

Speaking of schools

RICHARD HUNTER

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in instruction, curriculum and so forth.

There is not necessarily racial equity with regard to the way schools operate. So in fairness, certain things need to be adjusted in order to be more favorable. To treat everyone equitably some changes need to be made in school systems that give the impression of not being equitable but are in fact equitable because they are trying to correct for the lack of equity or equal treatment that does not exist, i.e., emphasis on various minority cultures and instruction that does not exist as much in certain locations for certain groups as it does in others.

Our situation is very different from Portland's. Our racial composition of our student body is such that what some call the minority is the majority. The same is true of our staff. So we basically had to develop policies that have, as an example, tried to make sure that there is some representation of some groups that are considered to be the majority. So we are dealing with it from the opposite perspective.

I think personally that it is hard to have equity in any situation where you have people who are very much in the minority. It requires a great deal of sensitivity to the fact that that is very difficult to accomplish. It's hard to have equity in the schools when you have people represented in very small percentages. . . . To be in a situation where Blacks are 10 to 15 per cent is similar to the situation we have in Richmond where whites are 15 per cent, which makes it more difficult for equity to ensue. And in our situation whites feel they are being discriminated against by virtue of the fact that 85 per cent of our population is Black and 15 per cent is white. The same is true for Blacks in a situation like Portland's.

GLENN HOUDE

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exist and we need to be alert to that fact and be willing to confront racism when it occurs and take various actions to eliminate it.

I wish I did not have to answer this question (racial balance). I do not see a relationship between the percentage of minority students in a school and the quality of education delivered. . . . A school that is all white or all Black in terms of students and faculty is unreal. It represents an environment, a picture of society, that exists nowhere else but in that particular school and that is on the verge of being insane.

Student achievement: Students achieve pretty much what we want them to achieve. The skills to be taught should be carefully identified. We should be clear as to when these skills should be introduced and when they are to be mastered. The student must have a minimum of skills set before them each year

So I think if I were to structure ideally a situation I would try to structure one where there is parity. Because integration is a parity concept—and equity, of course, is a parity concept. The more ways that you can artificially structure things so that you can arrange more equality from the get-go—the greater choice you have of the delivery of true equity.

I had been asked by somebody, what about a school situation where the school now is 50 per cent Black. Do we need to make a change in that? My response was I don't know that you need to make a change in that because personally that situation may facilitate the greater equity than a situation where you had 10 per cent Black students. If our true goal is to reach true equity in terms of program treatment.

Student achievement: First of all you must have quality, dedicated personnel that are well trained and committed. Then you must have high expectations for your students. Our student achievement, in a school system that is 85 per cent Black, when 84 per cent of the students are on free or reduced lunch, at the elementary level is above the national average. Most people would think that might not be feasible; it is feasible, if one has the right people involved and they have the right set of expectations.

We must have leadership that is willing to say that certain things must be done and can be done. And finally, will be done. I think you need to try to elicit the support of community, parents, try to engage them. . . . And as well, try to engage students. . . .

I think there must be some clear, established priorities and everybody must understand what these priorities are as well as the students and people must stay on track, not be diverted because there are just so many diversions that it's easy to go off track.

Educating ethnic children:

which builds on previously learned skills and it must be clearly understood that it is the responsibility of the teacher. Given that, you can see continued learning at the appropriate level.

The principal must be held accountable to insure that the agreed upon skills are to be taught and mastered. . . .

Educating ethnic children: The question is a very difficult one to respond to because the question implicitly is an assumption that I am not willing to make, and that is ethnicity predicts learning problems. I don't buy that and I think that it has been proven untrue.

Educating handicapped children: If we had unlimited resources which we do not, it clearly would be an easy matter to insure that all architectural barriers are removed. . . . For the time being we should insure that every youngster have available to him/her an appropriate free

public education in one or more of our facilities. That may mean that we can't make programs available everywhere at one time, we just don't have the money to do it. . . . The definition of how that adequate public free education is delivered should be left to the local district.

Fiscal management: I believe that I would continue doing what I have been doing for a good many years and begin the budget development at two levels. I would expect from the department of finance early in the school year a projection of revenue to the general fund and the projections of probable revenues from the federal and state funds for special programs. At the same time that this was being done I would want every staff person in the district to have an opportunity to assist in the development of the budget.

Curriculum and program evaluation: We took a look at the state mandated test to determine what was being asked and what were the required skills on these tests. We then compared these tests to our curriculum and asked the hard questions. We asked at what point is our curriculum preparing the students for the state mandated exam. We then changed our curriculum to insure that the students were getting the necessary skills to meet the requirement on the state examination.

Personnel: I would want the school principal responsible for the evaluation of every teacher and that means the principal should have the right to choose the people who work directly for him. . . . Also parent input can be very productive but the final decision as to what teacher is hired should be the responsibility of the school principal.

Planning: I don't know what I would want to accomplish in the first two years. The first task is to get the board to define the objectives of the superintendent.

Dropout prevention: Suspension is viewed as a means to eliminate the need for behavior control at the school to allow us to do the work for which we are employed. I believe suspension don't work. I would rather agree upon a leave of absence from school for the child rather than have the child leave and to discover some weeks later that the child has dropped out.



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From the Front Door

by Tom Boothe

From the Front door, I have been asked to describe my philosophy on life to my readers. Well, the easiest way for me to do that in short order is to lay out my principles of guidance. I believe that knowledge plus understanding equals Wisdom. So let me share with you a published abstract of my general philosophy toward relationships. I must do this in two parts.

Part one will be the first ten guidance remembrances under my "FINAL WISDOM" document.

Next week you will read the next eleven remembrances.

FINAL WISDOM

PART ONE

By Thomas Boothe
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1. *First comprehend and remember to think before speaking*
2. *First comprehend and remember to think before doing*
3. *First comprehend and remember to give the other person the benefit of the doubt, especially, when strong feelings are involved*
4. *First comprehend and remember that given the same history, timing, circumstances, and situation, you could have been that other unreasonable, selfish person who confronted you unfairly*
5. *First comprehend and remember to look for the fact and truth of the matter*
6. *First comprehend and remember to try and win the person, not the argument*
7. *First comprehend and remember that all things have at least two sides, but no one has enough wisdom to see them all*
8. *First comprehend and remember that respect precludes prejudices of all kinds toward others and wards off vexation of the spirit, mind and body*
9. *First comprehend and remember that the reality of your life will become more valuable with age*
10. *First comprehend and remember that there are only two entities that are fundamental to reality: they are communication and transportation (influence and motion)*

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