How School Busing Works in One Town

By GERTUDE SAMUELS

BERKELEY, Calif. — Every day of school, more than 17 million children, or more than one-third of the country's total enrollment, go to school by bus. But which kids specifically ride, and why, is not an obvious or simple matter.

In Berkeley, Calif., the proposal that would send white children from the suburbs to inner-city black schools this year has created tension and bitterness. In Mobile, Ala., continued negative publicity has sapped the opening of the academic year as white students suffer from racial slights.

In Berkeley, the process of busing itself has led some black students to stay away from school altogether.

I came to Berkeley not long ago because this metropolitan city has maintained a successful busing program for two years. It is the first city of more than 100,000 popu-

lation (121,100) and a single school system (45.7

square miles) that has achieved complete total integration in all its classrooms.

Since September 1969, the Berkeley Unified School District has been transporting nearly half of its ele-

mentary pupils ($600,000 this year) to and from school by bus. Prior to 1965 in junior and senior high has been desegregated; now the lower grades are also integrated. The younger black pupils, kindergarten through fifth grade, are bused to four "better" high schools, instead of the older white children, fourth through sixth grades, are bused to the "worse" schools, where they have a higher concentration of black pupils.

By impressed underestimate -

"The 1968 Census showed Berkeley's population to be 45.7 per cent Chinese, 25.4 per cent white, 11.1 per cent Mexican-American, 11 per cent Negro, 3.5 per cent "other," and only 1.6 per cent Japanese. This is the only school system in the state where the two largest racial groups are less than 50 per cent.

The "over 1,000 bus riders, who take the bus from every part of the city, are almost entirely white. They have been bused since the fall of 1968, when the city's schools were temporarily closed due to the racial violence in other areas. The bus riders are housed in three separate buildings: one for elementary, one for middle school, and one for high school. Each building has its own gymnasium, library, and cafeteria.

The buses leave the school at 8 a.m. and return at 3 p.m. Each bus carries about 15 students, who ride in pairs or small groups. The riders are supervised by a teacher or aide, who keeps order and helps with any problems that may arise.

The program has been controversial, with some parents opposing it and others supporting it as a way to achieve racial balance at the schools.

The parents of the bus riders have been surveyed extensively, and the results are mixed. Some parents are happy with the program, while others are concerned about the safety of their children.

The program has been successful in desegregating the schools, but it has also been expensive. The city spends $800,000 a year on transportation costs alone.

The program is expected to continue for at least another year, with some changes expected to be made. The city is considering alternative methods of desegregation, such as transferring students within the same school, or forming "regional" schools that would be accessible to all students.
School busing in one town

(Continued from Page 39) rather be in Longfellow, because it’s in my neighborhood."

Some kids chant a song: "My mother gave me a nickel! My father gave me a quarter! My sister gave me a boyfriend Who kissed me all the time."

On a hilltop overlooking San Francisco Bay, we reach a campus whose charm is equal to third grade. Its gracious two-story Tudor-style main building, modeled after an English estate, stands behind thick shrubbery. The large pillared porch is well equipped.

"Bye Marie, . . . Karen," Mrs. Goria says, helping the children off. They chorus affectionately, good-byes. To Mrs. Goria these are "my children." "Have a nice day," she calls.

THE city that has adopted this elaborate busing scheme is one of the least in the country. Berkeley has a temperate climate and splendid vistas of green hills, exotic gardens and the Golden Gate Bridge. But were it not for some ghetto like those in New York, Chicago and Washington; yet the southwest section of town, while no slum, is certainly segregated. Berkeley is a fair-housing ordinance so as to maintain residential segregation; Negro unemployment sometimes rises to 20 per cent compared with a white-unemployment rate of 5 per cent.

Berkeley’s best-known asset is the University of California, grandfather of the student and investment and biggest employer in town, providing jobs for about one-third of the 50,000 working residents — from professors, to janitors, to guards, clerks, tradesmen, etc. The city is a community of contradictions: old-timers, retired persons and Birch Society types contrast with Nobel Prize winners and educators with liberal and radical views; with the long-haired, scruffy young adults of Tele¬
graphics, Art Haas and Black Panthers whose national headquarters are now here.

