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Community Evaluates School Personnel High

See related story 1-A

EDITOR'S NOTE: Following is the last in a series of four articles, by Community Research Associates based on its survey of people living in the Birmingham School District. The survey resulted in a report on the community's thinking toward financing of schools, curriculum, background of the community and school personnel.

The community's evaluation of the services rendered by the public school personnel is very high. At the same time, some suggestions have been offered concerning ways in which the schools might further improve their services to students and to the community.

An Evaluation of School Personnel—Local residents were asked to summarize their impressions of the work of the school board, the superintendent and his staff and then the teachers.

These ratings were made on a five-point scale and proved to be so similar for the three groups that a composite table is presented below. This table represents within a percentage point the community's evaluation of the work of the school board, or the teachers, or the superintendent and his staff.

"Generally speaking, how would you evaluate the work of the Birmingham School Board?" (Superintendent and his staff; teachers)

Good	85%
Fair	13
Not very good	2
Total	100%

Request for a Superior Instructional Program—When people in the community were asked to specify ways in which the board, the administration, and teachers might improve their services to students and to the community, two-thirds could offer no suggestions. The majority of these people do not have children enrolled in the Birmingham Public Schools.

Of those who ventured advice, a large majority stressed the desire for a superior instructional program. More specifically, emphasis was placed upon the hiring and retention of superior teachers and upon a reduced teacher-student ratio which would permit more individual attention to children and contribute to warmer teacher-student relationships.

The two tables below are simple compilations of suggestions offered to the school board and to the superintendent and his staff.

It may be noted that over one-half of the requests to the board concerned a high quality instructional program, while one-third were requests for careful economic planning. Two-thirds of the suggestions to the superintendent and his staff were related to a superior instructional program.

Ways in which the present school board might improve school policies or render better services to the community.

Improve the quality of instruction...	55%
Hire and retain very good teachers	24%
More individual attention to students	13
Stress a sound acadamic program	11
Warmer student-teacher relations	7
Totals	55%
Economize (stress careful economic planning)	34
Communicate (Improve community-board relations by keeping the community well informed about school affairs)	11
	100%

Ways in which the superintendent and his staff might improve their services to students and to the community.

Improve the quality of instruction...	66%
Hire and retain excellent teachers	44%
Better discipline	14
Improved counselling service	10
	68%
Communicate	16
Economize	8
Permit more community use of school buildings	8
Total	100%

Suggestions for the Teachers are of a similar nature to those offered the board and the administration. The quality of the instructional program would be decidedly upgraded in the minds of a good many people if a reduced teacher-student ratio were obtained.

It may be observed in the table below that heaviest emphasis falls upon more individual attention to students, and to warmer, more personal student-teacher relationships. The three ways in which the Birmingham Public School teachers might improve their services to students and to the community:

More individual attention to slow, gifted, handicapped children	23%
Warmer teacher-student relations	23
Better discipline	14
High proficiency in subject matter	15
Improve marking, grading, exam systems	3
Total	100%

One of the difficulties for the teacher in fulfilling community expectations concerning her role may be noted in the table above.

Whereas one-quarter of the people offering suggestions to teachers stress the importance of friendlier and warmer ("less authoritarian") relations with students, 14 per cent request firmer treatment and greater supervision and control.

These data probably reflect the divided philosophy in our culture regarding child-rearing practices—the "permissive" and child-centered family as against the traditional or "paternalistic" orientation.

REVIEW

This and the preceding articles have attempted to sample the flavor of some 200 tables compiled in this study. We have tried to stress the following major points.

