Del. City Revitalizes Schools

WILMINGTON, Del.— At the recent meeting of the Legislative Action Committee, called by Mayor Harry G. Haskell Jr., the group decided to study the city's program for improved urban education.

Highlighting the city's revitalized school system is the soon-to-begin Howard Educational Park, which will be a career-oriented facility.

U.S. Commissioner Sidney P. Marland, a strong advocate of career education, met with the mayor recently on the issue.

The concept of the Howard Educational Park resulted from an unsuccessful community effort to keep in operation the Howard High School.

The school was regarded by the black population as "the only place where they could get an education" prior to the ending of de jure segregation in the cit

The building was to have been closed as a comprehensive high school and the students dispersed to other schools in the district.

• • •

Despite this strong community sentiment, the Board of Education had decided that existing residential patterns would make it impossible to achieve a satisfactory racial balance operating the Howard site as a comprehensive high school.

In 1968, newly appointed superintendent, Gene A. Geisert, suggested that the identity of Howard could be maintained by using the existing school as the hub of a career education facility, to be named Howard Educational Park.

Planned for construction in three phases by the firm of Caudill, Rowlett and Scott of Houston, the park will consist of a career education center (Phase I to be completed in 1974); an urban studies center (incorporating the existing Howard building in remodeled form Phase II); and a performing and creative arts center (Phase III). Projected costs for the entire complex approach $20 million.

• • •

The park will be operated on a combined comprehensive-center basis. Half of the students will receive their entire education, both career and basic curriculum, at the park while the remainder will be sharing time between other schools in both the city and suburbs and the park.

Buses transporting the part-time students will be education machines in themselves, designed for small group discussion and audio-visual learning while in transit.

Howard's programs will be diversified in both level and scope. Traditional vocational courses will exist side by side with courses in journalism, urban studies, restaurant operations and television production.

The courses will be designed to allow for entry and exit at any level commensurate with the students' abilities and interests — there is a place for the carpenter and the architect, the cameraman and the director, the short order cook and the restaurant manager.

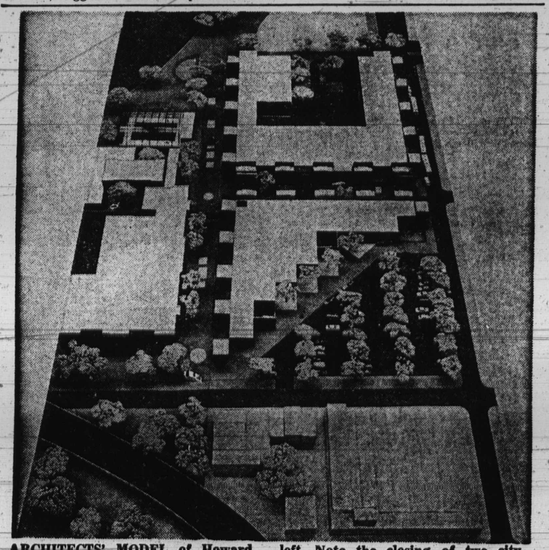
• • •

The park will become a community resource as well as an educational landmark. Evening operations will permit civic, recreational and education activities for the community at large.

Shops and dining facilities operated by students will be open to the public and the intertwining promenades and park areas will greatly enhance the appearance of the area.

Situated on the banks of the historic Brandywine Creek, Howard Educational Park will be an eye-pleasing and mind-expanding center of activity that will anchor the turn around in urban education that is taking place in Wilmington.

Dr. LeRoy M. Christophe, former principal of Howard High, is the director of the project.



ARCHITECTS' MODEL of Howard Educational Park showing the career building at right center and the existing Howard High School building to be remodeled as the urban center, at left. Note the closing of two city streets for use as a pedestrian concourse and arcades. The Brandywine flows by (upper left hand corner).

$3,990,000 in reading grants

Right to Read program grants totaling $3,990,000 have been awarded to 68 school districts in 44 states, U.S. Commissioner of Education Sidney P. Marland Jr., announced.

"These grants mark a major step forward in meeting the goal of the Right to Read Program, the elimination of functional illiteracy in the United States," Commissioner Marland said.