Busing and the integrated school program implements didn’t happen in one overnight. They would never have come about without the persistent, aggressive initiatives of leaders in the black community and representatives to the Board of Education.

Liberalization began in 1961 when black and white groups favoring a new educational approach met and chose delegates to represent them at the "New" of Education in Massachusetts, His gov.

*New Commissioner of Education in Massachusetts. His gov.

berkeley’s now 3-4-6 program reorganized the entire ele-

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mentary school system by dividing the city into four attendance zones, each containing one school (from nursery through sixth grade) and several K-3 (kindergarten through third grade) schools. The busing pattern was developed on the computer by creating a computerized punch card for each school child who was prepared containing information on age, race, address and school and was fed into computer and the Municipal Transportation Processing Center. The results of this study guided the school district's Office of Transportation in working out "ride zones" for 3,500 children. These zones covered routes and stopping points where buses could pick up and deliver children safely at designated times. ..."Walk zones" were similarly devised for 5,100 children who lived within walking distance of their schools. Before the busing plan went into effect, each parent received a card explaining about routes and schedules. Parents were even taken to see buses to ease any fears concerning the safety of their children.

Along with the new busing plan, Berkeley undertook another innovation, an approach to classroom teaching embodying the concept of heterogeneity. For Berkeley, in fact, the new program's "theoretically integrated is the heterogeneous classroom with its basic proposition that, in a pluralistic society, mutual benefits accrue to all races when they are brought together for learning purposes.

Before integration, the hill teachers had worked with homogeneous classes of white children representing basically the same socio-economic background and middle-class values and grouped according to ability and performance within the classroom. Down in the flats, teachers, both black and white, had similarly worked with their predominantly black children, many of whom were forced to operate behind the white children in terms of the basic skills—reading, language, mathematics. Under the ability-

The new program reorganized the entire elementary system. The busing pattern was developed by computer.
grouping program, sometimes called "tracking," children of the elementary schools eventually entered the more rigid "tracking" systems of the junior and senior high schools. This practice could, and often did, label a child for his entire school life ("He's a No. 3" or "he's a No. 7, the 'dumb' track.")

According to Mrs. Harriett G. Wood, a black administrator who taught here for a dozen years and is now director of elementary education: "The basic problem was that black kids had been getting an inferior education before integration. In their old schools, there was a sort of overriding, debilitating, low self-image that becomes a kind of vicious, self-fulfilling prophecy. Kids should see themselves in the whole society."

As worked out here, heterogeneity, considered the ideal integration, deliberately created racially balanced classes. These were not merely composites of all races but also contained a broad range of intellectual ability, all the way from mentally gifted children to the slower learners in the "normal" range. This approach was adopted partly because of the black community's demand that its children receive education of the same quality that the whites enjoyed (tests had shown that black children in black schools simply did not do as well as whites). It also recognized the fact that in real, everyday life people have to deal with many racial types and many kinds of mental ability. Berkeley wanted all of its children to function adequately in that real society.

The 1968 changeover meant that educators had to find effective ways of teaching in a class composed of children of different socio-economic backgrounds, different achievement levels and different life styles. The former ability groupings were dropped, for it was recognized that, without breaking up the old "tracking" system which separated quick learners from slower ones, busing would still mean segregated classes and perpetuate the old superiority and inferiority feelings.

"Tracking" was replaced to some extent by "performance groups," but these were so flexible that, as children improved in reading, math and science, they could move freely from one grouping to another within the same class. As Theodore F. Blitz, principal of Hillside, put it: "The old homogenous class tended to take away any educational stimulation and opportunity from those who were designated for the lower track. Our goal now is to help children to function academically in the heterogeneous class, whether at a study assignment, a work assignment, a reading assignment, or independently.

"This is a vast improvement. We're finding that our able students are going just as far, and making just the same kind of progress, moreover, as they did in the basic skills before integration. There's been no sacrifice, because able learners go ahead in spite of what any school..."
Classes were racially balanced; ability grouping was abandoned

is doing. They have the abil-
ity to learn and to create a
class atmosphere in which they—and others—can learn.”

