[ms-0436.003.006.006]

I.

A significant change over last year has occurred. The Board of Education members are participating with the Task Force and are much more involved with the business of the Task Force than they were last year. We will not speculate on the reasons for this change because at this point the reasons are not important. We suspect that the reasons for not achieving this last year might be as much the fault of the Task Force as that of the Board. What is important is that the two are working much more closely together. We consider this to be extremely important and it is the key to accomplishing the goals set forth by the Court. Although there is much educating to be done on the issues of racial integration and quality education, we feel that the Board is committed to these goals.

3/14/80

II.

One of the weaknesses we have found that exists within the District structure is its lack of involvement with the minority communities. The district's credibility in the minority appears to be at a very low level. It needs to increase its involvement with representatives from those communities for the purpose of obtaining input in the formulation of decisions. Obtaining this input prior to making a decision concerning school integration is extremely important.

An attempt to obtain this input was made recently during the Creative and Performing Arts controversy. This attempt did nothing to help the credibility gap between the district and the minority communities - in fact, it may have increased the gap. The district attempted to obtain this input by conducting a telephone survey. The problem was that in the eyes of the minority representatives the statement used in the survey was calculated to bring certain responses to the questions - responses that would support the decision already reached by the district. Whether this perception is accurate or not can be debated. However, there is strong support for this perception.

There is another faucet to this subject of obtaining information from minority communities. There is a feeling within the community that the pollster used by the district is highly suspect and does not provide the professional objectivity needed. Therefore, the data gathered through these surveys are highly suspect. Because the data that are collected by the district are used to support decisions made concerning school integration, we recommend that in the future the court approve the pollster(s) and all surveys

II. (cont'd)

conducted by the district if the data from such surveys are used to support positions concerning school integration.