The grants will be used to establish four types of school-based Right to Read sites:

Transition Sites, where federal funds are low, but schools are willing to make the transition to effective programs;

Redirection Sites, where schools with substantial federal reading program funds demonstrate willingness to change from ineffective reading programs to more effective ones:

Expansion Sites, where promising reading practices can be expanded into exemplary programs;

And **Impact Sites**, which are exemplary programs that can serve as dissemination replication centers. Programs in several of the sites will be bilingual.

• • •

Funds for the grants were made available from one or more of a variety of discretionary federal programs, including Titles III and VII of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, the Adult Basic Education Act, and the Education Professions Development Act.

Each of the 17 Redirection Sites received grants of $30,000, the 17 Expansion Sites received $40,000 each, the 12 Transition Sites received $50,000 grants, and each of 21 big-city Impact Sties received grants of $10,000. In addition, a special project for five school districts in four states received a $100,000 grant.

"Our objective is that by the end of this decade 99 per cent of the population 16 years old, and 90 per cent of those over 16 will have the reading competencies essential to function effectively as an adult," Commissioner Marland said.

Kalamazoo makes busing work to improve schools

By DOROTHY ROTHROCK

KALAMAZOO, Mich. — On September 7, some 10,000 Kalamazoo students in grades one through 12 boarded buses, nearly 4,000 of them for the first time, to ride to their newly desegregated schools. About 7,000 other students walked to school.

That same day, 150 miles to the east, Pontiac, Michigan's only other school district implementing a full-scale desegregation plan, made the headlines. in that city, bus bombings and massive protests won national attention.

By contrast, despite obviously fearful and vocal parents and legal attempts to block the move, Kalamazoo's students and teachers moved through that first day without incident. So did the rest of the community.

Six months later, the plan still appears to be working.

What happened in Kalamazoo was no accident. Four years of preparation and an involved corps of citizens lent support to students and teachers on that first day.

• • •

A bi-racial citizens' committee, appointed by the Board of Education in 1968, studied educational problems and student racial conflict for more than a year. Their recommendations to move into a total desegregation plan over a three-year period, while building understanding within the staff and in the community, came to fruition with the school board's adoption of a plan in May, 1971.

The plan now in effect designates elementary schools either early elementary (1-3) or later elementary (4-6) and retains five junior highs and two senior highs. Kindergarteners continue to attend nearby schools. Students have been assigned at all levels, except kindergarten, so that blacks would constitute from 10 per cent to 25 per cent of each student body.

Although Kalamazoo still falls short of its 20 per cent minority teacher goal, teacher assignments provide bi-racial staff in each school.

Many citizens objected to the "forced busing plan." Many particularly objected to a two-way busing plan. And many still do.

• • •

Citizens elected two new members to the school board in June who voted in the majority to delay total desegregation and substitute a voluntary program. Then, the NAACP, joined by the League of Women Voters and Michigan Education Association, filed suit.

Federal District Judge Noel Fox ruled, the week before school opened, that Kalamazoo schools would desegregate as planned.

On Saturday of Labor Day weekend, a plea for help went out, asking citizens to volunteer to move the tons of materials and equipment to convert elementary schools which previously housed kindergarten to sixth grade to 14 schools for kindergarten to third and ten schools for kindergarten and grades four through six.

Hundreds responded with trucks, station wagons, cars, and just plain manpower. The "big move" was completed in four hours, with volunteers manning specially installed telephones to direct the operation.

"On opening day of school, even those parents who fought the idea were at pick-up points to help load children onto buses, print nametags, and reassure the timid," reports Mayor Gilbert Bradley, the first black to be elected to that post.

• • •

Another who expresses optimism over the way the plan is working is Duane Roberts, a postman and head of the NAACP chapter which instigated the suit against the school board.

Kalamazoo schools' acting superintendent, Dr. Reed Hagen, also cites gains since the new plan began in September.

Despite his chairmanship of the schools' Administrative Racial Balance Committee which helped to put the plan into operation, Dr. Hagen was named to the acting superintendency in July when the former superintendent was asked to resign by the newly elected conservative board majority because of his support of the racial balance plan.

During the spring and fall of 1971, parents formed an active volunteer services organization in every school, each with its own leader and all working together under a system-wide coordinator.

