

REPORT: EDUCATION FOR PLURALISM

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School Districts Have Economic Clout. American school districts, which spend millions of dollars each year for products and services, can be a highly significant factor in bringing about employment gains for minority groups. An outstanding example is provided by the Detroit Public Schools.

As a condition of doing business with the Detroit Public Schools, each contractor or vendor must sign a fair employment practices agreement to indicate compliance with the policies of the Detroit Board of Education. These policies require that every employer with whom the Board does business must: (a) employ workers at the level of non-white representation equal to that in the area labor supply both in total work force and in each job category; or (b) agree to "an acceptable affirmative action plan with goals and timetables established to make satisfactory progress toward reaching that level." Implementation of these policies in Detroit has begun to result in notable gains for minorities.

Every school district, large and small, has economic clout. So it follows that the policies of a board of education play an important role—either positively or negatively, by what is done and by what is not done—in affecting the employment pattern for minorities (and for women too) in the local community as well as in the larger society.

Women and U.S. History. Over the years many educators and historians have expressed the need for a resource guide for the study of the history of women in the United States. Now, finally, one is being created. The National Endowment for the Humanities has awarded a

grant of \$277,000 to the University of Minnesota for this purpose. The guide will be based upon an extensive survey of research materials, which will alert archivists and librarians throughout the country to the needs of scholars who are interested in providing a more prominent place to the experience of women in written history.

Ethnic Heritage Studies Projects. Federal HEW officials recently announced that grants totaling \$1.8 million have been funded for 49 Ethnic Heritage Studies projects across the country. The program, provided under Title IX of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, is "intended to help promote greater appreciation of our nation's multiethnic society."

Some projects and project developers: "Ethnic Studies Curriculum Guidelines," National Council for the Social Studies; "Minneapolis Multiethnic Curriculum Project," Minneapolis Public Schools; "Ethnic Art Studies of Native Americans (Sioux) in Nebraska," University of Nebraska; "Community Action for Cultural Pluralism," National Conference of Christians and Jews.

It is interesting to note that under HEW

* Editor's Note: *This column offers a review of fair and unfair treatment accorded women, the poor, and racial/ethnic minorities in American schools. As educators and citizens we need to share ideas, programs, strategies, experiences in the continuing battle against bias, discrimination, and injustice.*

Readers are invited to submit appropriate items to: Dr. Max Rosenberg, Detroit Public Schools, 5057 Woodward Ave., Detroit, Michigan 48202.

guidelines, every project is required to show evidence of community cooperation, including the creation of a local advisory council.

A Better Chance To Learn. Bilingual-bicultural education is "the program of instruction which currently offers the best vehicle for large numbers of language minority students who experience language difficulty in our schools"—this is the basic conclusion of a major study recently prepared by the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights. The report, titled *A Better Chance To Learn: Bilingual-Bicultural Education*, clarifies the problems of "language minority" children—Mexican Americans, Puerto Ricans, Native Americans, and Asian Americans. The problems these children face are many: segregated education, low teacher expectations, cultural incompatibility with dominant culture-oriented curricula, educational neglect, and lack of proficiency in the language of instruction.

What is the answer for language minority children? According to the U.S. Civil Rights Commission, the answer is bilingual-bicultural education. Why? Because the bilingual-bicultural curriculum can provide the skills, knowledge, and English language proficiency needed. The integration of the native culture

in the curriculum results in increased pride and confidence, and serves as a source of encouragement and understanding. "Moreover, it can provide opportunities for all children to learn about and experience the benefits of a multicultural society."

In Brief . . .

Curriculum and Instruction After Desegregation: Form, Substance, and Proposals is a new series of essays dealing with step two of the desegregation process. The editors, Joe L. Boyer and James B. Boyer, summarize the needed curriculum thrust in these words: "differences are to be appreciated rather than challenged." . . . One good resource for locating Mexican American learning materials and studies: The Chicano Library and Education Researchers, 1300 S. Wabash Avenue, Chicago, Illinois 60605. . . . A growing number of workshops on multicultural education are being held in cities across the nation. For example, a Leadership Training Workshop on Cultural Diversity was held in Michigan recently. That workshop, which was held under the auspices of the School Management Institute, provided training for the Adult Basic Education staff of six states. □

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