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A Landmark in School Racial Integration: Berkeley, California
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cause for the riots, permit me to be a trifle skeptical.

It seems to me that what matters most is not concern for artistic limitations. After all, the artist is his own jailer. Nor is it the need for intellectual *Lebensraum* that matters. What does matter is the reality of life and actuality of freedom. People who shut their eyes to reality invite violence.

I wish it were not so, but I am afraid that we in America, in and out of the school system, Negro and white, still need and can benefit from the efforts of the Negro artists who create out of the pain and bitterness of their people. When democracy for the Negro really comes, the writer and the artist will be the first to let us know.

Mr. Baren suggests this "very short bibliography" for schoolmen interested in the Negro American and his literature:

1. *Cultural and Historical*—Margaret Just Butcher, *The Negro in American Culture*; Richard Bardolph, *The Negro Vanguard*; Hughes and Metzner, *Pictorial History of the Negro*; Rayford Logan, *The Negro in the U.S.;* Roi Ottley, *Black Odyssey*; Vernon Loggins, *The Negro Author, His Development in America*; Gunnar Myrdal, *The American Dilemma*; Sterling Brown, *The Negro in American Culture*.
2. *Autobiographical*—Saunders Redding, *The Lonesome Road*; Richard Wright, *Black Boy*; James Weldon Johnson, *Along This Way*; Claude McKay, *A Long Way From Home*; W. E. B. DuBois, *Dusk of Dawn*; Langston Hughes, *The Big Sea*; Malcolm X, *Autobiography*; Claude Brown, *Manchild in the Promised Land*.
3. *Essays*—James Baldwin, *The Fire Next Time* and *Notes of a Native Son*; Ralph Ellison, *Shadow and Act*; W. E. B. DuBois, *Soul of Black Folk*; Saunders Redding, *On Being a Negro in America*; Roi Ottley, *No Green Pastures*.
4. *Poetry*—Langston Hughes, "The Weary Blues"; Claude McKay, "Harlem Shadows"; James Weldon Johnson, "God's Trombones"; M. B. Tolson, "Rendezvous with America"; Gwendolyn Brooks, "A Street in Bronzeville."
5. *Plays*—William Mackey, *Requiem for Brother X;* Louis Peterson, *Take a Giant Step;* James Baldwin, *Amen Corner, Blues for Mister Charlie;* William Branch, *A Medal for Willie;* Lorraine Hansberry, *Raisin in the Sun;* Ossie Davis, *Purlie Victorious*.
6. *Novels and Short Stories*—By white writers: William Faulkner, *Intruder in the Dust,* "Dry September," and "That Evenin' Sun"; Lillian Smith, *Strange Fruit*; Dubose Heyward, *Porgy*. By Negro writers: James Baldwin, *Go Tell It on the Mountain*; Richard Wright, *Native Son* and *Eight Stories*; Ralph Ellison, *Invisible Man*; Chester Hines, *If He Hollers*; Jean Roomer, *Cane*; Ann Petry, *The Street*; William Attaway, *Blood on the Forge*.
7. *Anthologies*—Waring Cuney, Langston Hughes, and Bruce Wright, *Lincoln University Poets;* Arthur Davis and Sterling Brown, *The Negro Caravan;* Langston Hughes and Arna Bontemps, *Book of Negro Folklore*; Darwin Turner and J. M. Bright, *Images of the Negro in America*.

▶ "No other people ever demanded so much of education as have the American. None other was ever served so well by its schools and educators."

—Henry Steele Commager

A Landmark in School Racial Integration: Berkeley, California

By MIKE M. MILSTEIN AND DEAN E. HOCH

This is a rare success story, but it reports no miracles. Vision, planning, hard work, and educational statesmanship were the essential ingredients.

After an agonizing period of educational decision making, a new era has begun in Berkeley, California. With the integration of its elementary schools in the fall of 1968, Berkeley became the first city with a population of 100,000 or more to integrate its public schools fully from kindergarten through high school. The U. S. Commissioner of Education wired Neil V. Sullivan, superintendent of the Berkeley Public Schools (who has since become Commissioner of Education in Massachusetts), saying, "You have struck a blow for justice that will have an impact far beyond the limits of Berkeley." Other school districts across the country have experimented with integration, but never before has a major community assured *that all schools will approximate the racial composition of the total school student body*.

