



Black United Front meets with school board member Herb Cawthorne to discuss community responsibility.

Herb Cawthorne was "called on the carpet" by the Black United Front last week to explain what is considered to be his lack of communication with the community regarding important school district issues.

Cawthorne explained the reason for his vote to delay selection of a new school superintendent until next fall, after a new school board takes office. He believes the board is too involved in other issues -- budget cuts, a levy, school closures, etc. -- to give adequate attention to a superintendent search.

He also does not believe a good candidate would come to work for a "lame duck" board that is badly divided.

BUF spokesmen were concerned that the superintendent selection was put over and most of those attending the meeting opposed Cawthorne's position.

The main issue, however, was that Cawthorne had not discussed with any member of the Black community his decision to reverse his previous vote on that issue. Neither had he discussed his new willingness to renege on the board promise to place Tubman Middle School at the Eliot building to provide a middle school in the community.



Serious moment: Cawthorne listens as citizens discuss what they consider lack of communication with Black constituents. (Photos: Richard Brown)

Youth centers promote self-help

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with minor crimes - shoplifting, vandalism, disorderly conduct, minor assault and status offenses (behavior that would not be crimes if committed by adults) like possession of alcohol, running away, being beyond parental control.

"In many of these situations it's clear that the problem is social and not legal," Ms. Newhall explained. "The operating principal of the youth service centers is to work with young people as close to home as possible, in a non-coercive, voluntary setting. We function as an active alternative to the juvenile court. As much as possible we try to keep the young persons, who are minor offenders, out of detention, in the community, working in a constructive way to resolve bad communication problems, help them sort out the way they will relate to authority figures, and also help them improve their personal self-esteem through involvement in a variety of activities."

A center staff talks with the youngster, his parents, goes to the school to see what is happening and tries to sort out the problems. "It maybe that he just simply can't get along with a classroom teacher in which case we can help the parent find an acceptable transfer situation. Or it may be the youngster needs a tutor, in which case we can refer them to the Whitney Young Learning Center or provide a tutor; or it might be that the young person is coming from a single parent family and they'd like to be matched up with a big brother or sister to do something fun on weekends."

The centers have approximately an 80 percent success rate with young people referred by the police

or the courts; only twenty percent are charged with additional crimes.

There is a high correlation of juvenile crime with lack of success in school. Many young people need alternatives to the regular school system and the youth service centers help the individual to find alternatives. "There are some young people who have difficulties trying to cope, particularly in the large high school settings. They can't respond just because the very nature of the institution doesn't respond to their needs. We try to refer them to other programs." They also work toward changes in the school system that would be more responsive to the needs of today's young people. "We try to work closely with principals to allow counselors to come into the schools to work with kids who are not able to handle the school roles to which they are assigned and we've had some success in helping students who have not been able to find an adult they can talk to at school. We've been able to help some young people just make it through a situation that might not be best for them. Many students are helped to find other situations such as taking classes at Portland Community College."

The correlation between lack of school success and crime "is really confirmed when you look at the adult correctional system and see that a high percentage of inmates simply do not have basic skills. It cripples peoples' ability to get jobs and advance in those jobs so they can be self-supporting. When a person can't be self-supporting, when the system shuts those people out, then those people engage in anti-social acts."

An example of the programs of the Northeast Service Center is Cornrows Unlimited, a youth run

business where young people are trained in cornrowing, have studied its cultural tradition, and are rowing hair to make money to support the business. "I think that is the type of program the youth service center does best or - where we put the young people themselves in the leadership roles. They develop a pride in their work, a pride in themselves, and there is a spin off. By feeling better about yourself in the community, chances are when you get up the next morning to go to school you'll have a more positive attitude about your own education."

The services of the centers - located in Lents, St. Johns, Southwest, Inner Southeast and at the King Neighborhood Center - are free. For information call 248-4356.

Reagan

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right to create an independent Black Party, or a Citizens' Party, and that we should return "to the mainstream." If we follow this advice of Daniel Patrick Moynihan and Ralph David Abernathy, for instance, we would be criticizing Reagan from the right instead of the left.

The left must be progressive in the best sense of the word. We cannot allow the New Right to set all the national priorities for the next generation. We must seize the initiative at every opportunity, making the case for what we believe in, and translating that agenda into a social, political, economic force that is capable of seizing power. The great Black abolitionist Frederick Douglass observed: "Power concedes nothing without demand; it never has, and it never will."

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