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To: Integration Task Force Total Hours to date: 78
From: John A. Cavanagh
Subject: Morse High School
Memorial Junior High School

The following report relates to my visits to Morse High School.

As a general rule, the educational atmosphere is very good. The students and staff continue to work well together. There is a limited amount of conflict which is not unusual on a high school campus. The administrators are dedicated and hard working. To visit the campus is a pleasure. There is no tension or feeling of unrest.

The Magnet programs are still a very small portion of the student enrollment. The one program that is getting a lot of attention is the Aviation/Aerospace/Engineering program. The concept is quite good but I am afraid there will be the age old problem of short lead time and a shortage of money. The planning team is also trying to get the powers-to-be to consider building a facility to house the whole program. The land is available but the funds are not. A nice adjunct to the program is the plan to include the students enrolled in the gifted program. This could really strengthen the drawing power of the classes.

The Basic Aero and Science Seminar & Ground School classes are also programs that will compliment the wholeAviation/Aerospace/ Engineering classes. It would probably be helpful if the Integration Task Force would put a spotlight on this program so that the community and Industry would become aware of the need of outside input.

The problems related to the busing of students is still present. Late arrivals, early departures and no shows are all irritants to the educational process. A great deal of work is still to be done to solve this problem. Interruptions caused by this problem cause problems with staff morale.

Attendance is an area that could be investigated. If students are absent or tardy it causes problems with the educational process. In investigating the attendance office I found that there is need for someone to find out why students are absent from certain classes on a selective basis. Morse has been working on improving the attendance of all students but it requires great dedication on the part of parents toward this goal. There is still a lot of improving required in order to help the program.

Once again it is important that the Task Force and Judge Welsh put the educational process in the hands of the school Principal and give him the freedom and authority to run the school as he sees fit. The Principal should be held responsible and at the same time given total authority. Until he has total responsibility and total authority ~~he~~ we will continue to have a system that blames someone else.

The following report relates to my visits to Memorial Junior H.S.

The staff and administration are very aware of the need to create an atmosphere which is conducive to learning. Every attempt is made to reduce interruptions in the classroom. Most of the interruptions are scheduled around academic classes. The emphasis is on "Time on Task".

The attendance program designed to increase attendance and reduce truancy is progressing quite well. They have not met their goal of an improvement of 25% but a great deal of effort is directed toward this goal and they just may make it. Lets hope so. There is still a high absentee rate on Friday and Monday. I firmly believe that this is a problem that is family or home related. This is an area that should receive major attention by the Task Force and Judge Welsh. When you consider the quality buildings, adequate equipment, adequate support materials, the excess federal, state and district funding and the quality staff there just has to be a reason that is outside the confines of the school that is causing such a low academic achievement record. Almost without exception every person I have talked to comes to this conclusion. The sad thing is that most people are unwilling to say publicly that this may be a major cause of the low academic achievement scores. This would be a good research topic for one of the local universities.

The Magnet program will be expanded next year to include an "Academics and Athletics" program. This site is well suited to this program because of its proximity to the local Boys and Girls clubs as well as the city plunge.

The same comments regarding holding the Principal totally accountable for the academic achievement at the school holds also for Memorial Junior H.S.. There will not be any appreciable improvement until he has <u>total</u> responsibility and authority.

The Race/Human Relations program does not seem to be much. There is some talk about it but I have not seen anything happening. I don't think the staff has given it much of a priority.

Discipline at the school is quite good. No loitering of students and the atmosphere is pleasant.

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