LAKE CLIFTON HIGH SCHOOL, in addition to being one of the city's top schools academically, has quickly become a major tourist attraction. The multi-million dollar structure is the largest high school in the country.

The Baltimore City public schools today

Dr. John L. Crew Sr.
superintendent of public instruction
Baltimore City Public Schools
June 14, 1976

As our country celebrates its Bicentennial, there seems to be a rather natural human tendency for each of us to pause to take stock of his own life experiences.

For those of us with responsibilities for guiding agencies, there seems also to be a second urge to renew perspective on their missions and operations.

As superintendent of public instruction for the Baltimore City Public Schools, I try to keep a continuing awareness that our schools go back a long way in time. They have enjoyed an uninterrupted operation since 1829 and have thus been open for close to three-quarters of our country's two-hundred year history as the United States of America. This sense of continuity helps balance our daily operational perspective as we recall that many have served the schools before our time, and many more will serve after we have done our part.

The Baltimore City School System today ranks in size among ten largest school systems in the United States. Its schools and centers number 213 and collectively enroll better than 171,000 pupils during the current school year. That enrollment averages approximately 74 per cent nonwhite to 26 per cent white in composition.

Educational personnel staffing the system are also predominately nonwhite, as reflected in the following percentages: central offices, 54 per cent; regional offices, 58 per cent; elementary school total, 71 per cent; junior high school total, 61 per cent; and senior high school total, 52 per cent.

The operating budget for 1975-1976--including total general funds, total special funds, and total special project funds--amounts to $265,543,522.

It is therefore easy to see that from the modest beginnings with one school, 269 pupils, and a budget of several thousand dollars in 1829, we have developed into a sizeable enterprise which is both big business and big government in its own right.

During the current school year, the system as a whole is pursuing an extension of the major goal stated for the previous year: "To strengthen the instructional program by refining the organizational structure and operational procedures." There are eleven accompanying objectives which have been framed to realize the goal:

1. Improve achievement levels in reading, writing, and mathematics.
2. Continue to develop programs which elicit improved student adjustment behaviors.
3. Improve the quality and increase the frequency of communication.
4. Build improved internal and external human relationships.
5. Improve the quality and extent of community contact and participation.
6. Re-examine and redevelop support services to ensure that they enhance the educational processes.
7. Decrease the time required to obtain services from the support areas of the school system.
8. Make available written operational guidelines and procedures which further refine and clarify individual roles for all functional units of the school system.
9. Ensure that assessment and evaluation are facets of all plans and implementation strategies.
10. Continue to develop and implement accountability procedures for all persons concerned with schools, including students, teachers, administrators, and parents.
11. Implement components of the plan for the further desegregation of the Baltimore City Public Schools.

The goal and the concomittant objectives serve to provide both continuity and over-all direction to the operation of the system.

Having achieved ranking in the top ten school systems in sheer size without any particular aim to do so, we would, on the other hand, like very much to work to have our school system ranking in the top ten as regards the quality of education it delivers. This will clearly be no easy task, nor one achieved with little effort or belief. It is also likely that no one superintendent alone will be able to do it.

During the hundred and fifty year operation of our schools, a number of superintendents have set high sights for the system. Although through the filter of history those earlier years appear now to us to have been a golden age of simplicity and truth, to contemporaries, the times undoubtedly seemed as turbulent and as unsettling as our own do to us.

I feel certain that, from time to time, those earlier superintendents paused to reconsider their perspectives on public education in Baltimore City, as I do now.

Despite the words of critics, I believe that, by and large, the schools are quite in tune with the harmony of the larger society. I believe this because, wherever they are found, public schools are largely microcosmic reflections of their particular society. This is no new affirmation. It is at least as old as Plato, who acutely observed that what is honored in a country will be cultivated there.

What is cultivated in a given society is a reflection of the underlying value structure, and, simplifying a bit, societies have characteristic value structures which identify them almost as readily as voice or finger prints identify the individual.

Whatever contemporary notions there may be to the contrary, schools have traditionally existed as agencies domesticated principally for the transmission of the society's value structure. Thus, the schools exist to transmit the nonphysical possessions of the society--the arts and sciences as prime examples.

Schools are society's way of passing its characteristic value structure from generation to generation much as human characteristics are passed to new individuals by means of genetic endowment from parents.

Consistent with my belief about the role of the school in society, as the superintendent, I place the highest priority on monitoring and improving the instructional program of the Baltimore City Public Schools. I have no hesitation in saying that the instructional program is the true reason for being of the public schools. I also have no hesitation in saying that we must strive for a balanced approach to the instructional program. Over the past decade or so there has been a strong tendency to downplay cognitive or rational development in favor of social-emotional types of outcomes for the school. There is no question that both kinds of outcomes are needed in the development of citizens who can participate humanely in a complex industrial-technical society.

