—Friend or foe

(Continued from Page 31)

asked for by the union, perhaps the school year might have had a more peaceful beginning.

While it appeared as though the chief concern of the union was the fact that it had not been consulted before the adoption of the proposal the real concern was that the proposal could not be implemented as written and to permit the community to have its hopes raised and then dashed would not have been in the best interests of the students in the public schools.

As Dr. Clark so aptly pointed out no program will succeed unless it has the enthusiastic support of all the parties concerned.

How right he was in this respect even though he did not intend it this way. One does not engender enthusiastic support by imposing a program on someone.

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A careful reading of the plan revealed a difference in the approach to solving educational problems centering around reading difficulties.

Dr. Clark takes the behavioral approach as opposed to the humanistic approach.

Dr. Martin Engel, an educational officer in the experimental school program of the U.S. Office of Education, in an article, "Clark Plan Called 'Boot Camp' for D.C. Pupils," clearly distinguished between the two schools.

• • •

The Union shares the viewpoint of Dr. Engel:

"Consider the larger costs . . . and in total terms. What is the price of academic achievement? What are the rewards? Do the ends justify the means, as the behaviorists and Kenneth Clark intimate?

"Are there not other means, which themselves are self-justifying and self-fulfilling, more moral and more humane — above all, more humane"

• • •

Aside from the philosophical differences there were many matters of substance with which the union took exception.

The report was adopted with very little administrative input. The acting superintendent received his copy of the report sometime Monday afternoon, July 13, and was unable to make any contribution to the discussion.

It is the usual procedure to receive a report and then submit it to the superintendent for his recommendations. This was not done.

• • •

Even more serious and shocking was the fact that the board of education would adopt such a program while in the midst of searching for a new superintendent.

Common courtesy should dictate that you don't saddle a new person with a program in which he has had no opportunity to participate in the formulation.

• • •

Other areas of the report with which the Union was not in agreement were:

Standardize testing as the sole means of determining pupil and teacher achievement

The stress on competition

That the school can operate as an oasis without regard to the students' socio-economic background.

Differentiated staff as a means of enhancing the status of the teaching profession in the public schools

That no additional financing is necessary in order to carry out the proposal.

• • •

Other aspects of the situation surrounding the report raised serious questions on the part of the union as to the real intent and purpose of the entire exercise.

First there were a number of inconsistencies of MARC's actions as compared with their words.

A few examples are as follows:

• • •

"Wide contacts will be made with educators, office of education staff, community leaders, students, and parents."

There is no evidence to show that anyone other than a few isolated contacts with a few school officers was contacted.

The project staff cannot become involved in political idealogical controversies or in the day to day problems presently facing the District School System. The board of education must help the staff maintain its independence.

Why then did the MARC staff attempt to influence the board of education in the selection of a new superintendent?

• • •

Was it expected that these variances between statements and deeds would go unnoticed?

• • •

A close examination of the proposal in light of what is happening in other areas of the country would reveal that the "Design for Academic Excellence" contains the same basic ingredients which are found in performance contracts, which have become popular around the country.

These contracts which are let to private enterprisers pay a bonus for raising the level of achievement in reading and math skills.

The company never loses on these deals.

The evaluation of the most famous of these projects, the Texarkana Project, revealed that the teachers taught the test to the students.

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Education at Freedom Hi moves into 21st Century

BETHLEHEM, Pa. — Pupils at Freedom High School have already entered the 21st century as far as more enjoyable, more effective learning is concerned.

The three-year-old school is one of only five in the country equipped with a Dial Access Information Retrieval System (DAIRS) — an electronically-operated method of transmission that puts closed circuit or live TV, films, slides, records and audio tapes at the disposal of the classroom teacher or individual pupil by a flick of the switch and dialing of a code number.

The $250,000 DAIRS has made a tremendous impact not only on pupils but also on teachers and parents, who are increasingly aware of the unusual learning enthusiasm exhibited by pupils in the ultra-modern school.

Each classroom is equipped with a panel through which it can tune in to a huge and growing storehouse of pre-recorded video and sound tapes and records, films, TV programs and AM-FM radio.

Individual study carrels adjacent to the school library also have facilities for making use of the DAIRS information.

A committee of teachers spent weeks last summer working up programmed lessons to be stored in the DAIRS bank.

Individual teachers have videotaped lessons of a repetitive nature, to free them in the future for teaching on an individual basis.

Such tapes also enable pupils to "catch up" with their classes after absences.

Teachers and students have used DAIRS to record their teaching techniques for later critiquing. Dramatic and choral groups have taped rehearsals in order to polish up their techniques.

In a highly innovative move, the school's art gallery has utilized the system to become a "Talking Gallery," wherein the viewer need only dial the proper number to hear a tape recorded talk by the featured artist or artists—in other words, a personally-conducted tour of the exhibit.

The DAIRS will soon be made available at East Hills Junior High School.

A decision will be made in the near future as to whether or not Liberty High, the older of the district's two high schools, will also participate in the Freedom DAIRS or will develop its own Dial Access system in its new classroom center, which is to be occupied next September.

—Wilmington has

(Continued from Page 12)

below 80) to students at the top ability classification.

In fact, students at the top made scores of almost two months growth for each month of instruction.

Over the past five or six years, the Wilmington schools witnessed the pattern of declining achievement scores like other urban areas.

• • •

The reversal of this pattern in Wilmington is exciting.

However, it cannot be overlooked that many of the youngsters, while they show good gains, still are below national norms in achievement. The job facing Wilmington's schools is far from over.

A question on the minds of many in Wilmington is what brought about this shift in the direction of achievement.

• • •

There can be little doubt that the significant increases in finances provided by both the city government and the State of Delaware during the last three years provided the springboard for positive actions and results.

But more important is the way these funds were utilized.

Money allocated for textbooks, suplies and materials and capital equipment were doubled and tripled.

• • •

Teachers' salaries, negotiated with the Wilmington Federation of Teachers, are the highest in the state and among the best in the east.

Local funds were used to enhance federally supported programs such as Title I ESEA, Head Star and Follow Through.

A vast community school program was initiated to permit community use of school facilities after school hours and to give the community a voice in what takes place in their schools

These are real and tangible items that can be seen.

These things alone could not have provided the atmosphere of hope that exists.

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