Calls for 2-day moratorium in Washington, D.C. schools

By
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Once again, another tragedy has occurred within the District Public Schools. I, of course, am referring to the murder of the student at Hine Junior High School recently.

Already the rhetoric demanding immediate action with respect to severe school disorders has been heard from important civic leaders in the community.

I say rhetoric because I am afraid the school board, the administration, other government agencies and Congress will not move beyond strong, persuasive statements or temporary holding measures.

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As you will recall following the murder of Mr. Clifford last January, the Teachers' Union asked for the establishment of a safety committee.

This committee, consisting of students, teachers, administrators and the community drafted a report that was finally adopted by the Board of Education this summer.

Unfortunately, there has been absolutely no, on the board and/or the administration to implement the recommendations of this report.

You will also remember that following the outbreak of a series of violent incidents this past fall, Sen. William Spong held a hearing on "violence in the schools."

In my testimony before the Spong Committee, I offered several action proposals to deal with the growing current in the schools. Nothing, to my knowledge, has come from the hearing held by Senator Spong.

One of the suggestions made by the union before this committee was a two-day moratorium on classes in November. The purpose of the moratorium was to bring teachers, students, administrators, community residents, groups ranging from the Black United Front to the police department together in order to come up with a comprehensive action program.

After making this initial proposal, we wrote to the president of the board at the end of October asking whether the Board would support the two-day moratorium.

We were informed the matter was being referred to the superintendent. Having no response from the superintendent, we wrote another letter to the superintendent in early December.

To date, we have received no answer.

* * *

I realize that holding such a conference might not have prevented the death of the student, but certainly the creation of such a dialogue, along with many of the other suggestions made by the union, could be a constructive beginning at attack a critical problem facing our city.

With respect to immediate action, I call upon the administration to implement the safety committee report, which the board, I reiterate, has already approved.

We repeat our request for a two-day moratorium on classes. I believe the proposals suggested by board member Julius Hobson at the last meeting, should be worked out and implemented.

* * *

In short, it is intolerable for the Board of Education and the administration to delay action any longer.

Further, it is an indictment against the leaders in this school system that death seems to be the only motivating force for concrete action.

And even here, there is evidence to suggest that "business as usual" will return a few days after the funeral.

While on the subject of the shooting, it should be emphasized that the problem of guns in our schools is not a problem for the administration or the Board of Education.

There is easy access to guns because we have no effective gun control legislation.

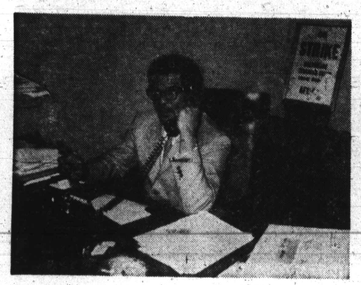
Finally, while we concentrate our efforts on finding effective solutions to this immediate problem, the union believes teachers should focus on another death this month.

As you know, Dr. Martin Luther King's birthday is on Jan. 15. The racist-economic system that Dr. King struggled against still prevails today.

In fact, a sound case can be argued that the turmoil and turbulence in our schools is a result of the explosive social cancer eating away at this city and this nation.

For this reason, on Jan. 15, the Washington Teachers' Union called for a day which menat teaching about the immoral war in Vietnam, about the racist institutions that govern America and about the significance of the Poor Peoples Campaign.

We further called for the school system to close its doors in the afternoon so that teachers and students alike could march together to the D.C. Coliseum where the Southern Christian Leadership Conference held a rally in honor of Dr. King.