Page two: "As the no-
flexible, heterogeneous class
in action, seven children in
a second-grade reading group,
a unit ranging from slow to very fast, were doing not only a
main idea in a paragraph
and learning vowel sounds.
Later a group in the same
class, all accelerated readers,
worked on some ideas about
horses, sharing their informa-
tion together. These advanced
readers were going at their
own pace, too.

VISITED many classes in
Berkeley, focusing mainly on
two schools—Hillside (K-3), a
prestigious hill school once
communist, now a racially
diverse, and Longfellow (4-6)
in the flats, because it is the
largest intermediate school,
to which Hillside eventually
sent most of its language
students.

Hillside has 375 children, 44
per cent of whom are black,
and 21 teachers, including
four part-time specialist aides
for remedial reading. The
white pupils are mainly from
hill or mid-Berkeley families
where often both parents
have university degrees. The
black children, coming from
poor, working-class families.
The emphasis at Hillside, as
at other elementary schools, is
on reading, for many of the
black children are lagging
their use of language, a seri-
ous handicap. Reading and
the language skills are, of
course, essential in coping
with the considerable social
and educational pressure.
When you can't understand
what is going on in the class-
room, it becomes too painful
to be there, the youngsters
begin to slide and the result is
often avoidance, anger, escape,
truan-cy or worse.

Under one technique adopt-
ed at Hillside, teachers em-
ploy a "language-experience
approach"—the child's own
vocabulary becomes his read-
ing vocabulary. A first-grader,
for example, may be familiar
ated by racing cars and have
words relating to them in his
vocabulary. Instead of being
compelled to study words fa-
miliar to boys and girls who
live in the suburbs but which
he can't grasp or "see," the
younger is invited to tell a
story in his own words before
reading it. The teacher types
out his story and then helps
him to read it, identifying the
words and learning the sounds
the words make.

In the language-arts class
of Mrs. Patsy Tanabe, a Chi-
nese-American, the desks of
the children, black and white,
boys and girls—are pushed
close together. Nine-year-old
Lauren was describing her story
for the class: "I went on a hike. We
were crossing a river when
Dennis spotted a burned-out
tree and went the long way
around it."

A black boy, listening intently,
breaks in with questions about
the jungle. Lynne explains
she invented that part.

There had been a tend-
cyency for the Tanabe," she
later, "for the more verbal
white kids to speak more often—
they've got more to say.
The black kids tended to list
what their husband and kids
as actively." So Mrs. Tanabe
devised her own incentives to
encourage the black pupils
(and some white kids) to be
more verbal. She has a "Speech
certificate" bearing an impres-
sive gold seal. Chil-
children could earn this by bring-
ing in original stories about
their families, reading
their stories to the class. Now
many more black children,
working for a certificate, are
volunteering to speak out and
share their ideas.

"I'm getting the ones who
have never spoken even one
word in class," Mrs. Tanabe
reports. "They're excited,
and they're good talkers now."

IN the room of Mrs. Mar-
garet Jukes, a large, vibrant
woman, six teachers and three
children are all teachers,
books by the score are pilled
helter-skelter on chairs,
crates, window ledges, desks
and occasional tables. One
child teaches second and third
grades together in tandem.
With the changeover to the
heterogeneous class, such
arrangements continue, com-
ing two or more grades, are
not uncommon. Mrs. Jukes
has found them "very exciting,
very challenging."

Every child in the room is
11 "high potentials," includ-
ing second-graders doing
third-grade work, and two so-
called E.H. (emotionally han-
dness) grade children.

"The beginning of this
year worried me," she said.
"There were some children so
educationally depressed by
not reading C.A.T. Now
they're doing beautifully, and
that's what matters to me,
the growth of the children.
Many of them don't have
books in their homes. So, as
you can see, I make books
and materials available to
them. When they come to
me they can borrow a book,
"June Long, a young, mini-
skirted black teacher with a

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red Afro cut, now on leave to work on her law degree at the University of Santa Clara, cited the advisory committee to have "disregarded Berkeley's most important tool for orienting teachers in the new methods: an in-service training program in minority history and designed to help teachers, white and black, who may have hangups about racially mixed classes."