1. The population composition of the Birmingham area is a type that is usually associated with personal values supportive of sound educational programs. It is an upper socio-economic community that is "well integrated", as measured by the extent to which people participate in community affairs. However, the factor of high residential mobility depresses the integration factor somewhat, and is also associated with a failure of the newcomer to act on his positive values toward education by not voting in school elections.
2. The selective nature of this population is manifest in the willingness of residents to assume local responsibility for both the building and the operational costs necessitated by the community's growing family of children. Moreover, the people of the community are unique in that a considerably higher importance is attached to the educational program of the schools than to the school building program.
3. In view of the importance placed upon the educational program, it is all the more significant that this facet of the public schools is given a good rating by local residents.
4. An evaluation of the personnel of the public schools results in a very good and almost identical rating accorded the school board, administration and teachers. The importance of "beefing up" the instructional program through the hiring and retention of superior teachers has been expressed by a minority of the population, but a minority composed primarily of people with children in the local public schools.

The Birmingham Eccentric
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Municipal Court In Birmingham

Before Judge Edward B. Emery
Friday

Peter Gurski, 36, of Livonia, charged $6 fine and court costs for prohibited U turn.

Robert J. Templin, 33, of 5607 Westwood, Birmingham, charged $6 fine and court costs for prohibited U turn.

Wednesday

Bernard Mannisto, 19, of Farmington, charged $9 fine and court costs for speeding.

David Campbell, 41, of Pontiac, charged $18 fine and court costs for disorderly person.

Rex Freeman Liles, 31, of Southfield, charged $28 fine and court costs for disorderly person.

William V. Coffin, 18, of 1150 Puritan, Birmingham, charged $20 fine and court costs for speeding and violation of stop sign.

Richard A. Hokemeier, 1794 Hazel, Birmingham, charged $18 court costs and given a year's probation for disorderly person.

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2-Hour Parking Limit Placed on Park St. in City

You can't park all day on the west side of Park St. between Oakland and Euclid anymore.

City Commissioners Monday night accepted the recommendation of Police Chief Ralph Moxley to remove all-day parking in that block and to replace it with two-hour parking from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. every day except Sundays and holidays.

The change was requested by property owners who complained that all-day parking created a problem of congestion, danger and unsightliness.

Parking on the east side of the street already is restricted to two hours.

MIT Club to Meet

The Massachusetts Institute of Technology Club will meet at 5:30 p.m. Wednesday at the Wyandotte Chemical Corporation for a round-table discussion. T. F. Morrow and D. J. MacDonnell, local residents, wil participate in the meeting.

MI 4-1100 is a number for you to remember. Call it today and place your Birmingham Eccentric classified.

Delay Decision On Dorchester Improvement

"I thought this was an exact science," said Birmingham City Commissioner Carl Ingraham.

He referred to the practice of using a level to establish grade.

Commissioners heard conflicting reports on this matter Monday night.

City Manager L. R. Gare and City Engineer William T. Killeen gave one report, and Jack H. Lawrence, of 1850 Dorchester, gave another.

On the basis of the City's survey of Lawrence's property, Gare recommended that the commission deny Lawrence's request to install at his own cost a road base in front of his property.

Drainage would be a problem, he said, if Lawrence put in the improvement without insalling drainage structures.

BUT, SAID Lawrence, his survey showed that the grade was such that water would drain sufficiently and there would be no problem.

Commissioners instructed Gare to meet with Lawrence this week, to have the city engineer survey the property again, this time in Lawrence's presence, and to report back next week.

Once they consider the report, they will have to determine whether to adhere to the City's policy of not permitting property owners to install road improvements.

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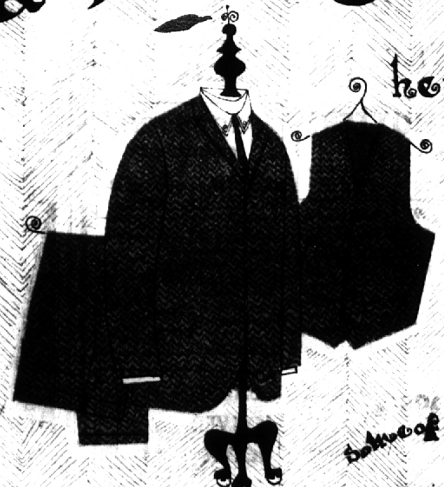
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