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II. **THE BTU IS NOW NEGOTIATING THE FOLLOWING:**

A. **POLICY ON INTEGRATION OF SCHOOL, STAFF, PUPIL AND CURRICULUM**

1. We demand that for the school year 197071, no white teacher new to the Baltimore School System be assigned to a school where the majority of the faculty is white and no Negro teacher new to the Baltimore Public School System be assigned to a school where the majority is all Negro until all the teaching positions in majority white schools are filled or until an effective racial balance in faculties is achieved.
2. We demand the development of an effective curriculum incorporating the historically accurate role of the Negro in American and World History.
   Fifteen years after the de-segregation of the Baltimore City Public Schools there still remains a disturbing absence of a unified and coordinated program of study in United States History which treats the experience of black Americans in an intelligent and factual manner. This situation poses a serious threat to the intellectual honesty and objectivity in the teaching of Social Studies in the Baltimore City Public Schools.
3. The immediate formation of a "History Writer's Council" for the purpose of completely revising the current courses of study in the Social Science. The Council should be composed of individuals of demonstrated competence, teaching experience in black history, and a broad understanding of the main threads of American History. We believe that this Council should not be within the parameter of the Baltimore City Schools Curriculum Development Division. The Council should report directly to the Superintendent of Public Instruction, Dr. Thomas D. Sheldon. We propose that the membership on the Council be limited to nine persons.
4. The BTU demands that a workshop dealing with the cultural and emotional problems of the various racial groups found in the school population be established immediately so as to aid in fostering better positive integration.
5. The BTU demands the creation of an impartial agency to hear complaints of parents, pupils and others, who have no mechanism to lodge complaints except through officialdom.

B. **POLICY ON EVALUATION OF TEACHERS**

1. Classroom teachers will only be evaluated by themselves and the principal.
2. The supervisory staff is a supportive service for the training and retraining of teachers. Therefore, it shall be the responsibility of the supervisory staff to aid the teacher in determining his needs as a professional classroom teacher, and preparing them for a self-evaluation as well as an annual cooperative evaluation by the teacher and principal.
3. Each classroom teacher shall use the following criteria when evaluating his own teaching performance.
   a. Professional attitude
   b. Daily and long term preparation for work
   c. Command of subject matter
   d. Working relationships with parents
   e. Working relationships with pupils
   f. Working relationships with professional personnel
   g. Use of appropriate content, materials, and procedures
   h. Adjustment of program to individual and group needs
   i. Development of pupils' work and study habits
   j. Effectiveness of instruction
   k. Attention to clerical and routine responsibilities
4. Self-evaluation by elected teachers shall occur once at the end of the second semester and shall be done cooperatively with the principal.
5. Self-evaluation by provisional and probationary teachers shall occur once at the end of the first semester and a copy of his evaluation shall be submitted to the principal and the Department of Personnel. At this time the principal shall also evaluate each provisional and probationary teacher. At the end of the second semester self-evaluation by provisional and probationary teachers shall be done cooperatively with the principal.
6. A committee comprised of the Union and supervisory staff shall appraise all evaluations annually and thus develop an In-Service Program based on the needs of the teacher in various subjects and grade levels.

C. **POLICY ON PROMOTIONS**

1. The promotional policies of Baltimore City rest on the following principles:
   a. The procedure used must be firm, fair, and equitable.
   b. The procedure must be free from religious, political, or racial bias.
   c. The procedure must be clean, consistent, and understandable to all staff members.
2. The selection process shall consist of three parts.
   a. A one year In-Service Training Program in urban education for all teachers interested in administrative positions with five years of satisfactory service. (A committee comprised of the Union and supervisory staff will structure the In-Service Program).
   b. An examination in urban administration structured and administered by the Princeton Testing Service.
   c. Rating of credentials shall be my a committee comprised of the Union and supervisory staff.
3. Guidelines to be used in screening candidates for promotional assignments.
   a. Teachers interested in promotions shall apply for admission to the In-Service Training Program.
   b. Application shall be acknowledged by personnel.
   c. Application and credentials are reviewed by a committee comprised of the Union and Department of Personnel.
4. Those who meet the following requirements shall be invited to participate.
   a. Eligibility
      (1) Five years of satisfactory service
   b. Training
      (1) Approved graduate study, Preferably a Master's Degree or equivalent
5. The examination shall be given by the Princeton Testing Service
6. The administration shall use the following criteria in the order in which they are ranked below in selecting teachers.
   a. In-Service Training workshop - 50%
   b. Professional experience - 30%
   c. Profesional training - 20%
   d. There shall be an annual eligibility list ranked by scoring the above criteria.
   e. Individuals shall be selected in rank order
   f. A separate promotional list shall be established for each job description
   g. A passed over teacher may file a grievance against the administration