In the short span of one decade the Berkeley district has changed from one which could be characterized as tranquil and nonprogressive to one which is capturing educational headlines because of its exciting innovativeness. Between 1958 and 1968 the district was shaken by the battle waged between pro- and anti-integration community groups. It has emerged from this conflict as a leader among school districts pursuing integration.

Tremendous pressure has been mobilized to achieve integration across the nation. Such demands have often been challenged by school boards and community leaders who have not been particularly sympathetic. Such was the case in Berkeley. Certainly the Berkeley school integration story holds meaning for other communities struggling to establish peaceful school integration. The extensive integration program in Berkeley is the product of much the same kind of controversy, debate, and study being carried on by both citizens and

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H. A. Roberts

educators in many other districts today.

NAACP Demand, School Response

As with most major public policy modifications, school integration is the result of specific demands for action. This happened in Berkeley in January, 1958, when the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, Berkeley branch, told the Berkeley Board of Education that ". . . the racially separated schools in the Negro community run the risk, because of peculiar problems of cultural or educational unreadiness, of being considered inferior." The NAACP petitioned the board for action in the predominantly Negro schools, which, it said, were characterized by a "high degree of transiency, cultural unreadiness, latent prejudice, teacher inadequacies, and disciplinary problems."[1]

This first thrust for change, culminating in the NAACP demand, led to a board-appointed study committee of 14 lay persons which became known, after its chairman, as the Staats Committee. The board charged the Staats Committee with studying in-service programs dealing with minority groups and with exploring possible avenues of cooperation in racial relations among school, home, and community. In October, 1959, the Staats Committee reported that school segregation closely followed housing patterns; curriculum was uniform in the schools, but grouping patterns tended to segregate Negroes academically *within* the schools; the curriculum did not cover minority contributions adequately; the level of performance of minority groups in the elementary grades was not as high as it should have been; and, finally, these matters were not being discussed freely. The committee recommended that inter-school projects, including exchange visits, should be initiated, counselors should not arbitrarily place lower socioeconomic children in "job orientation" tracks, and school-community relations should be improved.[2] Although the committee did not recommend racial integration, it should be remembered that this first agonizing look at the problem opened the door to further and more ambitious proposals. However small this achievement may now look, it was much more than the neighboring Oakland school system was doing. At that time Oakland did not even admit it had a segregation problem.

Changing of the Guard

The incumbent superintendent, hoping to end his career in relative tranquility and sensing the vastly changing environment surrounding his school system, announced his retirement at the time work of the Staats Committee was getting under way. The first notion of the board, composed of four "conservatives" and one "liberal," was to choose a successor from top aides within the district. Members of the central staff expressed concern that these candidates were members of the incumbent superintendent's "establishment" and resistant to *any* change. The need to retain staff cooperation led the board to seek an outside compromise candidate.

Demands by minority group representatives—first the NAACP and later the Congress for Racial Equality—and the appointment of an outsider as superintendent (C. H.

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Wennerberg, who was lured away from a white middle-class Southern California school district) were followed by a regular school board election. Reflecting the changing political climate of the community, a second liberal was elected. Soon after, one of the three conservatives resigned. Unable to agree on an appointment, the split board left the choice of a replacement to the community at the next regular election. Another liberal (a Negro) was elected; for the first time, liberals held a majority on the board.

With the changing of the guard, school officials began to modify procedures to reflect community demands. Personnel policy was reexamined so that hiring and placing of personnel would be decided strictly on merit. As a result, the number of Negro professional personnel in the district rose by three percent (from 7.3 percent of the total in 1960 to 10.3 percent in 1963).[3] But until a new director of personnel was appointed there was little effort to place Negro teachers in other than ghetto schools. Voluntary groups of teachers formed to discuss the Staats Report, seek alternatives, and make the curriculum more relevant to minority groups. Several educational enrichment programs were initiated and community relations efforts became more sophisticated and effective. The board and the administration began to adopt the philosophy that an informed citizenry is essential if there is to be sympathetic understanding of educational problems.

In short, approaches to "the problem" were multiple—aimed at school-community relations, personnel policy, in-service training, educational programs, counseling, and other pertinent areas. In the relatively short period of four years, the school system was opening up and accepting the challenge of meeting the needs of the changing school population. Both the community and the school system were actively working toward providing a better education for *all* students.

