

EDITORIAL

MUST HAVE BETTER COORDINATION BY BLACKS

Guest Editorial

ARE WESTSIDE SCHOOLS INFERIOR?

By Claude H. Parson

Very often the question arises--are westside schools inferior? Are the teachers as well trained and prepared to teach as they are in other schools? What about the facilities and instructional equipment used in ghetto schools--are they equivalent to schools in the other parts of the city?

Permit me to answer the questions in reverse order.

The instructional equipment is more or less the same in all schools, depending upon requests for instructional aids and equipment by teachers and principals. The C. V. T. Gilbert prestige school has more audio-visual material than other schools because of its highly individualized program. Buildings can also be classified as equal. All of the buildings in use were constructed after 1952 (Madison school was constructed that year) and are in reasonably good condition. Multi-purpose rooms are inadequate but so are they in other schools.

There is one difference however, other schools in Las Vegas seem to be kept a litter neater and cleaner than westside schools. The students at other schools seem to care a little more about the general appearance of their schools. (There are exceptions, of course, both ways).

There is an excessive amount of vandalism, breaking and entering, defacing walls and wrecking restrooms in westside schools. There is little respect for public or private property. (Respect for public and private property is part of the middle class value system and should not be taught to all kids, I guess.)

But let's move on. What about the teachers and their training? The Clark County School District has the same requirements for all teachers. What makes the difference is teacher attitudes, teacher expectations and willingness to instruct black students. Teachers that believe that blacks are inferior by nature, have bad blood, and smell bad, will not do the best job in instructing black students. The teacher turnover is greater in west Las Vegas schools. So these schools have become a testing ground for many new teachers, only to have them leave after a year or two of experience at the expense of black kids. They leave--not only because of prejudice or a desire to be with their own--but because it is more difficult to teach "poor" children.

Let's be frank and stop "beating around the bush". Poor people, black or white, have more problems. In this case they happen to be black. They are poor because of family background, lack of educational opportunities and unfair employment practices. Black children lack an adequate vocabulary upon entering school because their parents are generally uneducated. Their friends and associates also have limited vocabularies. They have trouble learning to read because of inadequate preparation for the school years. (Again there are exceptions.) Poor people buy few books or educational toys and games. Travel is at a minimum. Many very seldom leave their neighborhoods. There is also an excessive number of family separations and illegitimate children. Alcoholism and dope traffic doesn't help either. The boy friend meeting the mailman on mothers day robs the children of financial support. In this environment quality education is difficult to achieve. Unhappy, bitter parents make unhappy bitter children. Parents that argue and fight a good deal of the time produce children that argue and fight much of the time at school. The hatred for whites in the hearts of parents is reflected in the children in many school situations. Discipline is difficult. Threats are many and teachers leave when the opportunity presents itself (both black and white).

Poor parents are not generally involved in the educational process. They don't visit the schools very often or attend P. T. A. They are not prepared to help their children at home. They shy away from talking with teachers because they feel inadequate. Most of the kids must make it pretty much on their own--if they



Welfare Chiselers

by Stephen Clapp Public Information Center.

Thus it appears that public officials--from the HEW secretary to state and county welfare directors--are more concerned with keeping ineligible people off the welfare rolls than they are putting deserving people on. And this attitude translates into harsh and illegal administrative practices.

"Neither the state nor the federal government is likely to know about serious violations with the kind of clarity that compels action," the Senate consultants dryly concluded. "And neither is likely to act decisively when they do know."

The National Welfare Rights Organization took up its own version of the Nixon Administration's "law and order" theme at a meeting with then HEW Secretary Robert H. Finch on February 25, 1969.

"For an administration concerned with law and order it is extremely important to expose and remedy the lawlessness of public officials," said George A. Wiley, NWRO director in a followup letter to Finch.

Several months later, NWRO brought suit against Finch, alleging that he had illegally paid out more than \$500 million in federal funds to states that were not in compliance with the 1967 amendments to the Social Security Act.

Meanwhile, other pressures have been brought upon HEW to amend its welfare chiseling ways. In its report to the Nixon Administration's welfare reform bill, the House Ways and Means Committee said it expects HEW to "take what steps may be necessary to assure full and prompt compliance with the requirements of make it.

No--westside schools are not inferior--but ghetto conditions are, they affect the educational process. Problems in education are accentuated when all poor people are forced to huddle together in a society that permits de facto segregation. The walls of the ghetto must come down in housing, employment and education.

Integrated schools will lead the way to other needed changes in our society.

federal law."

The Supreme Court, also, has expressed the view in opinions and arguments that HEW should take more responsibility for bringing states into compliance. And even some of the state welfare directors themselves have privately approached HEW officials asking for compliance directives so that they can prod their state legislatures into acting.

On July 9, HEW announced that it would convene four hearings to determine whether Arizona, California, Indiana and Nebraska were complying with the Social Security Act. Earlier, HEW had called hearings involving Nevada and Connecticut. To appreciate what radical departure this was for HEW, one must understand that, since 1935, only 19 hearing notices have been sent to states, and only 14 hearings have been held.

Officially, at least, HEW is taking a hard line on welfare compliance.

"We're deadly serious," said Eugene Rugel, the HEW official who handles welfare compliance matters, in a P. I. C. NEWS interview. "It's a question of respect for the law. All laws must be respected, whether they apply to dope-pushers or to governors. HEW's problem in the past has been that we've always given in--to the states, to special interests, or whatever. In the past, our regional commissioners didn't dare push compliance because they knew they wouldn't be backed up in Washington. A lot of our regional people still don't be-

(see CHISELERS, page 3)

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