"As a black person in this culture," she told me in her soft, slightly cynical tones, "I am not interested in helping develop this cultural ghetto out of black children. I am interested in the positives of a school environment—in the honest exchange and sharing of life styles and beliefs and values. I'm concerned that children learn to think—and I don't mean think what I think or what I tell you to think—but to use the basic tools to think independently."
"DOWN THE HILL"—Richard Hunter, youngest principal in the system, heads Longfellow School (grades 4-6) in Berkeley's black neighborhood. The school is a laboratory for teachers training at the University of California.

"with some sixth grade children who don't know the difference between a sentence and a question, all the way up to children doing compound sentences and brilliantly creative reports."

"But I've learned, too," she went on suddenly. "Like what?"

"Like kids are kids! I had fears of how I was going to handle this diversity. I had impressions — what to beware of, the emphasis on the needs of the blacks. And it turned out," she went on quietly, "they were... kids. The main difference I found out about them was that they were poor.

"Now I guess it's me trying to meet the needs of these very divergent children."

"I can do it. I'm seeing results. I have one boy, 10 years old and black, he was a frightened child, a grade level below the class. He'll never set the world on fire. He had great difficulty in listening and then translating anything into action. He made a lot of growth this year. He needs polish, but I can't keep him busy enough. I give him five days to do a report, and he brings it in within three. Before busing he would have seen only black kids, poor work habits, poor school models, like himself. It wasn't the 'in' thing to learn as it is now."

A large black girl of 10 came up to listen. She hung on Miss Cheeseman, then shook her up with: "My cousin, he's 17, and he's in jail. Someone put a gun at his stomach and him and my cousin are in jail for disturbing the peace." She said it routinely, as though relating a simple fact of life in the flats.

HEADING the staff and a symbol of the new order is 31-year-old Richard Hunter, youngest principal in the district. A tall, dynamic black man with a high Afro, he is a well-known figure in classes and on the playground in his brightly-colored shirts and blazers. He taught in the Berkeley and neighboring Richmond schools and is currently working on his doctorate at the University of California.

"I'm aiming for the sort of experience here," he said, "that really turns kids on, provides them with the tools they need to be successful in living and later in working. Too often in school, teachers turn students off. Putting black and white children side by side in a classroom is only a first step. The significant thing is to get them to relate to each other, speak to each other, care about each other. That is our role as educators. When these human relationships become real, then we're moving on our basic objective, which is integration. This will cut across the whole district then, and not just the classrooms."

At Longfellow, as in many other schools I visited, adult volunteers have been helping as instructional aides, some for pay (three days a week), some "on their own" for the pure fun of tutoring. The district's School Resource Volunteers—parents, university students, other residents—ins-

(Continued on Page 58)
(Continued from Page 55) creased from 600 in 1968 to nearly 800 this year.

Mrs. Eileen Gilbert, who teaches fourth, fifth and sixth grades, in tandem at Columbus School in the poorest section of the flats, depends heavily on her aide as a bridge between school and community. "So many families think if you just send a child through the door, he'll learn," she said. "But every teacher knows that a child can learn depends on his experiences inside and outside the school." There are several black teacher-aiders at Columbus, young mothers from the neighborhoods, who had in-service training to help tutor slower children. "This gives the child a model whom they can easily identify with, and also helps to ease my way with the child.

Another of Mrs. Gilbert's innovations is the "learning team." Periodically the class is divided, (by placing the desks in circles) into six teams with the aptest students acting as leaders. In this way, as the teams study a math or science concept, the fast learners stimulate the slow ones, helping them to think through an idea. Mrs. Gilbert finds that such new teaching tools also give her insights as a teacher into the needs of individual pupils that she must meet.

