvement of quality education. We discovered that, when speaking of racially isolated schools, quality education means to most San Diegans that children cannot receive a "good" education at those schools. We conclude that that is more fiction than fact and is the result of a negative and inaccurate perception of Southeast San Diego schools. This perception is created by test score results and the image of violence. We have found the incidence of violence to be --------.

We have found that there are many students attending schools in Southeast San Diego who score high on the tests. So, the image of racially isolated schools is of much concern to us. The METF, in its interim report, expressed its anger and dissatisfaction with the disparity in test scores among the racially isolated schools and the non-racially isolated schools. We still feel just as angry and dissatisfied. However, the METF is very confident that the disparity can be removed with the implementation of an ambitious plan directed at achieving that purpose.

The following recommendations, based on the above remarks, are respectuflly submitted with the confidence that their adoption will contribute to a more positive perception of the racially isolated schools.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. The concept of the METF should be continued. We have found widespread support for pursuing the subject of quality education in the racially isolated schools and this should be a part of the charge to the Integration Task Force for the next year.

2. A report is to be submitted to the Court, due August 1, 1980, listing the number of students ranked by school at the various levels of the achievement tests in reading and math in grades K through Six.

3. A plan should be developed in concert with the Integration Task Force that addresses the needs of those students ranked at the lower levels.

4. Outside consultants should be hired to study the needs of students ranked at the lower levels of the reading and math scores. This should be done in concert with the Integration Task Force.

5. Formulation of studies and plans should be done in concert with the Integration Task Force to assure that input from the minority community is received.

6. A report of each incidence of violence that could be interpreted as racially motivated is to be sent to parents of the schools involved and to the Integration Task Force.

7. A plan is to be developed and implemented in concert with the Integration Task Force to project the positive aspects of racially isolated schools.

8. There is to be continuation and strong enforcement of the discipline code.

9. Goals for improving test scores contained in the District's plan submitted to the Court are to be developed in concert with the Integration Task Force.

10. The District's plan for achieving higher test scores at the racially isolated schools are to be focused at the K through Sixth grades.

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