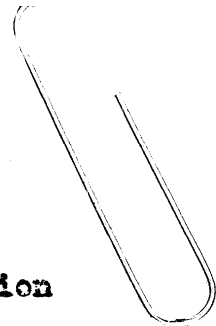


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Typed 8/10/64



TO: Ann Arbor Board of Education  
 FROM: Stephen Withey  
 RE: On Defining the So-Called "Jones School Problem"

The schools are supposed to prepare pupils for living gainfully, responsibly and happily in an adult world several years in the future. In times such as these, then, schools must be sensitive to changing social conditions and pressures as well as ready to shift educational practices. We must broaden our attention to include not only the curriculum but everything that goes on in the school.

We must educate for fewer low-skilled jobs, longer education, shorter work days, more leisure, changing work conditions, new economic and social conditions, exploding knowledge and new technologies. No educational format is frozen. These pressures can be sensed right now and they demand some immediate and imaginative shifts in the patterns of education. It is important to remind ourselves of this larger context of social change at the same time that we confront any smaller segment of social conditions that pressure for shifts in our educational practices.

Attempts to cope with change cannot always be certain of outstanding success but attempts must be made. Attempts must be tailored to local conditions. The willingness to try is one important step towards working out better solutions. New procedures to cope with changing conditions create new problems but these must be faced as challenges rather than shunned as hazards.

Racial concentration of significant proportions, in the schools, emphasizes the image of segregation. Such a concentration is a perpetual reminder to pupils of the forces, conditions and limited opportunities that create and maintain such heavily Negro communities.

Therefore, it would seem important and imperative to start to break down these conditions even if only partially and progressively and even if it appeared to make no particular educational difference in the immediate future.

As a result of racial concentration there are economic, cultural and social limitations. These problems require special educational attention and consideration in improved methods or programs if the school's responsibilities are to be fairly discharged.

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Educational approaches to these pupils must take into account complex problems and conditions that require imaginative educational innovation. Speedy remedial progress may not be apparent. Special attention must be given to ways and means of influencing motivations, expectations, aspirations, habits, etc., and accelerating educational progress.

Racial concentration also creates varied and unique personal problems that require special attention in addition to the general class enrichment and innovation referred to above. There are apparently more personal problems per classroom that have to be faced by a teacher in a racially-concentrated school than tend to be crowded into the classes of other teachers.

Educational help to these youngsters may in some cases be facilitated by grouping them together for remedial work but more often their problems are so varied that a single teacher is overloaded; if the pupils are in several classes, a larger segment of the school system (faculty, staff and pupils) are available to help them.