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May 15, 1979

To: Integration Task Force

From: Melba Margolis and Shuford Swift

Subject: Quality Education

The following comments on quality education are submitted in response to a request from Jim Anderson.

The quality of an educational experience depends upon a number of factors. Most of them are interdependent. For example, the enthusiasm of the teacher will affect the students and encourage enthusiasm in students. Enthusiasm in a student, or students, can also encourage a teacher. However, a student, or students, who is or are not motivated can sap the enthusiasm of a teacher. Or a student may lose interest in learning because of a negative attitude of a teacher. Teachers and students may be excited to explore new areas of knowledge because of new equipment or new resources. Or, on the other hand, they may be discouraged because available books are worn and outdated or facilities and resources are limited.

The following list of factors is offered with the comment that all are important in and of themselves, but especially because of their interdependence.

1. Quality of the administrators as measured by:
    a. Training in administration and leadership.
    b. Training in human/race relations.
    c. Recency of training.
    d. Experience.
    e. Attitudes toward teaching, teachers, students and parents.
    f. Easy and reasonable access by teachers, students and parents.
2. Quality of teachers as measured by:
    a. Training in academic area being taught.
    b. Training in teaching techniques.
    c. Training in human/race relations as it relates to teaching.

d. Recency of training.

e. Experience.

f. Turnover rate of teaching staff.

g. Attitude toward teaching, students and parents.

h. Interest in academic area being taught.

i. Easy and reasonable access by students and parents.

j. Number of students per teacher in school.

k. Number of students per teacher in classroom.

3. Quality of counselors as measured by:

a. Training in couseling techniques.

b. Training in human/race relations.

c. Recency of training.

d. Experience.

e. Attitudes toward counseling, teachers, students and parents.

f. Easy and reasonable access by teachers, students and parents.

g. Number of students per counselor.

h. Students being challenged to fulfill their potential.

i. Students of one racial, ethnic, or economic group not being directed into any particular career or careers.

4. Quality of physical resources as measured by:

a. A well-maintained, up-to-date library, with books responsive to the educational needs and the various cultural backgrounds of the students.

b. Laboratories with equipment appropriate to the skills of the students, but which will also challenge the students to extend their skills and knowledge.

c. Easy and reasonable access to equipment.

d. Sufficient materials and resources in each classroom. For example: reference books, maps, art and music supplies, physical education equipment, etc..

e. Sufficient textbooks to supply each student.

(If schools were integrated as they should be, with a mix of races, ethnic groups, and achievement levels, then libraries, laboratories, and other physical resources should be the same at each school, except for special materials or equipment for programs which had nothing to do with race, ethnic group or achievement level.)

5. Quality of the curriculum as measure by:
   a. Breadth of curriculum offerings.
   b. Curriculum offerings equal to those of other schools.
      (As with physical resources, if schools were integrated, with a mix of races, ethnic groups and achievement levels, and sizes of schools were roughly equal (though this is not possible at the elementary level because of capacities which are limited by physical size of some schools) then curriculum offerings should be equal at all schools, except for special offerings at some schools with special programs, such as career centers. However, these special programs should themselves be integrated.)
6. Characteristics of the student body, particularly in the classroom, as measured by:
   a. The range of achievement levels in the school and in the classroom. (Low achievers need the example and help of high achievers.)
   b. A cooperative and supportive attitude among students in the classroom.
   c. The total enrollment in the school should be large enough to support a varied curriculum.
7. Quality of discipline as measured by:
   a. Number of discipline cases per month.
   b. Numbers of students from one or more racial or ethnic groups over-represented in disciplinary cases.
   c. Policies and actions taken to deal with apparent inequities in discipline.
   d. Perceptions of students and parents of the fairness of the discipline.
8. Achievement scores and tests.
   a. Achievement scores and tests should be used as diagnistic tools, not to categorize or label students. Low scores do not indicate a students potential, but that the student did not perform well on a test. The system, of which the student is an important part, but not the only part, is not working for that student. The score indicates a need to look at the total system, including the student.

9. Integration.

a. One essential factor in quality education is quality integration. In a multi-racial, multi-cultural society integrated education is a necessity.

Additional comments.

The school district hired Professors Gerard and Miller, who had made a controversial study of the Riverside School District, to testify that integration did not help academic achievement. However, their own study showed that under certain conditions minority children did benefit academically from integration. We would classify those conditions as representing quality integration. The appropriate paragraph from their study submitted to the court follows.

d) Importance of Classroom Climate

Perhaps the most important aspect of our work is our not too surprising discovery of the importance of the classroom climate. Although there was no overall academic benefit for minority children, there were some important differences among them. Among the minority children, those who found themselves in classrooms where they happened to experience acceptance from both their teacher and their classmates did benefit academically from desegregation. On the contrary, those in classes where they tended to be rejected, suffered academically. Though the frequency of these two occurrences happened to cancel or balance one another out in Riverside, thereby resulting in no overall change in the academic achievement of the minority children, these findings indicate that a congenial social atmosphere in the classroom is critical for children if they are to develop and reach their intellectual potential.

The following characteristics of schools in which minorities are likely to make educational gains comes from a 1975 article by Meyer Weinberg, a professor of history, and long-time integration researcher.

> In addition, there appears to be substantial agreement among desegregation researchers that the likelihood that desegregation will lead to gains in achievement of racial minorities is greatest when the following characterize the desegregated schools:
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> 1. a relative absence of interracial hostility among students,
> 2. teachers and administrators who understand and accept minority students, encouraged and reinforced by aggressive in-service training programs,
> 3. the majority of students in a given classroom are from middle and/or upper socioeconomic classes,
> 4. desegregation at the classroom as well as at the school level, particularly in elementary schools,
> 5. no rigid ability grouping or tracking, particularly in elementary schools,
> 6. an absence of racial conflict in the community over desegregation, and
> 7. younger children are involved (though this last conclusion should be considered very tentative).
>
> Some of the apparent positive impact of racial integration on academic achievement that is found in some of the studies is traceable to interclass rather than interracial mixing of students. Of course, since nonwhite children are disproportionately from working class and poor families, racial integration also tends to result in socioeconomic mixing.