

Point of View

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MINORITY REPORT

PLAN FOR "NEIGHBORHOOD" SCHOOLS REOPENS OLD WOUNDS, COULD MEAN RE-SEGREGATION; PROS AND CONS NOW HOT TOPICS FOR BLACKS

By James E. Alsbrook

A new explosion of nationwide tension over public school desegregation may have begun in Columbus, Ohio. The 1954 Brown vs. Topeka decision is being tested there by that city's school board proposal to minimize court-mandated busing and return to "neighborhood schools."

The proposal came from the

office of Dr. John A. Middleton, the Black superintendent, and his White administrators. It revived old disagreements, old suspicions and race-based arguments fanned by the media.

Several so called "town meetings" to hear citizens' questions and opinions are scheduled for October and November. Suspicions are strong and lines already have been drawn.

Educators from various cities nationwide are watching developments to assess possible changes in their own cities.

Surprising reactions jumped to the fore immediately, for most White students interviewed randomly on television said they would rather "stay put" and be with the friends they had developed and maintain the school loyalties they had internalized.

Leaders of the predominantly White teacher's union also oppose the projected change. Their president said the change would disrupt effective programs and be conducive to racial re-segregation.

Those favoring the plan for neighborhood schools argue:

1. More students could walk to school and not ride a bus.
2. Parents of students would

not have to get up so early in the morning to prepare their children for bus rides sometimes lasting 30 to 45 minutes.

3. More Black teachers probably would be teaching more Black students and would be positive role models for these students.

4. Black teachers would understand the Black students better, communicate with them and their parents better, and be more effective than other teachers.

5. Special content on Black History and Black pride could be worked into the curriculum, thus developing more-positive feelings about self in the Black student.

6. Some White high school counselors have tended to steer White students toward academic or "brain work" classes and institutions of higher learning while sending Black students to "hand work" or industrial technology classes, ignoring the academic ability of high-scoring Black students.

7. Some Blacks argue that "a Black student does not have to sit beside a White student in order to learn."

8. "White flight" has reduced school population by one third. Those opposing the neighborhood schools plan argue:

1. The plan is a ploy to circumvent the Brown vs. Topeka Supreme Court Decision and its thesis that racially segregated schools are "inherently unequal."

2. Integrated schools made possible by court-mandated busing provide students the experience of interacting with



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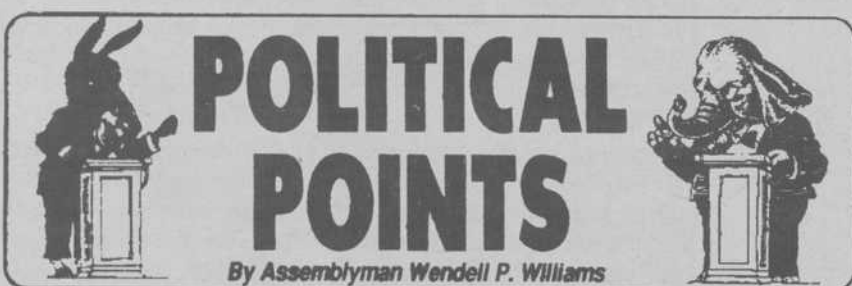
various youngsters from various cultures and value systems, thus providing students with "real world" training and promoting those peaceful and understanding relationships that are vital to peace and security in a "melting pot" democracy. Racial misconceptions and prejudices held by parents are often modified by the at-school learning process.

3. Racially segregated schools wherein Blacks were concentrated are easy targets for deliberate acts of omission (neglecting or failing to do whatever is done for other schools) or deliberate acts of commission (intentionally doing to Black schools whatever is NOT done to White or other schools.)

4. The "false sense of superiority" the Supreme Court said White students feel in racially segregated schools and the "false sense of inferiority" the Court said Black students feel at racially segregated schools would return in segregated schools and inflict psychological damage on both races.

5. These feelings of White superiority and Black inferiority sabotage the best performances of both groups.

6. Equal educational opportunity exists only when both races have equal access to the best human and material educational resources in the community.