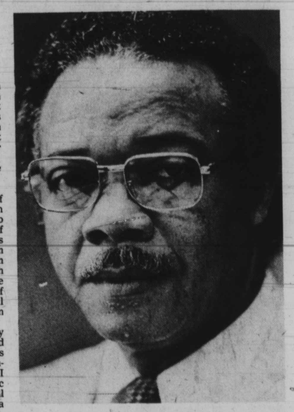
But, granting that balance is called for, another important question needs to be addressed: what kinds of outcomes would slighted or not undertaken at all if the child were not in school. To me, the answer is clear and it is cognitive or rational development.

In striking the balanced approach to the instructional program, care must be taken not to slight the achievement of such outcomes. As a wise man once remarked, it is not necessary to burn books to keep people in ignorance, merely let books go unread for several generations and you achieve the same result.

An important aspect of the instructional program is the approach taken to the evaluation of achievement outcomes for the students. I can reaffirm that my main concern is with how much given children improve during a given period of time rather than how well they perform in relation to norms.

In guiding the many support services and administrative services which undergird the instructional program, I emphasize a wholistic approach which ties all variables together. I am a synthesis kind of administrator--that is to say, I like to study the variables in a given situation such as budgetary allotment, pupils, community, and staff so that I can be objective in my decision making.

To me, there has been a long, unbroken tradition of sound educational practice, up to today. I believe that it will continue to flourish.



DR. JOHN L. CREW

Morgan historian cites black achievements and activism in state of Maryland

The black Marylander has a proud history of participation in the socio-political events of this state despite laboring under the most trying of conditions, according to distinguished Morgan historian, Dr. Roland C. McConnell.

In an article in the Bicentennial Edition of Morgan Magazine, Dr. McConnell maintained that in spite of the "dominance of slavery" the black Marylander made significant advances during the "national period of Maryland's history."

"In 1835, for example, the colored people of Baltimore had ten churches or religious institutions, thirty-five to forty benevolent institutions or mutual relief associations and a number of sabbath or special schools. Of the churches, three were founded in the first quarter of the nineteenth century that are still in existence.

These were Bethel African Methodist Episcopal Church founded by Daniel Coker in 1797, the Sharp Street Methodist Church founded by a group of free blacks in 1802, and St. James First African Protestant Episcopal Church founded by William Levington in 1824. Each of these added a church school.

"Economic aspects of the black community were revealed in the variety of occupations in which their members engaged. In 1840, free blacks in Baltimore numbered eighteen blacksmiths, forty-five barbers, thirty-five caulkers, thirteen drayers, and seven grocers. Free blacks were listed as butchers, cigar makers, comb makers, rope makers, stone makers, brass founders, ship carpenters, brick masons, coopers, plumbers, cordwainers, restaurant keepers, and hucksters..."

According to Dr. McConnell, the Nat Turner Insurrection in Virginia in 1831, and the growing free black population in Maryland during that period (the ratio of the number of free blacks to the number of slaves was nearly 1 to 1) resulted in the Act of 1831 which was enacted by the Maryland State Legislature.

Generally, the legislation provided for the continued repression of free blacks by restricting their rights to gather, to buy firearms, etc., and through conserving slavery in general and through limiting the numbers of free blacks by returning them to Africa.

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Baltimore City Bicentennial
Walter S. Orlinsky, Chairman
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Baltimore City's Bicentennial Committee has tried, throughout the year, to bring to the Baltimore community, a sense of their cultural and historical past with events such as the Five Museum Bicentennial Art Exhibition; Crafts '76, weekly ethnic festivals; and the re-enactment of famous historical occurrences.
In doing so, we have also added a bit of the family music by making, **The Great American Birthday Cake**, the largest in the world to date.
The celebration of the Bicentennial has given people an opportunity to look into their country's past and to really "discover America."
As we enter the year's halfway mark, the Bicentennial continues with activities such as Exto '76, July 3-11; Operation Sail, July 10-18; Urban Services mini-festivals; ethnic festivals; arts and crafts shows; concerts; and more.
We sincerely hope that the festive atmosphere created during the Bicentennial will not end with the year and that we will realize the ideals of our past and the reality of our present and work to develop a more fulfilling urban environment for Baltimore's community-at-large.

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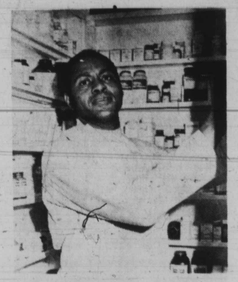

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