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Chief William B. Kolender
Chairman, Integration Task Force
801 West Market Street
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Dear Chief Kolender:

The Integration Task Force Report of March 17, 1980, describing the progress being made in responding to the six charges of the Court, explains that the Task Force is just beginning to gather data on most of the charges, and that there is only limited data on others. Therefore, the report contains no conclusions, and only a few preliminary findings.

Nevertheless, Plaintiffs are interested in these preliminary findings and the tentative observations in the report, and offer the following comments.

Plaintiffs agree with the Task Force observation that "(t)he Crawford decision compels us to desegregate minority isolated schools", and therefore, successful magnet programs which attract majority students must be put in minority schools. Because segregated schools cannot provide the same education as integrated schools, and the courts have determined that separate cannot be equal, it is important to persist in taking every opportunity to integrate segregated schools. Consequently, we commend the Task Force for its steadfast attention to this matter as expressed by its concern for the location of the School of Creative and Performing Arts.

Some members of the minority community have expressed their concern that the voluntary desegregation program, particularly VEEP, is damaging the quality of education in segregated schools because it results in a "brain drain" from those schools. Members of the Task Force evaluating the quality of education and the reasons for low test scores in segregated schools found that "there has not been an in-depth analysis of the reasons for this problem" by local administrators.

The Los Angeles Monitoring Committee, established by the court there, has examined the performance of PWT students, (the Los Angeles equivalent of VEEP students), and the non-PWT students, (minority students remaining in sending schools). They found that minority students in the PWT program do score higher on achievement tests, tend to be more mature, and exhibit more "leadership" than non-PWT students. (Los Angeles Monitoring Committee, Fourteenth Report, issued February 28, 1980).

These findings concerning PWT students in Los Angeles appear to justify the concern about VEEP by San Diego parents, and to confirm the soundness of the decision by the Task Force to urge the school board to conduct a full investigation of the problem of quality education and low test scores in segregated schools. Part of the investigation should be to determine the effect of the present voluntary desegregation program on the quality of education in minority segregated schools.

Consultation with the Los Angeles Monitoring Committee could assist the Task Force in its own evaluation of San Diego.

The Task Force also indicated in the report that it will urge the school board to charge the superintendent with the responsibility of raising low test scores in segregated schools. Since the report includes a call for a total community effort to stimulate student achievement, and points to the present low level of the district's credibility in the minority community, a necessary and concomitant charge to the superintendent should be to earn the confidence of the minority community. Increased support in the community could be expected to enhance efforts to raise test scores. Nevertheless, regardless of community support, raising test scores is the responsibility of the school district.

There is no information in the report describing the methodology used in arriving at the three preliminary findings on test scores. For example: is the finding on staff competence based on the 275 out of 1,150 questionnaires which were returned in that study? If so, was consideration given to the possibility that generally the most competent and responsible staff returned the questionnaire? Plaintiffs are not questioning the competence of staff. Rather, Plaintiffs are asking questions about methodology in order to gauge the validity of the findings. To this end, Plaintiffs request a copy of the questionnaire, and a brief description of how it was administered and analyzed.

Information about the evaluation of the race/human relations program being conducted by Dr. Guthrie has been limited. When the instruments to be used in the study are available Plaintiffs request the opportunity to examine them in order to understand what conclusions might be drawn from the data. Variables other than the race/human relations program can affect attitudes. Examples of such variables are: changes in ethnic balance, changes in curriculum, changes in staff and administration, and mobility of students. Plaintiffs are concerned about how these other variables will be controlled for from year to year in order to isolate the effect of the race/human relations program.

As the Task Force gathers additional data and information on violence and discipline in the schools and begins to analyze it, Plaintiffs ask that the following ideas be considered to assist in reconciling apparent discrepancies in the data. As

an example, the school district reports an increase in disciplinary problems, while the Police Department records show a decrease in violence in the schools. Do such differences result from different reporting procedures by the police and the district? Are there other explanations for these discrepancies?

The Court has called attention to the differences between disciplinary problems at Pacific Beach Junior High School and Muirlands Junior High School. Do such differences result from different reporting procedures in different schools? Is unequal treatment given students in some schools? Is there a relationship between race/human relations programs in schools and their disciplinary problems? If so, what is it? Since most districts do not experience increased violence when desegregating, (only one in fifteen required additional police help. Orfield, Must We Bus, 1978, p. 126-127), what are the characteristics of districts which did and did not experience violence associated with desegregation?

The value of the final report will depend upon definitive answers to such questions as are raised in this letter to support whatever recommendations are made.

Sincerely yours,

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cc: Members of the Integration Task Force