

Education

BLACK HIGH SCHOOL DROPOUT RATE DECLINES, GRADUATION RATE UP, CENSUS BUREAU REPORTS

The proportion of young Blacks dropping out of high school declined significantly from 1975 to 1985, while Black graduation rates improved dramatically, the Commerce Department's Census Bureau reports.

During the 10-year period the proportion of Blacks aged 18 to 21 who had dropped out of high school fell from 27 percent to 17 percent, and the proportion graduating rose from 61 percent to 71 percent. Black college enrollment remained at 25 percent.

Although 81 percent of Whites aged 18 to 21 were high school graduates in both years, their proportion enrolled in college rose from 35 percent to 39 percent.

The proportion dropping out decreased 1 percentage point to 14 percent.

Here are additional highlights from the report for the year 1985:

- The proportions of 18- to 21-year-olds still in high school were 11 percent of Blacks and 5 percent of Whites.

- About 14 percent of Black men and 8 percent of Black women aged 18 to 21 still were in high school.

- The proportions of Black and White three- and four-year-olds enrolled in nursery school did not differ significantly; both were around 40 percent. Of children enrolled in nursery school, however, 66 percent of Blacks attended school all day compared

with 28 percent of Whites.

- Sixty-four percent of Black children attended public nursery school in 1985 compared with 30 percent of White children.

- About 64 percent of Black kindergartners were attending school all day in 1985, twice the proportion of whites.

As in all surveys, the data in this report are subject to sampling variability and response errors.

copies of *School Enrollment — Social and Economic Characteristics of Students: Oct. 1985 and 1984*, Series P-20, No. 426, are available from the Superintendent of Documents, U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C. 20402.

ELEMENTARY SUMMER SCHOOL REGISTRATION BEGINS

Elementary summer school classes will be held June 20 through July 28, 8 a.m. to 10:30 a.m., Monday thru Thursday.

Enrollment is limited to students whose teachers recommend additional course work. The tuition fee is \$70.

Summer school application forms are available at any Clark County School District elementary school. The application deadline is June 13. Parents are encouraged to complete enrollment for summer school as soon as possible.

Proposed summer school sites include: Howard Wasden, Twin Lakes, R.E. Tobler, Vegas Verdes, Doris Hancock, Paradise, Ruby Thomas, J.M. Ullom, John S. Park, Will Beckley, Clyde C. Cox, Tom Williams, Lincoln, C.V.T. Gilbert, Gordon McCaw, Indian Springs, Grant Bowler, Virgin Valley and Andrew Mitchell schools. A final determination of sites will depend on the total number of students who enroll.

For further information contact the summer school office at 799-7440.

NANCY REAGAN THANKS LV STUDENTS FOR ANTI-DRUG SKIT

First Lady Nancy Reagan sent her personal letter of thanks to students at Ruby Thomas Elementary School for their video production of an anti-drug message in the form of a cheerleading routine, titled "Marijuana Awareness Hop."

The project was the brainchild of Reading Improvement Program teacher Peggy McElrath. She first wrote a song called "Marijuana Awareness Hop" receiving her inspiration from a drug abuse class she was enrolled in. Already musically-inclined, McElrath said coordinating the song, rhythms, and dance steps came natural to her. She then selected several students from her second and third grade reading classes to be in the production.

By the time she decided to put the finished presentation on video tape and send it to President and Mrs. Reagan, it became a full-blown production.

Here's how the presentation goes. First the students sing the song twice with movements coordinated to the words. Then they go into a routine of saying "No thank you." The students have paper bunny faces

drawn on their backs which are revealed as they turn around. The letters spell out "No thank you."

Mrs. Reagan's letter follows:

THE WHITE HOUSE
April 15, 1988

Dear Girls and Boys:

How delighted and encouraged I was to receive your wonderful videotape. I am so very proud of you for having the courage to say "NO" to drugs.

A drug is something that sick people need to make them well, and it is something that makes well people sick. Drugs are a crutch and you shouldn't have to go through life depending on a crutch. If you let your friends know how you feel about the dangers of drug abuse, you can help them avoid the terrible problems other young people are facing who use drugs. I hope each of you will always stay drug-free.

I can't tell you how special it was to hear from you. The President joins me in sending you our warmest good wishes.

Sincerely,
Nancy Reagan

REAGAN'S POLICY ON STUDENT AID CRITICIZED BY BLACK EDUCATORS

Many Black educators have expressed disenchantment with policies drafted by the Reagan Administration concerning student aid programs. Black educators are convinced that such stringent proposals will adversely affect the stability of historically Black colleges and universities.

Most criticism has been directed towards Bruce Carnes, the Education Department's deputy undersecretary for planning, budget and evaluation, who earlier this month was quoted as saying that Black colleges may have high Guaranteed Student Loan (GSL) default rates because they may have a high level of "thieves" on their campuses. However, Carnes denied making the statement at the National Association for Equal Oppor-

tunity in Higher Education's annual conference in Washington, D.C.

According to Raymond Bruse, president of Kentucky State University in Frankfort, it is ironic that the Education Department encouraged historically Black colleges to recruit low-income students who are more likely to default, but now plan to punish schools for recruiting those students by suspending them from the GSL program.

Black educators have suggested that much of the blame for the high GSL default rates lies with the Education Department which ad-

ministers the program. Therefore, the Education Department should accept some responsibility for high GSL default rates.

NEA President Commencement Speaker At Two Colleges

WASHINGTON, D.C.—National Education Association President Mary Hatwood Futress delivered the commencement address at two universities this weekend—at North Carolina Central University on Saturday, May 7 and at Xavier University of Louisiana on Sunday, May 8.

Futress, who heads the 1.9 million-member NEA, also received honorary degrees from both universities. She is serving an unprece-

dent third term as president of NEA.

The NEA president called upon the new graduates at both universities to commit themselves to ensuring that every child in America has access to a quality education. Futrell stressed the need for active citizen involvement in the nation's efforts to improve public education.

Futrell received an honorary Doctor of Education de-

gree from Xavier University President Norman C. Francis in recognition of her many contributions to education as a dedicated teacher and distinguished leader in educational policy.

At North Carolina Central University, Futrell received a Doctor of Humane Letters degree in recognition of her

outstanding accomplishments from Chancellor T.R. Richmond. The graduation was scheduled at 9 a.m. in Durham.

North Carolina Central University is a comprehensive liberal arts university founded in 1910. It was the nation's first state-supported liberal arts college for Black students.

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