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From Everyone's Point of View

Will Bussing Help Racial Balance?

Should we bus students to achieve racial balance of schools? Currently, the only school children who are bussed in San Diego are physically handicapped students.

Spokesmen for San Diego City Schools report that the school district operates a fleet of 51 station wagon type buses which are used to transport these children to centers of instruction.

Bussing has been proposed as a means of achieving racial balance of schools, which some believe in turn will result in equal educational opportunities for all children.

The San Diego Board of Education has not acted on this proposal at this time. The members do feel that the quality of education in Southeast San Diego schools is "equal to if not better than" many schools in other areas.

They have adopted a policy of issuing "special attendance permits" for any parents (white or black) who desire them. Transportation is provided by parents.

Perhaps this is the true democratic way. We would like to hear our readers' ideas concerning this question.

By MARY FISHEL

Quality Is Answer

Harold K. Brown, former Western Regional chairman of CORE and former local chairman, said "Bussing black students to white schools is a phenomonon that

Harold K. Brown

Mrs. Leonard Swanson

Mrs. Gretchen Rudnick

can carry with it serious damage to the black student.

"In the first place, it has a strong possibility of perpetuating the myth of 'white superiority'. The child may very easily decide (usually unconsciously) that black schools are inherently inferior and white schools are inherently superior.

"If black students are led to believe that in order for them to receive a good education they must go to a white school, the black student receives a negative image of 'black', therefore receiving a negative image of himself and all others who have a skin similar to his.

"Of course, the white student is led to believe that a white school is better, merely because it is white. He also receives a false image, but his image may possibly be a superior one, which may result in a positive and strong self-concept.

"The way to eliminate these possibilities is of course to make 'bussing' a two-way street. Bus white students to black schools and black students to white schools. This traffic then stresses the integration concept (at least as far as students are concerned).

"Then of course we are faced with the possibility of creating a feeling within the student (both black and white) that QUALITY education only results from integrated education. Looking at this (admittedly from a black point of view) I see us telling the students (both black and white) everything except that a black school can be a wonderful place for learning.

"And the only reason it may not be today is because the people of this country have practiced racism. And racism causes forced segregation and forced conditions that are compared with the whites and these conditions are judged as being inferior.

"At this stage of our attempt to recover from slavery, I strongly support QUALITY EDUCATION.

"If we are to turn the corner leading away from racism and toward a true democracy, we must give strong support in every way necessary to the predominantly black schools, which are suffering from the effects of a racist past."

Special Permits

Mrs. Leonard Swanson, active in church and civic affairs, said, "I feel that bussing is not an effective solution to achieve racial balance.

"It has been predicted by responsible persons that in the next 20 to 25 years the public school enrollment in all big U.S. cities will be almost entirely non - white, while at least 90 per cent of the pupils in private and parochial schools will be white.

"Whether or not this is true, the trend is in that direction. This indicates the probem is much more deep seated than can be solved temporarily by bussing.

"We have to stop running away from each other and learn to live together with a mutual Christian concern. It is time the citizens look at defacto segregation less emotionally than many persons would have us do.

"I think we are fortunate here in San Diego in having our school board try to meet the problem by means of special attendance permits and the compensatory educational program.

"Bussing defeats one of the most important features of childhood, that of finding friends in one's own neighborhood. It seems much more sensible to use these funds which would be spent on bussing to provide better teachers and improved facilities.

"With our special permit policy, those parents who wish to may enroll their children in other schools. Many Negro leaders themselves feel that bussing indicates an indignity forced on the Negro family with no basic attempt to deal with the quality of life in a Negro community.

"I am inclined to agree with George W. Smith (a member of the San Diego School Board) that many persons are using this issue of bussing hypocritically. It gives them the opportunity to vent many of their hostilities toward the community in general."

Horizontal Plan

Mrs. Gretchen Rudnick, executive director of the La Jolla Community Educational Service, said, "There are advantages and disadvantages to bussing.

"Among the disadvantages is the removal from home neighborhoods.

"However, bussing DOES mix the races during school hours and studies have indicated the absolute necessity of sharing education with children of other backgrounds, if it is to be effective.

"No amount of 'enrichment' of a segregated school gets real results. Children are much more influenced proportionally by other children than by adults.

"So I favor the horizontal plan, where one school would have for instance, first, second and third grade from a wide area and another fourth, fifth and sixth and both would include an ad-mixture of racial and ethnic backgrounds.

"Special tutoring and enrichment programs can help the disadvantaged child, if they help him to feel himself the equal of the privileged child with whom he is attending regular classes.

"In this way friendships can be made with different kinds of people and this is beneficial to the child's development.

"NOTHING which continues the pattern of segregation is going to break the tragic, triangualr prison of housing - employment-education."

Bussing Preordained

Lt. Comdr. Thomas H. McPhatter, a chaplain in the United States Navy said, in the "All American City in Motion" the bussing of children is unavoidable if the Supreme Court decision of 1954 is to be abided by and if growing antagonism, hate, and mistrust between blacks and whites is to be impeded or terminated.

"In our state, the Assembly has voted to repeal the only legislation we had of consequence to deal with elimination of segregated housing.

"The city of San Diego's 'General Plan' promotes the neighborhood school concept which will accelerate school segregation, and school segregation will foster economic discrimination. This limits the types of training one acquires and therefore determines his income, his home, and his neighborhood.

"For our children to have honest experiences; we cannot pick our houses up and move them, but we can move our children.

"It is what I have worked for, prayed to God for, and have fought for and I trust there are many others who feel as I do."

Need More Discipline

Mrs. John C. O'Donnell, field representative for Congressman Bob Wilson who serves on the boards of the Old Globe Theatre, Woman's Committee for San Diego Symphony Orchestra and the Salvation Army, said, "What would bussing school children truly accomplish? Would it benefit education with its added expense?

"I think rather that we should concentrate our efforts and money on improving the quality of our weaker schools if we do have weaker schools, by giving them the best teachers, improving the buildings and curriculum.

"Most important, I think, is that we have lost track of good old fashioned discipline in our schools. We should maintain more discipline by not 'tying the hands' of our school teachers and administrators.

"When I went to school, I saw many a child reprimanded by the use of a ruler or dunce cap and I don't believe it hurt them one bit! Good discipline means good citizens.

"What are we hoping to accomplish by bussing students? I think that we have, regardless of race, creed or color, the brilliant student, the average and the below average in every school.

"So perhaps the answer is to stress 'quality education' for all. Maybe we should reevaluate in all our schools the quality of our education, discipline and moral, religious, guidance."

Law Says Must

Lawrence J. Kamm, general manager of Numerical Control Corporation in San Diego said, "The real question is do we believe in integrating schools?

"Educators say we should and the law says we must. We can integrate schools in only two ways: by integrating neighborhoods and retaining neighborhood schools or by transporting pupils from segregated neighborhoods to integrated schools.

"Widespread integrated housing seems unlikely in the near future, so the only way to obey the law is by 'bussing'.

"There are many transportation patterns new in successful use. Some carry only colored children and some carry both white and colored children, but they all put children on buses.

"Since there are few protests against 'bussing' wealthy children to private schools, it is probable that the real objections are to integration and not to bussing."

Lawrence J. Kamm

Chaplain McPhatter

Mrs. John C. O'Donnell