CORE and Integration

On May 1, 1962, the Berkeley chapter of CORE, stating that "segregated education in any form —black, white, or yellow—is educationally undesirable," challenged the board to "formulate and put into operation a program for elimination of de facto segregation."[4] The board responded by appointing a racially mixed study group which became known as the Hadsell Committee after its chairman, John Hadsell. A year and a half later this committee presented its findings and recommendations. Where the Staats Committee worked around the edges of the segregation issue, the Hadsell Committee met it head-on, stating that "recognition of basic human rights and dignity is the solution to the problems of discrimination."[5]

The committee found that all of Berkeley's 14 elementary schools were de facto segregated, and that only one of three junior highs and the single high school approximated the racial composition of the district's total student body. Even in the one racially balanced junior high, most Negro students were segregated in the lower academic tracks and in the high school, largely due to previous segregation, Caucasian and Negro students practiced self-segregation. Linking segregated education and achievement, the committee noted that intelligence scores among minority group students were underestimations of their true intelligence.[6] The committee found achievement differentials to be greater than ability differentials. Most important, children of equal ability were not learning language skills as well in largely Negro-populated schools as they were in predominantly Caucasian schools.

The Hadsell Committee's recommendations went well beyond those of the Staats Committee. The committee recommended 1) elementary school integration, either through redistricting, limited open enrollment, or through the "sister school concept" of Caucasian and Negro elementary schools working together; and 2) integration of the junior high schools through redistricting or limited open enrollment.[7] The report was widely distributed and discussed at PTA and other civic group meetings. Two public hearings, one drawing more than 2,000 people, were held. Finding wide community support, the board asked the administration to study the report and develop alternative means of achieving integration.

Operationalizing the Objective

An increasingly vocal minority group leadership and a changing school board were solid indications that environmental conditions surrounding the system were changing. How was this new environmental posture to be fed back into the system itself? How were the backers of integration to gain organizational commitment to an innovation of such magnitude? First Wennerberg, and later Sullivan, employed a variety of means to achieve the ambitious objective of complete school racial integration:

Task Groups. The first effort was to form district-wide task groups to come up with proposals for implementing integration plans. Involved teachers and administrators who provided needed detailed planning felt themselves a part of the process. Membership on the task groups was broad enough to include negative critics of integration so that a necessary sounding board might be provided *before* innovations were implemented.

One of the task groups came up with the Ramsey Plan (named after the teacher who originally developed it) to achieve integration in the junior highs. Before integration only one junior high school approximated the racial composition of the total school population (54 percent Caucasian, 37.3 percent Negro, and 8.7 percent Oriental and "other").[8] The other two were largely de facto segregated. The Ramsey Plan as adopted and instituted by the board led to the housing of all seventh- and eighth-graders in two junior highs. All ninth-graders were housed at the third junior high. Attendance boundaries were altered to achieve a racial balance in the two seventh- and eighth-grade schools. Teachers were asked where they would prefer to teach and, in almost all cases,

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were given their first choice. Counselors were transferred with their counselees to lend a degree of continuity to student programs.

The board accepted the Ramsey Plan but completely rejected another task group recommendation for elementary integration. This proposal, based on the Princeton Plan, would have necessitated the busing of approximately 50 percent of the district's primary and elementary pupils. The board felt that this was more than the community was ready or willing to accept. In our opinion this was a politically astute move, for it allowed the community to become accustomed to integration in a smaller but still meaningful dose, preparing parents for an effective and complete integration only four years later.

Finances. Backing up its commitment with dollars, the board allocated $200,000 in the first fiscal year of the integration plan for projects which "compensate for gaps in experiences and skills which some children bring to school."[9] Further monies were received from state programs earmarked for compensatory education and from the federally funded Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965.

Inter-group. With the help of university advisors, a district-wide group of teachers, labeled Inter-group, was organized to hold workshops, carry on group discussions, and study such things as Negro life, Negro history, and minority coverage in textbooks. Much learning takes place within the group, but more important, the feedback into the schools where open debate has become a reality has been an important factor in staff acceptance of integration and compensatory education programs. Inter-group, which has now become a permanent department called the Office of Human Relations, has grown from 15 voluntary school personnel in 1960 to 300 active participants this year. Spreading the value of the group beyond the school staff, it is now admitting members of the community.

Gaining Staff Commitment. At the classroom level, it is necessary to make teachers feel that the community supports the change. Parents were urged to come to the schools to discuss the issues. Community meetings were consciously pursued and parents were urged to play teaching roles in pre-school programs and as teacher aides. The result has been that many formerly critical parents are now supportive, and teachers feel they are not "fighting a losing battle."

