

SUBJECT: Reactions to Inner City Parents' Statement
FROM : Staff
TO : Norman Drachler, Superintendent
DATE : November 30, 1967

1. Racial Composition of Administrative Staff

It is the belief of the Detroit Public Schools that a bi-racial administrative staff is educationally desirable. It is our belief, also, that Negro administrators are needed in outer-city as well as inner-city schools. Not only do Negro children need to identify with the model provided by qualified Negro administrators and teachers, but white children also need to have contact with them.

Only recently has the Superintendent begun to overcome some of the factors which have mitigated against a higher representation of Negroes above the rank of teacher. Since the large influx of Negro teachers, most of them young, has occurred only in recent years, the experience requirement for promotion has been reduced significantly in order to enable younger teachers to qualify for promotional opportunities. Results are already apparent. The last eligibility list for department heads compiled, for instance, includes 42% Negroes; counselors, 40%; elementary assistant principals, 35%. At higher level positions, as another instance, Negroes have been appointed during the past few weeks as indicated: one

Assistant Superintendent, two Region Superintendents, four Region Assistants, two placed on Region Assistant waiting list, two secondary principals, and one Assistant to the Superintendent.

Another step was taken the last few weeks to increase the number of Negro administrators when promotional examinations were given for secondary principal and assistant principals before the previous lists had been exhausted. All the remaining names on the previous lists were those of white staff members; the new lists contain a substantial number of Negroes, several of whom have already been placed.

2. Test Results

The figures in the Inner-City Parents' Statement are accurate. Indeed, they were prepared by the Research and Development Department of the Detroit Public Schools. Despite the mean scores shown, it should be noted that every school in the city does have pupils well above national norms, an indication that teachers do help children to work to their capacity.

In reference to a state-wide test, although we would not object to it, it is not a solution for improving education. New York State has the Board of Regents who provide a state-wide exam at the secondary level, but New York still has its reading and arithmetic problems. The challenge is to raise the aspirations of the principals and teachers; and to provide the kind of learning environment which will enhance learning.

The official position of the administration regarding achievement was enunciated by Dr. Drachler before the Board of Education on July 26, 1966, when he said: "Our basic premise is that all children are educable. Lack of motivation, poverty, or physical handicaps must serve not as explanations for our shortcomings, but as guidelines for developing insights, skills, attitudes, and programs necessary for the success of the student."

3. Selection Procedures

The purpose of the selection procedures is to provide for the school system the best possible administrative and supervisory staff. Because of the importance of the testing machinery, it is constantly being evaluated. While the objective kind of tests prove helpful at the lower job levels, such as counselor and department head, it has become evident that they are less valuable at higher level posts. Since the candidates for these have already demonstrated their competence on theoretical matters on the written tests at lower levels, job performance becomes more important as higher levels are reached. Indeed, serious consideration is being given to whether demonstrated and verified job performance should not be the prime criterion for top level jobs. For this reason, an outside group of consultants on personnel has been contacted for the purpose of developing standards to evaluate performance by administrators.

4. Distribution of Non-Certificated Personnel

Both the Board of Education and staff believe that there should be an equalized distribution throughout the city of both specially certificated teachers and fully certificated ones. We recognize that at this time distribution is not equitable, a situation that results mainly from sharp increases of enrollment in some schools and decreases in others. Also affecting this is the fact that of 1300 teachers offered employment this year, 322 refused to accept inner-city school assignments, and, as a result, were released. Nevertheless, representatives of the Detroit Federation of Teachers, the Office of Personnel, and the Chief of Labor Negotiations are holding joint meetings to study and recommend specific procedures to implement these objectives. Improvement of this situation is expected because of the reduction of class sizes in 35 inner-city schools, and also because of the newly adopted higher beginning salaries.

5. Accountability of Administrators

Like all school employees, principals are held accountable for their responsibilities. Every staff member has a superior who is charged with evaluating his work, helping him improve, or making adjustments in case of unsatisfactory performance. More supervision and evaluation of the work of each principal is expected as the result of the

increase in staff of the Region Superintendents' offices. Another example of emphasis on accountability is the action in October, 1966 of the Board of Education when it established a policy of making all promotions on a three-year contract basis. At the end of each three years, the performance of the person concerned will be evaluated prior to renewal of his contract.

6. Bussing

Bussing of inner-city school children to outlying schools is done, not on the basis that the outlying schools are superior, but, rather, on the basis that they are the ones with excess capacity. The same practice prevailed in reverse some years ago when inner-city schools had room and those on the periphery were crowded. In 1947, for example, as opposed to the 3065 currently being bussed, 5491 pupils were transported, mainly from the outskirts of the city to inner-city schools; in 1952, 6156; in 1957, 4849; and in 1962, 6250.

7. Instructional Materials

The Board of Education is on record as approving the policy of using instructional materials which give appropriate attention to the pluralistic nature of our society. To insure that this policy is carried out, all

textbooks are carefully reviewed by a selection committee working with the Division for Improvement of Instruction and also the Division of School-Community Relations. The Board of Education and staff have further demonstrated their concern by discontinuing the use of two history books in the past few years which did not give appropriate attention to the part played by Negroes in our history. Although currently publishers recognize the importance of including Negro history in their books, several years ago when this was not the case, the Detroit Public Schools prepared its own materials to fill this void. The Struggle for Freedom and Rights, the history of the Negro in America, is an example of this as are a supplement on Negro history and a curriculum guide entitled, The Negro American History. Mention should also be made of the well-known Detroit bi-racial large city readers, ten of which have been produced in the last several years.

Appended to this report is a copy of "Titles in Negro History and Culture", a list of supplementary books provided for all social studies classes at the grade levels indicated. In addition, all school librarians periodically receive up-dated Negro culture bibliographies, from which books are ordered. At present there are more than 400 titles on this list to choose from.

8. Curriculum

For several years the Board of Education, as well

as staff, has recognized the need for increased curriculum emphasis on the contributions of Negroes in both United States and World History. To this end, a number of steps have been taken, including the development of special curriculum materials as noted above. In addition, at this time there is in process a revision of the 8th grade civics textbook which will give appropriate attention to the social dynamics and needs of our city. Another important step forward in this area is the fact that during the past year 629 teachers and administrators have participated in workshops devoted to the teaching of Negro history.

Thus, as has been demonstrated, to the extent that the curriculum should be changed to improve the self-image of young people, especially those in minority groups, we believe it should be changed and should include a variety of methods, materials, and equipment. Nevertheless, we believe that creative teaching with problem-centered classes, flexibility and selection of textbooks, and emphasis on everyday urban problems should not be limited to a single minority group. This combination of interests should be presented to all the children in the Detroit Public Schools.

9. Assignment of Negro Coaches and Officials

Coaching and officiating staffs should be bi-racial, as are staffs in other activities of the school system. Although improvement in this area has been impeded by the fact that there is an extremely small turnover in coaching

and officiating staffs, progress has been made. Assigned for the present school year, for example, have been nine additional Negro coaches in the high schools for varsity teams; four have been assigned to coach junior varsity.