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from the desk of

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July 6, 1964

Mr. James Crippen
Trustee
Ann Arbor Board of Education

I am very concerned for the education of the children in the Ann Arbor school system and particularly for those in Jones School. I think the Board of Education is to be complimented for bringing to the attention of the community that an educational problem does exist among negro youngsters, but I find myself poles apart from the solution that has been offered.

In the Jones School Report, it is argued that reading test scores of negroes in Jones School are lower than negroes in predominantly white schools and, therefore, moving children from Jones School to other schools will raise their test scores and thereby their level of learning.

Let us examine the results that might be anticipated from such a bussing program. From the statistics given on Table 3 of the Report, the following mean grade levels were computed:

Negroes - Jones	0.24 grade levels above national average grade level
Negroes - Mack	0.35 grade levels above national average grade level.
Negroes - other schools	0.63 grade levels above national average grade level.
All white children of Ann Arbor Schools	2.24 grade levels above national average grade level.

These statistics show Jones School negroes to be two grade levels behind Ann Arbor white children. But the most we might expect from bussing them to white schools is to raise them to the level of negroes from other schools which is still 1.6 grade levels behind Ann Arbor white children. This would seem to be no significant improvement, particularly if we take account of cultural and family differences between negroes who have moved into white neighborhoods and those in Jones School.

Indeed, an impartial review of this problem might well point to the success of the present arrangement of defining a problem area, then giving it the special attention it deserves with dedicated, competent teachers.

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And, finally, where does it all end? It is right to bus negro youngsters to white schools to further integration, it is equally just to bus white children to negro schools to further the same cause. Or if for some reason other than race, the level of learning in a particular school is not up to City average, it becomes equally just to bus children into the school to balance the student body. To date I have not heard of any school official who has satisfactorily defined the cause of such differences between schools. It would seem extremely important for the School Board to ascertain the real cause of any problem in order that a proper solution can be found. The proposed solution would seem too much like the proverbial shot in the dark and may create many more problems than it solves in the minds of the youngsters being displaced from their home neighborhoods.

Sincerely yours,

(signed) Raymond Smit