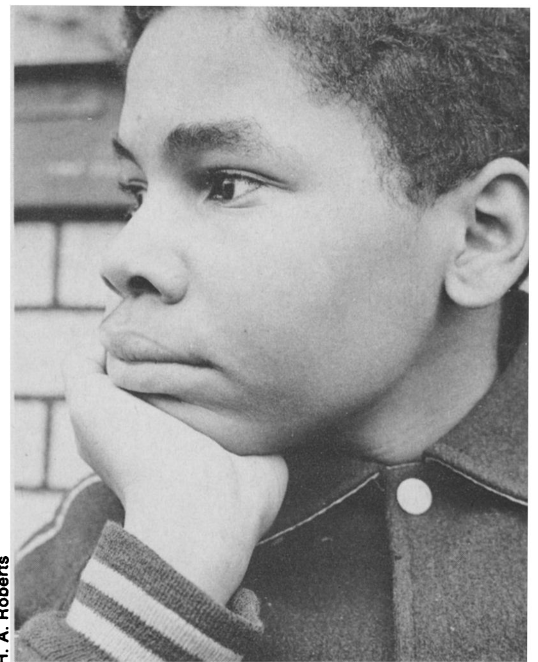
Those administrators who were obstructionists or who refused to participate in the process had to be side-stepped or removed. As they were isolated and identified they were transferred to positions where they would be rendered harmless, encouraged to retire, or helped to find positions in other systems. An immediate result has been a boost in morale for staff members who are committed to racial integration in the schools.

To orient other administrators and minimize indirect methods of communications, several university personnel were employed to lead a group of administrators in sensitivity training (T-grouping). Some members of this group emerged as key participants who were "able to get things done" in the school district. Settling problems instead of imbedding them in an area as touchy as racial relations is critical.

Meeting Community Resistance

After the Board of Education voted to put the Ramsey Plan into effect in the fall of 1964, the opponents of integration organized as the Parents Association for Neighborhood Schools (PANS) and demanded removal of the board members who favored the plan. Supporters of integration formed the Berkeley Friends of Better Schools to counteract PANS. A moment of truth had been reached. The ensuing recall election was to indicate whether the schools would be allowed to move ahead with integration.

The result was an overwhelming vote of confidence for school integration. Incumbents who stayed to face the recall election retained their seats on the board by three-to-two victory margins. This election, which saw one of the largest voter turnouts in any Berkeley School Board election, was taken as the final signal for the board to move ahead with its integration plans. There were other positive indicators of acceptance of integration in the schools. These included a reduced rate of teacher turnover, an increased student enrollment, and the passage of a tax election at a time when similar tax elections were failing across the nation.



H. A. Roberts

"Even in the one racially balanced junior high, most Negro students were segregated in the lower academic tracks —and in the high school . . . Caucasian and Negro students practiced self-segregation."

Enter Superintendent Sullivan

In the fall of 1963, as final plans were being drawn up to institute the long-awaited integration program, Superintendent Wennerberg, deciding to concentrate on full-time graduate studies, tendered his resignation effective at the end of the school year. Wennerberg was an in-fighter, bloodied in battle. With his resignation, a new superintendent would be able to take advantage of the gains without having to contend with all of the accompanying animosities that developed in the war on segregation. The board set out to replace Wennerberg with

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a man who was known to be sympathetic to racial integration in the schools.

In the midst of the recall election, Neil Sullivan accepted the superintendency. His professional experience included chief educational administrator roles in suburban New York and New Hampshire communities. He was John F. Kennedy's hand-picked head of the "Free Schools" of Prince Edward County, Virginia. His commitment to integration and his aim to make Berkeley schools "worthy of imitation" buoyed the hopes of Board of Education supporters.

At Sullivan's request, the board established a 138-member School Master Plan Committee, two-thirds of whom were lay citizens, to study and make recommendations concerning the educational program. The committee presented a comprehensive report which urged immediate "racial and socioeconomic integration of students in Berkeley schools."[10] With this report as a guideline, the district was off and running towards the completion of its integration program.