• • •

The parent volunteers instruct their own members, assist with bus loading and unloading, help supervise students during the noon periods, provide tutorial services, and generally assist in the schools.

Businessmen and other citizens in the community succeeded in motivating action in the Legislature to permit passage and the levying of local tax monies to support Kalamazoo schools. The citizens' group drew the largest vote in Kalamazoo school history to the polls in November to approve, by a 4-3 margin, an extra property tax to support the schools in 1971-72.

THE WASHINGTON TEACHERS' UNION

1424 16TH STREET, N.W. WASHINGTON, D.C. 20036 PHONE : 387-8100

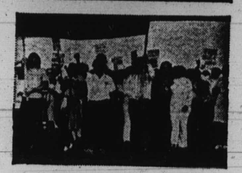
"Education, then, is more than literacy and the ability to get a job. Yes, students must read. Yes, they must be prepared for jobs. Yes, but there is something else. If we concern ourselves only with reading and job skills we will be forgetting that which is the very essence of education. Education is change. The educated person is one who can see what is wrong in his society and work to change it. True, he must have knowledge and skills, but the mere acquisition of these is not education. Education is manifested through the use of knowledge and skills. The schools, therefore, must concern themselves with helping the student relate what he is learning to the problems of the society. If the student does not do this in the classroom, he is not likely to do it once he leaves."

Jeanne Walton

AFT

On the national scene, WTU delegates are active at AFT conventions.

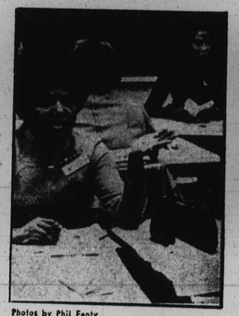
WTU members made an impact on the 1971 national convention in San Francisco. Discussing strategy moves on the floor of the convention regarding the Angela Davis resolution are, right to left: Jeannette Feely, Harold Fisher, Charles Cheng, Betty Nyangoni. Later, WTU delegates joined the Oakland County Federation of Teachers demonstration outside the Marin jail where Angela Davis is incarcerated.



Membership moves to ACTION.

Upwards of 1,000 Union teachers assembled at the Leckie School in June, 1971, to demonstrate support for their Union's negotiating team. This militant action was a major factor in preventing the board and the administration from saddling the teachers with repressive measures in the new contract. The militancy of the rank and file allowed collective bargaining to win out over collective begging.

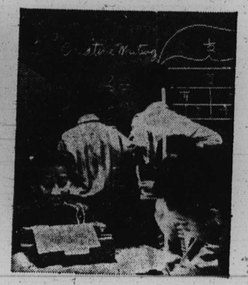
Union members busily at work developing contractual demands for the 1971 bargaining session. Conferences like these provide the rank and file the opportunity to actively participate in the decision-making process.



Photos by Phil Fenty

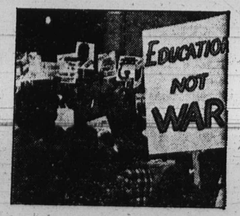
During any given school year, the Union constantly is confronted by crisis situations. One of the more famous controversial cases concerned the Hendley Eight. A group of Union teachers refused to teach their students in filthy and cold classrooms. Because of this forceful stand taken by the teachers, the superintendent punished the teachers. Above, William H. Simons, president of the Union, issues a press statement on behalf of the teachers at Hendley School.

Teachers concerned about the outcome of the 1971 negotiations gather in a mass meeting at Spingarn High School to hear a report from the negotiators. The rank and file voted unanimously to send the Union's bargaining team back to the table with the directions—*"don't give in to the administration, and preserve our contract."*



When word came that nearly 600 teaching positions would be eliminated for the 1971-72 school year, the Union called for a mass demonstration at the District Government Building in May. Community leaders (Marion Barry, director of PRIDE, at right), teachers and students joined this Union campaign. Union action throughout the summer resulted in the restoration of over 200 positions.

AFT



The Washington Teachers' Union stands ready to meet the challenge of the new decade — "Providing Optimum Opportunities for the Students in the Nation's Capital. Teaching offers an excellent career for those who are interested in bringing about the necessary changes needed in order to make this nation a society of people dedicated to humanism.