IT is sometimes argued that Berkeley is atypical because of its unique assets, physical and intellectual. Yet for a city of its size with its ethnic and housing patterns, it does reflect the problems in interracial communities everywhere.

Before Berkeley undertook its busing program, five major objections were raised: (1) it would mean too much moving around for the children; (2) busing would be too complicated and inefficient; (3) it would provoke a white exodus; (4) disciplinary problems with strong racial problems, mostly develop; (5) the new sociological emphasis would dilute the quality of education.

In fact, recent studies show: (1) less than half of the elementary children are actually using buses; (2) routines were worked out so carefully that no bus takes more than half an hour for pickup and delivery of passengers. (The actual cost of busing is negligible—less than 1 per cent of the school budget, which works out to 45 cents a day per pupil.)

(3) Some people did move because of busing (they moved because of taxes, too,) but as shown in the schools' racial census, the shift was under 2 per cent. (4) There have been strong racial problems, mostly during the first year, but nothing of a significantly racial nature.

(5) It is the issue of academic achievement that has generated the most heat among educators and parents. It is, of course, too early for conclusive studies of the ultimate effect that Berkeley's new style of schooling will have on quality education. But local foes of integration, and some liberals, using a set of figures distributed six months after busing started, argue that academic excellence is being sacrificed. School board officials and other experts, using more current data, say there is no proof that this is happening.

The critics have attacked the school board for "the aca-

PHONICS LESSON—Many of Berkeley's black pupils are deficient in reading. The staff at Hillside School, where this boy is being tutored, includes four part-time remedial-reading experts.
demic failure of the Berkeley schools,” basing their charge chiefly on the decline in scores on the standard Stanford Achievement Test (S.A.T.) administered in the spring of 1969. According to the old S.A.T.

The high-scoring Negro students were exceptional—outstanding in their research work, creative not only in English but in science and mathematics, they were, it was argued, while actually they were only doing better than 67 out of 100.

But the school administrators and other educators argue that traditional data are not true indicators of achievement or potential, especially among minority populations, being based ar-

As a reading itself, school spokesmen point out, reading test figures are actually beginning to show a significant difference between performance of pre- and post-integration classes of the first six grades, whether the children are high or low achievers. Before integration, low-achieving students grew from 4 to 7 months in one year’s time. The post-integration rate, based on last spring’s figures, shows a growth of 6 to 11 months each year.

“For the future,” asks Dr. Arthur Dumbacher, coordi- nation of a group of officials of the Berk- eley schools, “why shouldn’t we hope for tests to assess growth in behavior and atti- tudes? These domains involving feelings, values, responses are harder to measure.”

NOW as court-ordered busing to desegregate schools continues to disrupt other communities, the fears and opposition are growing. In Berkeley they have declined. A survey con- ducted before busing indicated that 52 per cent of Berkeley’s parents opposed the idea (70 per cent of the Negro parents were in favor of it). Recent estimates show only about 30 per cent op- posed.

Dr. Richard Foster, successor to Mr. Sullivan as superin- tendent of schools, told me:

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“I’ve been here over a year and never get a question on the Berkeley: if judgment is past the stage of discussing that. Busing as an argument,” the heavy-set man with bushy, graying hair, said in a hard tone, “is an acceptable escape for racism. People can’t say they’re really afraid of having their children bus out, they’re afraid of the black so they use busing as their excuse for opposing integration. Yet in a pluralistic society, it’s through the early associations you learn loving—or pluralistic loving—isn’t it?”

It will take some years to make a reliable assessment of how the innovations in civic education and the educators feel about their system, but some reports are noteworthy. Superintendent Foster has noted among the “positive” the enthusiasm in the inquiring and dedicated spirit of the teachers, aides . . . lay citizens and volunteers, all working cooperatively to make school progress occur.”

Among the “negatives”: The feeling of some parents that bright children were not having a fair chance to rise, some偏低 teachers because of time spent on discipline problems; some teachers’ unrecognized biases toward both black and white children.