The first major step was a pilot test run under the district's ESEA Title I program. In the spring of 1966, 250 students from the predominantly Negro South and West Berkeley elementary schools were bused to the predominantly Caucasian schools in the northeastern part of the city. The operation, which proved effective despite alarmist forebodings by critics, was well received by participating students and families of both races. Racial barriers were reduced as students became acquainted with each other, but most important, Sullivan contends that "the pilot integration program involving the busing of 250 Negro children to predominantly Caucasian schools . . . demonstrated that integration causes the achievement of Negro pupils to rise without causing any corresponding decline in the achievement of white pupils."[11]

These positive indicators, combined with extensive pressure from the Negro community and many teachers, convinced the board that the time to complete its integration program had arrived. Therefore, it unanimously adopted a resolution to have the administration present plans which would permit desegregation of all elementary schools by September, 1968. Sullivan, in turn, encouraged his administrators and teachers to submit ideas on how to best integrate the schools.

Two task groups were formed. One concentrated on the instructional component of integration to assure that increased achievement would be possible, while the other developed the organizational structure necessary for implementation of the desegregation plans. A lay Citizen Advisory and Review Committee was also formed to review the superintendent's recommendations.

Desegregation proposals were reviewed for feasibility in terms of the following criteria: 1) provision of racial balance in all elementary schools based upon actual school-wide racial enrollment percentages; 2) minimum school plant conversion costs; 3) equitable participation of children from all parts of the city in any necessary busing; 4) a minimum number of school changes in a child's career; and 5) acceptability to the community.[12]

From the proposals presented, the board selected a K-3, 4-6 plan. The plan requires all grades K-3 children to attend schools in predominantly white neighborhoods and all grades 4-6 children to attend schools in predominantly Negro neighborhoods. This two-way busing, unique for an urban area of this size, is almost identical with the original staff-proposed elementary integration plan of 1964. It requires the transportation of 3,400 students but provides a fair racial, socioeconomic, and achievement balance.

This momentous decision has made Berkeley (a community with a significant Negro minority) the first United States city of 100,000 or more population to achieve *total school desegregation.*

Sullivan has said, "We are not simply moving children's bodies. Every classroom will be integrated, racially and socioeconomically. Quality education will be maintained. . . . Equally important, we will be changing attitudes, thereby preventing the growth of prejudice in the young."[13]

Integration Issues

Two major concerns articulated by integration opponents dealt with the safety of busing and the effects of integration on the quality of education in the schools. The concern over busing was reduced when the administration went to the community with evidence that pointed out that "the safest time in a child's school day is while riding in a school bus."[14]

The issue of quality education was, and is, a very real concern. Many feel that although integration might cause the achievement of Negro pupils to rise, it could well produce conditions detrimental to white student achievement. The few studies carried out in this area indicate that minority students tend to achieve at higher levels when racial mixing takes place, and even more important, that Caucasian student achievement does not suffer. The administration publicized the much discussed Coleman Report, which concluded that ". . . if a white pupil from a home that is strongly and effectively supportive of education is put in a school where most pupils do not come from such homes, his achievement will be little different than if he were in a school composed of others like himself. But if a minority pupil from a home without much educational strength is put with schoolmates with strong educational backgrounds, his achievement is likely to increase."[15]

The administration claims that student achievement will not be endangered in Berkeley. In support of this objective, lower pupil-teacher ratios, special education programs, and an excellent elementary library program have been established. Many teacher aides and volunteer lay assistants have been employed. As a check on achievement, the board has asked the University of California to evaluate the results of its integration activities. Baseline data gathered before school closed in June, 1968,

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compared with data to be gathered at later dates will permit analysis of changes in individual student achievement, behavior, and attitudes.

In Closing

The Berkeley integration success story is complex. Clearly, concomitant circumstances such as the civil rights movement and the growing liberalism of the Berkeley community have had an impact. The board, which has undergone a drastic reorganization, and the leadership catalyst supplied by Wennerberg and Sullivan were invaluable components. Together, the vast web of interrelationships involving many internal and external forces acted upon the schools to make them susceptible to change.

One can find comparable processes at work in other urban communities as demands for a more equitable distribution of students and resources increase. These communities are beginning to turn away board members who are unwilling or unable to meet the challenge. The same may happen to administrators who refuse to move with the times.

Whether one is talking about Berkeley, Buffalo, or Boston, the problem is there and must be dealt with. A new element, the changing racial composition of the schools, is knocking at the doors. Responses to the problem must transcend education to include other problem areas such as housing and employment, but the schools may well be an excellent place to begin. Realistically, school boards and educational administrators no longer have the luxury of deferring the problem.

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[1]Report to the Board of Education by an Advisory Committee of Citizens, "Interracial Problems and Their Effect on Education in the Public Schools of Berkeley, California." October 19, 1959, pp. 18-19.

