

# School Board considering plan to help minority achievement

By AUGUST MAGGY  
I-G Staff Writer

The Berkeley school board is considering asking the federal government to finance a \$1.8 million proposal aimed at improving the low achievement scores of minority students.

Initial school board reaction to the proposal was negative, however.

The school district's office of project planning and development, which wrote the complex and lengthy proposal, calls the project "as monumental as integration itself."

THE OFFICE, under the direction of Jay Ball, says the proposal represents the "third phase of the desegregation process here." The other two stages were the busing program started in 1968 and the subsequent pilot programs tackling the problems of "minority under-achievement," according to Ball's office.

The proposal, which will appear in its final form before the school board next Tuesday, is an application for funding by the U.S. Office of Education via the Emergency Schools Assistance Act

(ESAA).

Ball delivered a preliminary report on the ESAA proposal last night in a special board meeting attended by members Marc Monheimer, Mary Jane Johnson and Louise Stoll. Rev. Hazaiah Williams and outgoing member Samuel Markowitz were absent.

The three board members and a handful of people from the audience had harsh words for the report. Speakers from the audience in general claimed the report lacked input from parents and scorned some of the specific

programs within the project.

MRS. STOLL was more blunt. "This is beyond doubt the most jargon-filled document that I have ever laid eyes on in the two years I've been a board member."

She said the proposal is a "nonproject at best and a disaster at worst."

"It shows little or no relationship to the needs of this district," she added.

Mrs. Johnson, who is black, says the proposal is "stereotyping black kids and setting them apart."

"This district is capable of  
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By MARK T  
I-G Staff

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The INDEPENDENT

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# NOT INQUIRY DEMAND

## PROJECT

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the land which is assessed by the county to have a fair market value of \$50,000.

A 90 per cent option is virtually unheard of, especially because it bought the city no equity whatsoever in the property.

The money was paid to realtor Leonard Wallace, instead of a title company which is the usual practice.

**YESTERDAY, MODEL** Cities board associate Ray Dobard alleged that the deal was negotiated through Edward Harris, treasurer and chairman of the Hardeman-Markey administrative committee, who also, according to Dobard, is a "salesman" in Wallace's real estate office.

Dobard vehemently insisted that Harris' involvement was a clear case of conflict of interest and he implied that fraud may be involved as well.

A thoroughly irate Dobard blasted yesterday that the council should cancel the agreements "and retrieve the taxpayers' money because it has been fraudulently used."

Instead, the council voted to exercise the corporation's options on the land. The council was forced to move fast because one of the options expires Thursday, another Monday, a third in May and the fourth on June 8.

The council resolution released another \$5,000 to complete purchase of the properties, which ironically include 1812 Fairview St., home of the Earth People's Commune and source of a bitter City Council hearing recently and

## MINORITY ACHIEVEMENT

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something better," she said.

Mrs. Johnson, who agreed with Mrs. Stoll that the proposal "lacks sensitivity," said the proposal contained numerous "put-downs for black kids."

Monheimer, in noting his fellow board members' reactions to the proposal and the absence of any support for the proposal from the audience said "the direction" of the report is "not where it should have been."

"THIS DISTRICT is not really interested in grantsmanship anymore. It is interested in substantive programs," he said.

Both Monheimer and Mrs. Johnson indicated that their remarks were not directed personally at those involved in writing the massive document.

The Community Education Advisory Committee, established in March of this year, meets tonight to review the proposal and will meet again Friday to prepare recommendations and comments, which will be available for school board consideration next Tuesday.

The school district must submit the grant application, if approved by the board, next Wednesday.

As it stands, Ball's office will have to do a drastic rewrite of the proposal in order to satisfy most members of the school board.

Ball's report says the proposal was not developed "to offer another innovative program."

"IT IS TO take a hard look at existing programs and another hard look at the con-

tinuing needs that result from desegregation, and then combine successful aspects of these programs in a comprehensive plan to meet continuing unmet needs."

The ESAA funding is designed specifically for school districts involved in the desegregation process.

Minority youngsters in Berkeley, as the last test scores show, are below the national norms in the basic skills levels achieved by non-minority students.

Test scores by minority students here, however, have shown a noticeable improvement since 1968.

Dr. Arthur Dambacher, coordinator of research and evaluation for the school district, last night told the board that Berkeley is one of the few urban centers where minority students are improving in basic skills.

THE ESAA proposal, for the most part, does not call for additional school personnel but would utilize existing staff.

The proposal is broken down in five school district "needs" categories:

"1. To end minority under-achievement through more active involvement of students in the education process.

"2. To end minority un-

der-achievement through support to teachers in innovative programs in math and reading and to provide consistency between math and reading programs.

"3. To support home learning.

"4. To increase the capacities of administrators and the teacher support staff to help teachers eliminate minority underachievement.

"5. To build all components into a comprehensive plan coordinating, consolidating and expanding all efforts to eliminate minority under-achievement by working with each student's total environment."

Ball's report says the project will "demonstrate that school districts need not despair when they realize that their problems only begin with the integration of schools."

"Rather, they can see by Berkeley's model that desegregation may well be the very catalyst necessary to transform an antiquated educational system into a true learning environment that meets kids where their needs are," according to the report.

The ESAA preliminary proposal was the only item on last night's agenda. The public hearing was required under ESAA guidelines.

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## UC notes big earthquake

The University of California seismology station here Tuesday reported a "large" earthquake on the northwest coast of Ecuador.

UC officials said the temblor registered 6.5 on the Richter Scale. It was recorded at 1:30 p.m.

At Boulder, Colo., the National Earthquake Information Center said the quake occurred 240 miles west of Bogota, Columbia.