

88/CL comm

Jody: *Haver*

I thought it might help if I gave you my answers to your questions; so you have some idea at least what'll be said at the meeting tomorrow.

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I see these questions, first. Then, my answers.

Who start/run the school?

We have to be clear there are these two dimensions to the 'charter' idea . . . two answers to the question, "What group should . . .?"

We can be really open about who could start/run a school so long as there's always the requirement for a governmental body to sponsor it. So I'd answer:

- Teachers
- Principals and other administrators
- A private 'group', that could be either non-profit or commercial
- An existing school, public or private
- Not a parent group

Who sponsor the school?

Some legitimate governmental body. Including: the SDE. A public college or university. A unit of general government. An ECSU. An education district. An intermediate district. And, of course, an existing local school district; inside or outside its borders.

There must be multiple potential sponsors. Absolutely no single metropolitan board.

Where?

In the Twin Cities area. In the central cities. In the suburbs, if the school is a desegregation magnet school.

In space available in the general market. Or in a public building. Or in a specifically public school building.

Basically, no restrictions. The essential idea is for the school to come to the kids, independent of the location of existing schools. Leave the decision to the school and its sponsor.

For what kids?

General enrollment. We want integration, after all.

Some might be tailored for at-risk kids; as the contract schools

and programs are now in Minneapolis (and soon will be in St. Paul).

### Under what rules?

Only those essential 'rules' necessary to define a public school: Not segregated. Not selective by ability. Basically: follow the 'rules' in 1988 enrollment-options law, which limits "criteria" to space and prohibits criteria from relating to characteristics of the student (except for racial balance).

Follow policy in recent state law about home schools . . . which is: state not specify the how; only measure results.

It is emphatically to be a different playing field. Reject talk about "level playing field".

### How evaluated?

Again, follow law on home schools: State can give any test it wants, so long as it gives the same test to the comparable students in traditional public schools. Shut school down if kids fail to perform as well.

### Why do this?

Desegregation requires quality. Quality requires innovation. Innovation requires freedom to be different. Freedom to be different requires new schools under new sponsors.

Nothing will prevent the traditional public schools from changing as fast as they want to change. We simply will not restrict the rate of change to the rate at which they are willing to change.

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You might want to look up the law on home schools; or have somebody tell you that story.

The effort to ensure an equal education for the children of people of color now requires that we deal with the quality of education directly.

Over the past 40 years we have tried to do this in-directly. We have assumed that the quality of education in the system as structured was OK; so that if the minority kids could just get into that system their education would be OK too.

That assumption no longer holds. (1)

So: We must now deal directly with the quality of the schooling in the classrooms those children attend.

If we can make those classrooms successful classrooms then those schools will be schools that most people will be happy to have their children attend.

So: The route to integration, today, runs through the door marked "Quality".

(1) There are several reasons. It simply may not be true (as we have assumed) that the kind of schooling that works for middle-class kids will also work for kids of a different culture. Most important, though: In many schools and in many big-city districts there is no longer the traditional 'majority' for the kids to get in to: The minority has become a new majority.

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(Re: the chartered public schools)

This is a radical proposal.

We make it because the problems of inequity and low-performance are rooted in the structure of public education.

I want to say this carefully, so you understand it is an attack on the structure and not on the people. But it is important to say it.

In the big urban areas the traditional structure makes public education a deeply inequitable system. The division of the community into districts stratifies the students by income and therefore, largely, by race.

The traditional structure also makes public education an ineffective system. It allows the schools to take their students for granted. Educators like to say that "all kids can learn". But the schools do not fail if the students fail.

Our proposal for the chartered public schools is designed to attack both those serious problems -- of inequity and low-performance -- in public education as presently structured.