

# Schools move to end racial discrimination

by Lanita Duke

GRASSROOT NEWS, N.W. — The Special Education component of the Portland Public Schools is in a transition stage as they re-evaluate their referral, assessment and placement practices.

The Desegregation Monitoring and Advisory Committee (DMAC) discovered a disproportion of Black children referred and placed in Special Education under the category of

learning disabled. And once in Special Education that process that leads a child back into general education is vague.

The problems in Special Education mirrors a national disproportion affecting Black children. The unique aspects of Portland's Special Education department is the willingness of management to evaluate and implement change.

With the approval of School Superintendent Matthew Prophet, Maralyn Turner, assistant superintendent for special instruction, has launched a file review. And instead of relying on the school district's personnel office for professionals of color, Turner plans to contract Black psychologists and others to assist her with this evaluation.

"DMAC questions have spurred us to focus our information. I don't

believe the disproportions are intentional, but built into the assessment process," Turner added.

At a recent DMAC meeting a member of Turner's staff said, "A lot of these assessment tests were normed on white middle-class homes. We realize the tools we are utilizing, which we were told were fair, have come into question. Considering that the tests were standard, they are not fair."

Some members of the DMAC and other Black professionals felt an intelligent Black child, especially a Black male, who had an insensitive, culturally ignorant classroom teacher, could get referred to Special Education and get lost in its maze. Data from the school district revealed Black children enrolled in Special Education peaked in the first grade at 25.9 percent and stayed above 20 percent until the tenth grade where it

reaches an all time high of 30.3 percent.

In terms of funding, Special Education has a catch-22 element in its funding mechanism. Dollars allocated to Special Education are based on a per pupil basis. Hypothetically, funding is reduced once students re-enter general education. In 1983-84 the school district was reimbursed for Special Education by the state with \$1,779,902 and \$714,018 from the federal government.

Turner is positive and upbeat as her department searches for a solution. "Because of DMAC's willingness to work with us we will come up with solutions that are good for all children. If there are things we can do around assessment, pre-referral or placement which treats Black children fairer, then we can come up with solutions that treat all children fairly," Turner concluded.

## Scholarships granted

Six Black graduate students are the 1984-85 recipients of a total of \$18,000 in scholarships granted by the National Black MBA Association. The scholarships were awarded during the Sixth Annual NMBAA Conference and Exposition in San Francisco, October 3-7, 1984. Geoffrey Wayne Davis of Indiana University, Gladys Hart DeClouet of the University of Wisconsin, Gabrielle Elise Simms of Harvard University, Karen Natalie Jones of Atlanta University, Elizabeth Sessoms Wilkerson of Stanford University and Robert D. Taylor of Stanford University were the recipients. Each received a \$3,000 scholarship and were chosen from over 100 applicants from around the United States. A special \$1,000 scholarship was also awarded to Marcene D. Mitchell of Stanford University.

The recipients were judged on the basis of scholastic excellence, personal interviews and community service, a two-page essay describing "your strategy and approach for entering the business community as an employee or entrepreneur given current national economic conditions."

"Offering these scholarships underscores NMBAA's commitment and dedication to the Black community," says Beverly Hawkins, National President of the NMBAA. "We see today's student population as the critical link with our communities' future economic growth."

"Our scholarship program is a result of strong corporate participation by leading companies including Coca-Cola, Atlantic Richfield, American Hospital Supply, Bendix Corporation, Black Enterprise magazine, Baxter Travenol Laboratories, Exxon Corporation, The First National Bank of Chicago, the Ford Motor Company, the Pepsi Cola Company, the Northern Trust Company and United California Bank," says Steve Lewis, Chairman of the 1984-85 Scholarship Program.

"Not only do these fortune 500 and other companies provide the NMBAA with financial assistance to fund our scholarships, but they are involved in our annual conference as speakers, panelists and exhibitors and other ongoing activities throughout the year," says Hawkins.

The National Black MBA Association 1985-86 Scholarship Program was formerly announced in early March, 1985, with a minimum of six scholarships to be awarded at the Seventh Annual NMBAA Conference and Exposition in Washington, D.C., October 30-November 3, 1985.

For more information regarding the 1985-86 NMBAA Scholarship Program, contact: NMBAA, 111 E. Wacker Drive, Suite 600, Chicago, Illinois 60601.

The NMBAA is a non-profit organization of 1500 minority MBA's in private and public sectors nationwide, whose goal is to focus on its combined leverage towards achieving meaningful gains for the minority MBA professional and improving community relations.

## Conference on child abuse

"Breaking the Cycle of Abuse: New Hopes, New Beginnings," is the theme for the fourth annual Northwest Conference on child sexual abuse, sponsored by Portland State University's Community Psychology Group. The conference will be held Thursday and Friday, April 11 and 12, in Smith Memorial Center at P.S.U. Presenters from a variety of backgrounds will be discussing the aspect of recovery.

Hours for the conference are 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. both days, and registration fees are \$10 for one day or \$15 for both days. Persons interested in attending may register in advance or at the door. For more information, call 229-4787.

## Announcing wide area paging coverage without the wide area price.

The paging people who have always brought you selection and service now bring you one of the widest coverage areas in Portland.

Plus one big advantage: Our competitors charge you for "extended coverage." RAM includes it as standard bill of fare.

Premium coverage without a premium price. Because at RAM, we believe your pager is only as good as the area it reaches.

226-1507 **RAM**  
The Beeper People!

RAM Broadcasting of Oregon, Inc., 713 S.W. 12th Avenue

# In this world of give and take, retirement may be the last reason to open an IRA.

### The first reason is the tax break.

Open an IRA at The Benj. Franklin, and whether you itemize your deductions or not, your allowable contributions are deductible in full.

How much it cuts your taxes depends on your tax bracket, filing status and how much you invest.

### The second reason is tax-deferred interest.

This is what makes an IRA such a strong growth investment. You don't pay taxes on the interest earned until you start taking money out. By that time, you'll probably be retired and in a lower tax bracket. So the taxes you pay could be substantially less.

### The third reason is The Benj. Franklin.

Why us? Because we handle more IRAs than anyone else in the Northwest. So we have more experience. And more options. Like a variety of certificates of deposit and access to annuities.

Plus, at The Benj. Franklin, you can invest whatever best suits your budget, starting with as little as \$10. On many of our investment options, there are no service charges or trustee fees. And all certificates are insured by the FSLIC.

### The last reason is retirement.

Retirement may be the last reason for an IRA now, but when you retire, it'll be the first. That's because most people find their pension or retirement funds just aren't enough. And that's where an IRA can really help.

### Do you need any more reasons?

Open a Benj. Franklin IRA. And cash in on your tax break. And start earning your tax-deferred interest right now.

Stop in and see us today.



Over 30 offices in the greater Portland area to serve you.

Deposits insured to \$100,000 by the FSLIC