

COALITION FOR EDUCATIONAL AND
ECONOMIC JUSTICE

PRESS RELEASE

The system of apartheid is alive and well in the leadership of the Kansas City, Missouri school district. The student population is over 75% minority. Yet, ALL the key administrators are white.

EXAMPLE:

Superintendent---White (Dr. Walter Marks)
Asst. Superintendent---White (Art Rainwater)
Director of High School Education--- White; reports to white, who reports to white.
Director of Middle School Education---White, reports to white all the way up the line.
Director of Magnet Schools Instructional Programs---white female from Jackson, Mississippi. In total charge of what our kids are learning.
Director of Instructional Training---White female; coordinates and oversees all staff training and development.
Eight curriculum coordinators---6 are white.

There is no significant input from the Black community on what our kids are learning, or whose teaching them, and of whose is teaching them to teach them. There is no equity! There is no inclusion here! Top-level decisions are being made about what's best for Black kids and for Black community from an all-white jury of administrators.

Out of the 10 high school principals, 6 are white. One of these schools (Southeast) has a 96% minority student body. What kind of message is this sending to our kids just before they step into a world that is already filled with hatred and racism?

However, many of our kids don't make it that far. In 1990-91, 61% of the total drop-out population was composed of Blacks. Last year, 58 out of 65 students (89%) who received long-term suspension (11 to 90 days) and expulsion were Black. Last year, 1500 kids received short-term suspensions, 90-95 percent Black. Yet, under the current leadership of the school board and administration, 140 positions which were occupied by Blacks were cut from the 1992-93 budget.

Yesterday, we personally observed teachers displaying insensitive, unacceptable behavior and a lack of cultural understanding when she stated to a Black student that "you people are unteachable", and an assistant principal stating that "it's a jungle out there in the hallways" and refused to leave her office.

Therefore, we are calling for an immediate independent investigation by the State of Missouri and the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education into the massive drop-out and suspension of minority students.

Also, in light of Dr. Marks' track record and hiring practices, we are calling for an immediate investigation into the hiring of his crony and classmate, Don Steele, as a \$1,100-day consultant for some esoteric concept called "Paradigm Shift", which we feel is a misallocation of resources, yet our teachers are in need of some basic classroom materials and training. (200 nurses have been eliminated from the 1992-93 budget, most of them Black).

The Long Range Magnet Plan has been drafted and renewed without community input. We are calling upon Judge Clark to allow this plan to be reopened so that this community can be a part of the process that has been insensitive to our community needs.

Our community and our kids are taking an academic and social beating very analogous to the physical and emotional beating that Rodney King took. We are not going to lie still any longer and let business go on as usual.