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BOARD OF EDUCATION
SAN DIEGO CITY SCHOOLS

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REACTION TO JUDGE WELSH'S DECISION

Bob Filner
Member, Board of Education
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I believe that Judge Welsh appropriately commended us where we have achieved success--and appropriately took us to task where we have not made sufficient progress. We are criticized primarily for not exercising "bold and vigorous" leadership, for lack of candor in evaluating our own efforts, and even for misleading the Judge about our Achievement Goals Program.

These are not new criticisms. The Judge has voiced them before. The Integration Task Force has stated them. Editorial writers, members of the public, and this Board Member have made them. I must now ask again: when is the San Diego Board of Education going to take these criticisms seriously, exert some leadership--and act?

When is this Board going to say to the Superintendent--we are tired of self-serving statements that paint an inaccurate picture of our integration program.

When is this Board going to say to the Superintendent--we are tired of these inane weekly reports that supposedly inform us of the status of our integration program but merely tell us how many people attended a workshop.

When is this Board going to say to the Superintendent--we are tired of being considered so irrelevant to the decision-making process that our first word of important Court orders comes from the media rather than from your administration.

When is this Board going to say to the Superintendent--we want enthusiastic and innovative leadership and not tired and timid statements about complying with court orders.

When is this Board going to say to the Superintendent (as the Judge has now ordered)--we will formally evaluate your actions in regard to the integration program.

And I must also ask: when is the majority of this Board going to vote for real public discussion and dialogue on the broad educational policies underlying our integration efforts?

When is the majority of this Board going to vote for holding meetings in the various communities of San Diego so we can get direct and appropriate input?

When is the majority of this Board going to vote for a staff person directly responsible to the Board who has the authority to solve people's problems rather than dismissing them?

When is the majority of this Board going to vote for the staff assistance directly responsible to the Board that will make possible our own evaluation of the progress of the integration program?

When is the majority of this Board going to vote for an effective Citizens Advisory Committee on our total integration plan?

In short, when is this Board going to take the power from a bureaucracy unwilling to take bold action, put it in the hands of the people's elected representatives (where it belongs!), and provide the dynamism and leadership necessary to make our integration plan really work?

The Judge has given us a final warning: "This is a crucial year. The choice for the future is up to the Board of Education."

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