One principal on the other hand, has commented: “My most singular ‘positive’ is the growth I have seen in my teachers, as well as the students and human beings. Some have grown more than others; some had farther to go; some may never ‘make it.’ But for those who are working harder, learning more, teaching more, and growing more than I had ever anticipated. Those, I believe, are the true darings of them won't make it either, but most will.”

Mrs. Wood, director of elementary education, puts it this way: “We have been busing in every school, then every classroom is going to have proportionate black kids and white kids. So there was no need for any sac segments or even toward these former white or former black schools. That was one of the beauties of the two-way busing thing. Here in Berkeley teachers have learned from the integration experience and that parents have profited from it, too.”

It would assume that the public schools, even these at Berkeley, have not been immunized against all of the things of our society and the racism in us. There is latent racism in teachers throughout the nation, though I feel we have fewer of them in us. Good teachers are adjusting to children on the basis of what they actually need to learn, not on color. In poor teachers it shows up in their low expectation of blacks, a sort of rationalization that "the poor things can’t do this," say with a shrug, as if accepting a half-done paper from a black, while insisting that the Caucasian student perform as directed.”

Among the 1,000 teachers working in the Berkeley schools, there is today a 10 per cent per cent turnover (leaves of absence, resignations, resignations)—the same turnover rate as before busing. Although last spring there were only 24 openings on the teaching staff, there are now more than 8,000 applications.

Among those still firmly opposed to Berkeley’s program of busing is Dr. Arthur R. Jensen, the U. of C.’s controversial educational psychologist, who maintains that genetic differences are hereditary and results in lower I.Q. scores among blacks taking intelligence tests.

“I think that the schools by themselves are not going to build an integrated society,” Dr. Jensen says. “But greater equality of occupational opportunities, enforcement of open housing laws—those are natural integration in the schools. In some places it could take a hundred of years. In others it shouldn’t take long. I suppose President Nixon and Vice President Agnew on this matter of preserving the neighborhood schools. Neighborhoods happen to be the economic, and because of this, racial in aspect.”

Unreconciled to the new program is Michael Cul- more, Jr., the editor of the Berkeley Gazette. “We certainly questioned busing, and we still do,” he says. “It was new and innovative, and it still is. The district really has a long-term, a descending spiral of academic achievement for several years. I personally attribute it to the changes in educational priorities—priority of school choice. The meaning integration of the races—becomes a first priority, and hard-core, basic skills—meaning reading is in second.”

Would he like to see Berkeley give up busing? “No. But so far we doubt...
that the district is delivering on its promise of quality education.”

On balance, one finds that the new type of schooling has been breaking down clichés while not living up to all the early expectations.

What Berkeley has certainly done is give a new dimension to school integration: the learning and working together of a group of diverse children in the same classroom, in meaningful numbers in a meaningful way.

And with busiing so widely accepted here, many people are now worrying more about the effect on the younger children, the older youth, and the hippies, who hang around the campus but are not students.

Dr. Alan Willner, professor of education at U.C., father of four and a strong advocate of the Berkeley program “because it’s morally right,” declares that he feels the students know what the people’s alienation, the dropouts, the use of drugs in this community is, and is an expert of the subterranean movements among youth today, but there certainly is a fairly widespread delegitimization of the Berkeley experiment among the university as well as the national Government.

More than 100 years after the end of the Civil War, and more than 15 years after the 1954 Supreme Court decision to desegregate the schools, there are black schools and there are white schools all over the country. Is Berkeley any worthier of imitation by other communities? Most people here seem to be saying yes, for there is no move to drop busiing to integrate, and the enthusiasm to it has been declining.

In her small frame house in the flats section, Mrs. Mary Johnson, president of the local branch of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, whose 8-year-old grandson, Michael Dunlevy, is in grade school, reflects on the years of struggle in Berkeley before busing, and the controversy over busing now raging throughout the country.

“Our children will be something to watch,” she said.

“The Berkeley children are recognizing that their likes and dislikes are identical and there’s nothing racial about them, contrary to what they may have been at home through myths and prejudice. It’s my hope that 10 years from now, these kids — black and white — will be the nucleus of a new and a better society, learning and benefiting from this experience. And had it in their earliest, formative years.”