

PORTLAND OBSERVER

Volume XVII, Number 38

July 29, 1987

25¢

Professor Leads Drive 'To Save' Black Children

by Omari Kenyatta, J.D.

Howard University Professor Faustine Jones-Wilson is fired up. "It's time for us to stop passing the buck. What can each of us do to facilitate learning?"

She's referring to the education of black children, indicating that too many are underachievers. "Our children are falling between the cracks. They're not being properly educated for the 21st century," charges the educator, who is black.

In what she calls a "self-help effort to save our children," Dr. Jones-Wilson leads a national initiative spearheaded by Rep. Augustus Hawkins, D-Calif., chairman of the House Committee on Education and Labor, to get more people involved in the process of educating black children, who gene-

Lovely H. Billups, director of field services for educational issues with the American Federation of Teachers, points out that the blueprint will be presented this summer at the AFT's national QuEST (Quality Educational Standards in Teaching) Conference, where thousands of teachers, administrators and educational researchers are expected to gather. "I don't think this is an initiative that will die . . . It has a solid research foundation and knowledge base," she maintains.

The NCEBC initiative is being carried out by what Jones-Wilson calls a predominantly black "loose-knit coalition of education advocates."

This band of education advocates, all volunteers, including Jones-Wilson, is trying to get all segments of society involved in a coordinated

pressed concern over the underachievement of black children.

A few months later, last September, the first conference was held, and a blueprint for action was drafted. A refined plan was presented at the second National Conference on Educating Black Children in May.

One of researcher Ron Edmond's assumptions on which the plan is based was that "all students ought to graduate from high school prepared to go to college. I don't care whether they go to college or not, but they ought to have the choice . . ."

Jones-Wilson basically agrees, and goes one step further, citing the United Negro College Fund's motto: "A mind is a terrible thing to waste."

Koch Joins Walk to Protest Street Prostitution

Commissioner Bob Koch joins members of the Piedmont Neighborhood Association in a walk along Union Avenue to protest the continuing problem of street prostitution in the area on Wednesday, July 29. The march began at Northeast Union and Holman at 6:30 p.m.

"Street prostitution is a crime that deserves our attention," says Koch,



Howard University Professor Faustine Jones-Wilson, editor of *The Journal of Negro Education*, is in the forefront of a national initiative

to educate black children. Says the educator, "Our children are falling between the cracks."

to educate black children. Says the educator, "Our children are falling between the cracks."

Photo by Marvin T. Jones

rally lag behind their white counterparts in reading and math skills. The professor of education, along with retired Los Angeles school district administrator Owen Knox, co-chairs the National Conference on Educating Black Children (NCEBC), launched in 1986, which recently developed a "blueprint for action" to ensure that black children achieve to their maximum potential.

Stressing that a "comprehensive strategy" is needed, Jones-Wilson explains in an interview, "We must get this blueprint into classrooms, homes and school-board rooms so that a massive all-encompassing program is implemented."

The blueprint offers a set of recommendations, or "action-oriented mandates," specifically designed for students, teachers, administrators, parents and policymakers, as well as communities.

Recommendations range from encouraging students to develop and maintain a positive attitude about learning to urging policymakers to investigate and replace institutionalized policies and practices that may be obsolete. Tips are given on how to follow through on "action items."

The blueprint has its roots in the "effective-schools" research of late Harvard University educator Ron Edmonds, who identified five characteristics that make up an effective school environment.

He found that strong administrative leadership, an orderly and safe climate for learning, high expectations for students, instructional routines and operational procedures geared toward learning, and continuous monitoring all contribute to an effective school environment.

One of the blueprint's architects, Dr. Kenneth Tollett, distinguished professor of higher education at Howard, says the NCEBC initiative is based on "a very ambitious blueprint for action that I think can be accomplished because of the quality of people spearheading it, such as Congressman Hawkins, Faustine Jones and Althea Simmons (director of the Washington, D.C., bureau of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People)."

Some 300 educators, social scientists, policymakers, parents, community and civil-rights leaders met near Baltimore in late May to move a national education agenda from blueprint stage to action during the second National Conference on Educating Black Children.

Successful educational programs in cities such as Baltimore, Chicago, and Los Angeles that bring the blueprint to life were highlighted at the conference.

The participants, many of whom represent national civil-rights, education, fraternal, professional and social-service organizations, were urged to take the blueprint for action back to their local communities and organizations for introduction and implementation.

Although there's "no grand plan for implementation," there's evidence that individuals are spreading the word of the plan through various networks, says Jones-Wilson, who is editor of *The Journal of Negro Education*, a Howard University publication on education issues affecting blacks.

LaMar Haynes of the National Education Association says that several NEA officials have been and still are involved in the planning, development and implementation of the initiative. "As a follow-up to our efforts with the NCEBC, the NEA will be sharing the blueprint with attendees at its annual Women and Minority Conference, which precedes the NEA annual meeting."



Photo by Richard J. Brown

"because of the amount of street violence, drug abuse and loitering that it causes in our neighborhoods."

Earlier this year, Koch sought a legal opinion on whether the city could enact a law allowing for the seizure of vehicles owned by persons arrested for soliciting prostitutes. The opinion stated that the law could best be enacted by the state of Oregon.

Rep. John Minnis then introduced the bill in the last session, but the legislature failed to act on the matter before the close of session.

Koch praised Piedmont neighborhood leaders for helping to "try and solve problems" occurring within their boundaries.



Portland will host the Northwest Regional Convention of the National Association of Colored Women's Clubs, the oldest Black women's organization in the nation. State District 18 Representative, Margaret Carter, will be guest speaker Wednesday, July 29, 1987. See story on Page 6.