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# Berkeley's Yellow School Buses To Become Symbol of Integration

By JAMES BOW,  
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SACRAMENTO (AP) — The yellow school bus carries much of the load in integrating California schools, but teachers, parents and school administrators don't agree on how

far or how fast the bus should travel.  
Berkeley, Riverside, Sacramento and Sausalito schools are among the state's pioneers in moving children from Negro or Mexican-American neighborhoods to all-white classes.

But bigger cities such as Los Angeles, San Francisco, Oakland and San Diego do not require busing for integration, although they have some limited desegregation programs.  
Federal education officials say California schools lead the nation in integration.

But last year then-President Dorman L. Commons of the State Board of Education said California may be making no progress at all toward desegregation of schools.  
Commons referred to a State Education Department survey of the racial balance in schools

during 1966-67. The survey showed 88 per cent of Negro children, 78 per cent of Mexican-American pupils and 61 per cent of white, English-speaking children attended California schools that are basically segregated.  
The list of California cities

adopting or considering integration plans is "long. And the outcry over busing children away from their neighborhood schools in such cities as Berkeley and Sacramento has been loud at times.  
But many educators say the  
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neloer long lists not controversy over busing and neighborhood schools tell the real story.

Los Angeles is too vast to make integration by school bus work, says one school official. But the Los Angeles school board has adopted a policy to work toward desegregation.

## Negro View

Jack Gillean, information officer for city schools, adds: "You are aware that not every Negro wants integration." He reports that the district had a voluntary busing program a few years ago but it didn't work.

The resistance from both the majority and minority community is rising, generally says Theodore Neff, chief of the state Office of Intergroup Relations.

He reports many Negroes and some Mexican-Americans want better schools of their own. They say just rubbing shoulders with Anglo-white kids isn't enough.

"We've never considered busing to be anything but a kind of phony issue," Neff said. "If you say buses are bad, then they're bad for athletics and field trips."

## Phony Issue

The plea for neighborhood schools often is a coverup for parents not wanting their kids with Negroes, says Supt. Neil V. Sullivan of Berkeley.

The education department is preparing a report on the number of California children attending integrated schools. Neff has his own list of the progress of integration in California.

Only four districts are completely desegregated, Neff says. They are Riverside, Sausalito and Das Palos and Livingston elementary districts in the San Joaquin Valley.

## Desegregation

Full desegregation is scheduled to begin this fall in Berkeley, Corona and possibly in the San Mateo Elementary School District.

Districts in which some are desegregated and

further action undecided are Sacramento, Fullerton, Palm Springs, Redlands and Soledad in Monterey County.

Some action has been taken but major integration remains undecided in San Bernardino, Richmond, Oakland, Monterey and Fresno, Neff reports. Major integration studies have begun in Vallejo, Stockton, Santa Barbara, San Francisco, Ingewood, Colton, the New Haven district south of Oakland and the Desert Sands district east of Los Angeles.

## Ambitious Plan

Berkeley, with some 2.4 million fewer residents than Los Angeles, will begin an ambitious plan to send all of its public school fourth, fifth and sixth graders to classes in Negro or mixed racial areas.

Supt. Neil Sullivan says the size of big cities is not the reason why full integration plans are not used. Berkeley's population is about 125,000.

"There is no damn difference between the waterfront and hills of Oakland and the waterfront and hills of Berkeley," Sullivan said. "All Oakland has to do is to have four Berkeley plans."

Berkeley integration calls for busing white as well as Negro children. But few educators share Sullivan's enthusiasm for the two-way busing.

## Doubts Voiced

And in Berkeley, members of the Parent-Teachers Association voice doubts. A poll of parents at Berkeley's Hillside School, in a white neighborhood, showed they thought forced integration, the use of coercion on any group, was morally wrong and that the turmoil and bitterness engendered... would work against the kind of school climate conducive to good education or true integration.

Mrs. Haluk Akol of the school's PTA also said that parents felt that fragmenting the child's education by too many school changes would be educationally unsound.

Sacramento's school superintendent had a different reason for opposing two-way integration. Supt. F. Melvyn

Lawson heads the state's largest school district to adopt an extensive integration plan.

## Sacramento Plan

The Sacramento plan began in September, 1966, with buses carrying Negro children to formerly all-white schools.

"I have consistently taken the position that you could justify moving youngsters in disadvantaged areas to higher-horizon areas and motivate them to better achievement," Lawson said.

"But you could not justify the reverse in that connection — lowering the horizon, lowering the sights and calling for lower motivation," he continued.

There has been no organized opposition to busing since the program began in Sacramento. But a few weeks before school opened in 1966, a group of Negro parents threatened to boycott classes. They said buses weren't being provided for enough

children and some pupils would have to walk two miles a day, crossing busy streets.

## Bus Issue

In Sacramento, as in Berkeley, the major protests weren't directed at busing itself, only at how the buses would be used.

But in Congress and in the state legislature, required use of any buses for integration has come under strong attack.

This year Republican Assemblyman Floyd Wakefield of South Gate introduced a bill requiring parents' consent before a child could be bused to an integrated school.

"It's a waste of time and money," he said. "Those children could be playing with neighborhood children, earning a few pennies or doing their homework — instead they must spend this time being bused."

## Termed Unsuccessful

Berkeley is now trying a busing program," Wakefield said. "This has been tried time and time again unsuccessfully."

In the U.S. Senate, Sen. Everett Dirksen, R-Ill., introduced a measure last year to prevent federal school aid money from being used for buses in school integration. The move was defeated.

The big fight is quality education, not busing, Berkeley's Sullivan says.

In San Bernardino, school principals report that a voluntary busing system has worked well and minority group pupils have improved in school work and behavior.

## Request Transfers

About 500 children have requested transfers to other schools in San Bernardino.

But in Santa Ana the school superintendent reports the Mexican-Americans who make up 88 per cent of the population at one school are very happy with this school.

"In Sacramento," Neff says, "we're proud of the progress there is and unhappy there is not more."

"We've come a long way, and we have a whale of a way to go."