

[REDACTED]
Dorchester,
Massachusetts 02122
September 18, 1974

Dear Mr. Kennedy:

May I strongly disagree with your blanket statement on Sunday that black schools offer inferior education. You should look at the facts closely. My husband is a non-teaching assistant principal in [REDACTED]. He has been in his school for 14 years. I practice-taught in [REDACTED] in the first grade. Therefore, we feel qualified to tell you of the education offered in the black area.

First of all, my husband orders all the books and supplies so he knows the amount per pupil- \$25 per student. He has far more supplies than a friend who teaches in the very wealthy area of Jamaica Plain- another part of the Boston School System. He also has more of almost everything than friends who teach in the Weymouth School System.

Do you also realize that no book with a copyright date of 1968 or earlier may be used in Roxbury? This ruling was made after repeated complaints from the NAACP about old books in Roxbury. Even if a set of books has been used only one year, the set must be discarded if the copyright date is over 5 years.

My husband's school is also staffed with three Title 1 Math and three Title 1 Reading aides to augment the regular staff of 29.

His school is fortunate in having a 6 weeks SEREL program. During the 1974 summer 12 teachers and 5 aides taught 175 children 1 or 2 remedial subjects and 1 or 2 enrichment or fun subjects. Summer school, of course, had many additional materials and supplies.

Many children participate in the free lunch and milk program during the school year and the free milk and cookie program during summer school.

My husband's staff is excellent. Most are in school long before the first bell in the morning. Some buy their school children clothes from their own salaries. They spend their own money for candy, ice cream and cookies for the seasonal parties. These are the teachers who -you believe- do not offer rewarding teaching experiences to the black children.

The only inferior part of the black schools is the safety of the neighborhoods in which the schools are located. The following are examples of incidents that have happened at my husband's elementary school:

1. We had the rear window of our station wagon shot out by a pellet gun outside school.
2. The other assistant principal suffered a slight concussion when he was knocked down against a radiator and smashed across the back with a school chair. A young man was incensed when the assistant principal scolded the man's sister(an 11 year old) for fighting with a small child. The young man wanted to "teach the school man a lesson for yellin" at my sister."
3. A 4th grade male teacher, while in the school yard, was jumped by three black males and had his wallet ripped from his pocket- while his class looked on stunned.
4. Three women teachers have had their handbags. snatched. The women teachers are instructed to leave almost immediately after the end of school and to go in groups.
5. An elderly sewing teacher, refusing to release her handbag, was dragged down the school stairs and along the street. She spent 2 months in bed with badly bruised legs.
6. My husband missed- by 5 minutes- a gunfight on the school stairs between the police and a thief.
7. My cousin, also in my husband's school, had a fire in her car's electrical system on her way home from school. The mechanic said that the cause was deliberate. That day she had broken up a fight outside school. My cousin also had a tooth knocked out when she helped a fellow teacher in a dispute with a hysterical parent.
8. Almost all the teachers have suffered stolen cars, slashed tires, flat tires, and other acts of vandalism.
9. An aide, on her way to school, escaped being raped when 2 men discovered that she was decidedly pregnant.
10. I have not mentioned the countless break-ins in which much damage is done. The teachers take home the phonographs, recorders, and typewriters so they will not be stolen overnight. The hours lost by the staff and custodians in cleaning the school after the break-ins cannot be measured.

Thus, the safety of the neighborhood is the only inferior aspect of the black school.

Perhaps these incidents can show you why the white parents are reluctant to send their children into unsafe areas. I, myself, marched last Monday to the Federal Building. Although our own 3 children are in parochial school, I marched peacefully with 99% of my fellow marchers, because we deplore the fact that our neighborhood children are being sent into unsafe areas. To clarify one point, we chose the local parochial school for our children 8 years ago because our local public school- all

white- was such a physical mess and ancient structure.

Undoubtedly, the only solution is to make all areas of Boston safe so that children may go to their neighborhood schools. We chose to keep our two older children at our local parochial school- even though they were accepted to Latin School- because of the dangers in MBTA travel.

Judge Garrity has done a great disservice to most people in Boston. He should have provided voluntary busing for those who desired it. With the additional money not needed for forced busing, he could have provided increased police protection in Boston to fight increasing crime. All people, both black and white, would be delighted with the results.

Please sympathize with the white parents of Boston. Those who caused your unpleasant experience were hardly indicative of the thousands like myself who marched.

Also, refrain from downgrading the quality of education in black areas. The teachers try; the supplies are generally excellent; and most of the kids want to learn and do learn.

Your responsibility, as senator to all the people of Boston, should be to provide increased safety protection in all neighborhoods. Then education would proceed in a beneficial and stimulating atmosphere.

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(Mrs. [REDACTED])