[2]*Ibid.*, pp. 12-17.

[3]*Ibid.*, p. 10.

[4]CORE, "Presentation to the Berkeley Board of Education on De Facto Segregated Schools," May 1, 1962, p. 4.

[5]Report of a Citizens Committee, "De Facto Segregation in the Berkeley Public Schools," Fall, 1963, p. 1.

[6]*Ibid.*, p. 57.

[7]*Ibid.*, p. 31.

[8]*Ibid.*, p. 5.

[9]Superintendent's Report, "Desegregation of the Berkeley Schools" (Appendix to the Reports), May, 1964, p. 39.

[10]Report of the Berkeley School Master Plan Committee. Board of Education: Berkeley, California, October, 1967, Vol. 1, p. ii-6.

[11]Berkeley Unified School District, news release, January 17, 1968. (Article concerning Board of Education decision on desegregation)

[12]"Integrated Quality Education, a Study of Educational Parks and Other Alternatives for Urban Needs," ESEA Act 1965, Title III, Berkeley Unified School District (July, 1968), p. 12.

[13]Berkeley Unified School District, news release, January 17, 1968.

[14]Report of the Superintendent to the Berkeley Board of Education, "Integration, a Plan for Berkeley," October 3, 1967, p. 25. (From a report by the State Department of Education to the California State Board of Education.)

[15]James S. Coleman *et al.*, *Equality of Educational Opportunity*. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1966, p. 22. □

Milwaukee's Project for Change in the Central City

▶ Take a white teacher from a comfortable, middle-class background and, without warning or preparation, put her into an all-black school in one of our urban ghettos.

The result all too often is disaster.

She does not know how to talk to her students, and her students don't know how to talk to her. She knows and understands little of their background and they know and understand little of hers and what she is trying to do. Few teachers achieve success in this kind of setting and look upon their first years of teaching in the ghetto as a kind of penance they must do in order to get a job in a better school.

This is the problem attacked in Milwaukee's Central City Teacher-Community Project, now in its third year. During the summer prior to the opening of school the project brings together students, parents, and teachers for a series of lectures, discussions, and readings on race relations and related subjects; development of new materials for teaching in ghetto schools; and frequent, informal visits of teachers to their students' homes.

The area in which the project operates is the most depressed area in Milwaukee, containing most of the city's blacks, the highest percentage of families on welfare, the highest unemployment rates, and the highest percentage of physical and environmental blight.

Although cautious in their evaluations, directors of the project have noted improved grades and attendance, more positive student attitudes toward school, less negative feelings on the part of teachers toward teaching in the ghetto, and a rise in parent morale.

The project expanded from 15 teachers in one school in 1966 to 196 teachers in 19 schools in 1968. The budget increased from $26,652 in 1966 to a 1968 total of $387,000, part of which was federal funds authorized under Title III of ESEA.

As one major practical outcome, the project's staff has developed a list of what they termed apparent solutions to problems in central city schools. These solutions included: a public information program to acquaint the entire community with the problems of the central city schools; decentralization of the administration of the school system; more teacher aides; massive programs to improve reading achievement; increased extracurricular activities; teacher-initiated federal projects; special state funds for schools in urban, low-income areas; more Negro administrators; and increased incentive to attract teachers to inner-city schools. Nearly all of the suggested solutions were carried out to some degree in 1968.

Ben Sklar, a former agricultural engineer teaching at the 78 percent black Lincoln High School, said the project has given him a better awareness of the background of his students and a chance to meet more students on a face-to-face basis. "Some kids still mistrust Mr. Charlie," Sklar says, but he adds that parents are beginning to find it easier to understand what the schools are trying to do.

One mother in the project reported that she was convinced it helped her child do better in school. "If the child is close to the teacher so he can express himself, he is going to achieve more," she said.

Each teacher works with seven to 10 students in a series of activities ranging from home visitations to a trip to the beach as part of the effort to increase personal contacts among teachers, students, and parents. Teachers are required to set aside $50 of their stipend for such activities.

—Contributed by David Bednarek of the *Milwaukee Journal*

▶ James Farmer, the newly appointed Assistant Secretary of HEW for Administration, will have a mandate not previously given to this office-holder. He will be "key adviser" to Secretary Robert H. Finch on urban affairs and will serve as a special representative to the student community with the mission of recruiting young people, particularly those from minority groups, to HEW.

—*Education U.S.A.*, March 3, 1969

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