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San Diego Chamber of Commerce

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MEMORANDUM TO: WILLIAM KOLENDER, CHAIRMAN
INTEGRATION TASK FORCE

FROM: LEE GRISSOM, CHAIRMAN
SUBCOMMITTEE ON VIOLENCE

As you requested, the following is a report on our committee activities to date. Judge Welsh instructed our committee "to accumulate data and investigate causes for violence in the schools, and recommend procedures for reducing violence and punishing offenders".

Members of our subcommittee include Mrs. Ann Hunsaker, Mr. Hartwell Ragsdale and Mr. Vernon Sukuma. We have held several meetings to date in researching the problems related to violence in the schools, and have reviewed an extensive amount of information regarding the violent incidents reported in district schools during both the current year, and the previous year as well. A copy of the reported incidents of violence for the past year is attached as an appendix to this memorandum.

DISTRICT DISCIPLINE POLICY

During the Summer of 1979, the San Diego Unified School District's Board of Education adopted a district-wide policy regarding school discipline, and incorporated it into a brochure which was distributed to each student and parent in the district. This publication underlines the high discipline standards expected within the district; outlines responsibilities of students and parents, teachers and principals, and other involved citizens, in implementing the policy; lists the type of prohibited student behavior and subsequent disciplinary actions. In many schools in the district, parents are required to sign a statement indicating that they had read and understood the district policy. We believe that this policy can be very helpful in reducing violent incidents in the future.

SCHOOL SECURITY TASK FORCE

Our committee met with Mr. Alex Rascon, the head of the School Security Patrol, and received a briefing on their current activities. With a total staff of 51 individuals, they currently have 24 site agents (with 20 assigned to individual schools and 4 floating throughout the district, on call as needed), and 14 patrol agents who work during the evening. They just recently were granted 4 new site agent positions. We are encouraged by this activity of the school district, and feel that it needs to be encouraged even more.

In addition, 4 ground assistants funded by the CETA Program are also at various key sites, assisting primarily with recess and lunch patrols. These individuals have received 40 hours of instruction and appear to be working out reasonably well. One concern expressed by the schools, however, is that the CETA Program is expected to be terminated in approximately 18 months, and these positions will be lost.

POLICE DEPARTMENT SECONDARY SCHOOL TASK FORCE

This program is implemented by the San Diego Police Department and consists of 2 Sergeants and 18 Officers. This is in addition to the widely recognized School Safety Patrol for secondary schools. The Police Department works very closely with the School Security Task Force, and the 2 groups maintain excellent coordination and are very complimentary of the job the other department is doing. The Police Department was complimentary of the strict policy adopted by the Unified School District regarding the disciplinary procedures, and noted that in part, this has led to a substantial reduction in the total number of cases reported to the Police Department versus the previous year. The schools have requested that the City of San Diego add 2 units (a total of 4 people), to the Police detail so that some elementary schools, specifically Baker, could receive on-site visits by uniformed policemen.

GANG DETAIL

This project of the San Diego Unified School District, consists of one Sergeant and 6 men who monitor on a continuing basis, the activities of street "bands". It was noted that 5 years ago there were approximately 16 groups in this category, but now the total is well over 50. Most of these bands are either Mexican-American or Black, although the formation of some new Anglo groups has been noted in recent weeks. A tendency on the part of elementary school children to form bands has also been noted, particularly when the children have older brothers or sisters in similar groups. To date, there has been little interracial or ethnic violence.

CONCLUSION

In future months, our committee will be working very closely with the school monitors to ascertain information about the feeling of safety within each of the 23 isolated schools, and also to determine what security measures have been taken in transportation for students traveling from one area of the City to another.

Concern has also been expressed over unequal treatment given students in some schools. The concern is that sometimes the teachers do not exercise equal treatment in handling disciplinary problems.

In summary, our Task Force has been very involved in researching the major areas of violence within the schools, and ascertaining those areas in which we might become more involved. The remainder of the school year will be spent on identifying specific problems and proposing specific remedies for implementation in 1980-81.

LG/ma
Attachment