

General Busing form.
Letter.

Feb. 10, 1975

Dear Mayor White,

I think that the busing of Boston school children is deplorable but something must be done to solve the problems of educational inequities.

Racial balance seems to be the emotional, media-focused problem while the real problem is that the white schools are better. That's being simplistic but I believe if the educational facilities and opportunities were "equal" the racial mix would be a dead issue.

I offer the following suggestions:
1) stop the busing and pour all the millions of dollars allocated to it into upgrading the facilities in the poorer sections of Boston; and 2) see to it that the teachers in Boston are allocated to each school on a completely non-discriminatory basis. Rather than move all the children around all over the cities and suburbs move the teachers and

administrators. I am a firm believer in the theory that any large system, whether a corporation, military, government agency or school system, is only as good as the people at the lowest level who are dealing directly with the consumer, student or general public. e.g. a good teacher is far more important than a good principal or a good case worker in a welfare office than a good administrator who deals only with lower level workers and never the student or consumer. I believe if you took the teachers and principal out of an elementary school in Darien, Conn. or Newton, Mass. and put them en masse in the "worst" Boston elementary school that the level of performance and interest from students would rise dramatically and a lot of complaints would cease. The reason for this is simple the rich suburbs will not stand for any educational deficiencies. The parents are involved and will spend

large sums of money on anything vaguely connected with education. Anything but the best teachers do not last long because of the constant checking by parents, administrators and students. (The missing ingredient in the inner-city is not ~~better~~ administrators but rather that the parents are not totally involved enough to weed out the poor teachers before it is too late or more likely the parents do not even care. Also the students in the inner-city are most probably less communicative with their parents about school and the teachers. Even when the children are, the less-educated inner-city parents would find it hard to judge a good teacher from bad.) The city of Boston has many excellent teachers, many average teachers and more than their share of poor teachers. If one can believe the media reports (?), most of the excellent teachers are in white schools and poor in black or at least the ~~mix~~ of good

and bad is higher in white.

I believe that all teachers by grade or subject should be put into a lottery pool each year and then matched with available jobs. e.g. if there are 200 first grade classes, then they should be listed 1-200 and all 200 teachers put in a barrel and each drawn to match the spots (just like any other lottery, no bias should be built in just "pure" luck).

The teachers would scream but that would be a lot easier to handle than the parents, NAACP, busing, Federal Courts etc, especially with the estimated 200,000 unemployed teachers (most due to poor planning by Mass. State Teachers Colleges). The commuting distances in Boston are such that no matter where a teacher lives the commute to any school could never be termed unrealistic. Assignments would be changed each year which

I believe would help weed out the poorer teachers and administrators because the chances are much greater that they will run into responsible parents, administrators or other teachers before tenure (a vicious self-defeating system) and be weeded out of the system.

I believe if you held a teacher lottery all talk of discrimination in the quality of teachers would cease. If you coupled this system with a huge influx of money (Federal?) to upgrade the physical facilities a huge step forward to equal and more important quality education would have been taken.

What the Boston school problem needs most is a radical (bad choice of words) idea since all that has been proposed so far is a ridiculous failure and in the last analysis only the children are being hurt.

If you would like to discuss this further, I am always available either in Boston or at Gooch's on a weekend morning. I am at my best trying to think up new solutions to old problems when the old solutions no longer work - (very few old solutions seem to work anymore seems to be like the mosquitoes that become immune to the old pesticides!)

Sincerely,

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

BUZZARDS BAY, MASS.
02532

P.S. I can see your summer home as I write this and we across the bay back your stand on the Woody property 100%; Thanks for fighting that problem. I saw 1000 dead turkeys and the whole property 6 feet under water in 1954.