By Assemblyman Wendell P. Williams

IT'S JUST LIKE COMPTON

I can somewhat imagine how New York Mayor David Dinkins must feel this week after being called a "Nigger" on the steps of City Hall, the very steps that the mayor proudly escalates everyday to meet the challenge of being the city's "top citizen." I would not think that Mayor Dinkins was totally shocked to have that word directed towards him, after all, this is America, the country that invented the word. However, even with that, I don't think that Dinkins expected to receive an attack of racial slurs at City Hall by over 10,000 unruly "police officers." By the way, the mob was outraged because the city of New York is considering an all citizen review board. At one point the unruly group had a tense standoff with uniformed police officers. Now that's a joke in itself!

I would just remind the mayor that the video of the attempted lynching of Rodney King was in fact, not a mirage, and what you have heard about police tactics in Compton and other parts of the California area is real. Face it Mr. Mayor, New York-It's Just Like Compton.

I would like to tell the Big Apple's Mayor that even though we are completely

across the nation, many of us do understand. Mr. Mayor, you are not alone as you find those who are supposedly "public servants" and public employees calling you nigger and displaying blatant disrespect. Here, in the good old state of Nevada back in 1987, Reno police officer Jim Johns, after stopping Wayne Brenneck for a "routine traffic matter," choked Brenneck to death with a choke hold. Police officers in Reno, still even today, become outraged if anyone suggest banning the death hold. The Mayor should not feel alone; you see, even Reno- Its Just Like Compton.

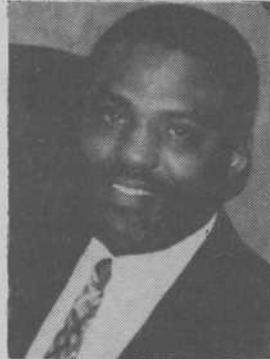
All across the country, more and more communities are asking the same question- "What makes a modern police team turn into a goon squad with badges? I can clearly tell you the answer; our system of policing encourages it. Because police officers are prevented from meeting anybody in the community except to make an arrest, they view all citizens as potentially dangerous law breakers rather than as people. This leads to frustration, then fear, then brutality. Many level-headed cities are now moving back to community policing and its paying off. Rather than working a different neighborhood every day, officers are staying in one

community and getting to know the people in it. In return, residents are giving police crime tips that they use to keep to themselves. Its intelligent; it favors long-term solutions over quick fixes. However, best of all, community policing gives ordinary people the confidence they need to fight crime themselves.

Its amazing how law enforcement fights tooth and nail to prevent any type of over sight body to control excessive force and murder, while at the exact same time more brutality cases are occurring each year throughout America. The way the system now works, when an officer comes into a community of color, it will be someone who doesn't trust them, and wants to get the call over with so he can move onto the next one.

Quite frankly, community input to policing makes sense anyway that you look at it, expect if you have no intent to make peace. Clearly the actions of those New York cops in many cities across the country indicate the latter.

And finally I would submit to Mayor Dinkins, do not be too embarrassed for the true rue citizens of New York because of some out-of-control cops. Because here in Las Vegas back on July 31, 1990 three Las Vegas police officers illegally, accord-



Assemblyman Wendell P. Williams

ing to a District Court Judge, entered the apartment of a sleeping man and choked him to death. Even without a crime being committed, and without a warrant, and without handcuffs, the officers found a reason to kill Charles Bush. And to add salt to injury, both the coroner's jury and the trial jury found no wrong doing by the three policemen.

As far as the three officers that killed Bush, the harshest penalty that the sheriff imposed was six weeks suspension. Upon making the decision for that discipline, the sheriff said, "To some in our community the discipline may be perceived too harsh, to others, too lenient." It is obvious who he was thinking of when he made the hand slap.

So Mayor Dinkins, I guess you realize that New York and most of America, including Las Vegas - is just like Compton. Its up to us to change it; all of us. Here locally the question of a citizens Control Board for metro will be on the Nov 3rd ballot. Remember, exercise your right to vote but just don't vote for exercise.

For more information contact the National Alliance Against Racist & Political Repression at 871-5011.

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