

City's school desegregation plan rejected

By MIKE BOWLER

The Department of Health, Education and Welfare rejected yesterday Baltimore's junior and senior high school desegregation plans and set in motion the procedures for cutting off more than \$20 million in federal school aid.

A seven-page, tersely written letter from Peter E. Holmes, director of the department's Office of Civil Rights, said the plans are "not adequate to bring your district into compliance" with the Civil Rights Act of 1964.

Mr. Holmes cited a long list of "deficiencies," including the zone lines the school board had altered under intense community pressure from Southeast Baltimore and the racial proportions that would result under the city plan at Patterson, Northern, Hamilton, Canton, Benjamin Franklin, Dunbar and Poly.

The civil rights director said his office had "no alternative but to request the Office of General Counsel to request a hearing date and the appointment of an administrative law judge."

This is the beginning of the fund cut-off process, a procedure that could take more than a year and that allows a district to appeal as high as the HEW secretary.

Other federal agencies will be notified of yesterday's action and "given an opportunity to join the enforcement proceedings," the letter said, and federal commitments of aid for "new programs and activities" are deferred for at least 90 days.

City school officials received the letter last evening and declined immediate comment. Norman P. Ramsey, the school board president, said he would not discuss the city's next move until he had conferred with his board and the lawyers advising the board on desegregation matters.

Sheila Sachs, a board member who had played a major role in drawing up the plans, said she was "not terribly shocked or distressed. I had sort of expected that someone from the outside would not understand why we would leave some schools black or under-en-

rolled. MAY 3 1975
"There are some things we may be able to resolve. Others may never be resolved."

Mrs. Sachs and school officials noted that the threat to defer federal funds for new programs is meaningless, since such funds have been withheld during most of the 14 months the city has been negotiating with HEW.

Specifically, Mr. Holmes said that 13, or one-half, of the city's junior high schools do not fall within federal desegregation guidelines under the school board's proposed zoning plan.

He named Hamilton, Benjamin Franklin and Canton—site of two successful community desegregation protests in the last eight months—as schools that would remain predominantly white but that would be adjacent to 98 to 99 per cent black schools. MAY 3 1975

Additionally, Mr. Holmes said, Hamilton and Canton would be overcrowded and adjacent to black schools with empty seats. SUM

"... Zone lines must be drawn, where possible, in such a manner as to eliminate the racial identifiability of your disproportionate nonminority schools," he said.

Mr. Holmes also ordered the board to include Fallstaff and Chinquapin middle schools in the plan, rejecting the board's argument that these were special cases involving children passing from "childhood to adolescence." MAY 3 1975

All children must pass from childhood to adolescence, Mr. Holmes said, so the board's position "does not provide an adequate explanation for the exclusion of these two schools from your plan." SUM

Mrs. Sachs said that the fed-

eral department apparently had not taken into account that fact that, though no students would be transferred out of the two middle schools, both nevertheless would fall within the desegregation guidelines next fall.

Mr. Holmes was no less easy on the high school zone plan, which would have been implemented along with the junior high plan this fall.

He said only 5 of 12 comprehensive high schools would fall within the guidelines, which call for a 50 to 90 per cent black enrollment. Patterson and Northern high schools, which would remain predominantly white, are adjacent to nearly all black Dunbar and City-Eastern, Mr. Holmes noted.

School officials noted that HEW officials apparently had not considered the school board's transferring of the predominantly white ninth grade from Robert Poole Junior High to the City-Eastern complex, reducing its black enrollment to below 90 per cent. SUM

Mr. Holmes said Dunbar's health careers program, which had been cited as the rationale for designating it a citywide school, does not differ "significantly" from health programs offered at other schools, which he did not name. MAY 3 1975

Additionally, Mr. Holmes said, "It appears from newspaper accounts that Patterson is operating on double shifts." While double shifts do not constitute a civil rights violation in themselves, he said, they "give rise to the logical inference that the maintenance of over-enrollment ... represents an effort by the district to avoid further desegregation of the high schools." SUM

Only two of the five proposed citywide schools would fall within the guidelines, Mr. Holmes charged. He said Carver and Mergenthaler, the vocational-technical senior high schools, have "overlapping curricula" and could be paired.

Polytechnic Institute, which would draw 41 per cent of all the white students scheduled to attend the five citywide schools, would be 69 per cent white and "appears to be a continuing vestige of the dual school system." Mr. Holmes demanded an explanation of the Poly admissions "policies and procedures." SUM

He said 10 of the 12 special schools would be "racially identifiable," under the plan and that two of them, all-male Samuel Gompers General Vocation-

al High School and all-female Jane Addams Vocational School, appear in violation of Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, the act prohibiting sex discrimination in public school programs.

The city's faculty desegregation plan was criticized on several points. The board's proposal to "tailor" faculty assignments to schools 90 per cent or more black "is clearly unacceptable and contrary to what this office has communicated to you in the past," Mr. Holmes said.

"No lesser degree of faculty desegregation" than 50 per cent or more black faculty at all schools "would be legally acceptable," the letter said.

Even the system's proposed student-transfer policy was rejected by Mr. Holmes because it does not take into account the effect on desegregation in both the receiving and sending school.

Finally, the civil rights chief said the school system has failed to submit an analysis of elementary school zoning that takes school capacity into account, data on student suspensions that his office has "repeatedly requested" since September 13, and a description of specific measures the city will take to "correct deficiencies" in the pairing of Waverly and Abbottston elementary schools.

"Of course, the legal actions taken by this letter will be suspended when and if the school district submits an acceptable compliance plan and the suspension data for the 1972-1973 school year," Mr. Holmes concluded. MAY 3 1975



PETER E. HOLMES
... civil rights director

School plan, ends open enrollment

By MIKE BOWLER

City school officials unveiled a high school desegregation plan yesterday that ends more than a decade of open enrollment by creating attendance zones for 13 senior high schools.

The plan would require nearly a third of Baltimore's senior high school students to change schools next fall. JAN 22 1975

Eight of the city's 17 high schools would meet desegregation guidelines under the plan. Only three city high schools now are between 50 and 90 per cent black and meet the guidelines.

Under the plan, introduced at an elaborate press conference at Coldstream Elementary School, four city schools—Poly, Western, Mervo and Carver—would still draw students from anywhere in the city. SUN

Single-sex schools

City College and Eastern High School would share a zone and remain single-sex schools. Students in the other 11 zones generally would attend the school closest to their homes, and Southwestern from 83 to 69 per cent black.

School officials said, however, that the zones were not drawn strictly on a nearest-to-school basis because such a scheme would have left some schools crowded and some underutilized. SUN

Only one high school, Patterson, would remain on double shifts under the plan. Ninth grades housed in senior highs would be eliminated.

So would the so-called "magnet plan" in seven senior high schools. Instead, each of the new "zoned comprehensive high schools" would develop programs equal in depth and variety.

The officials admitted that when they studied programs at each of the schools in planning desegregation, they found wide variations in curriculum, staffing and course requirements.

Roland N. Patterson, the superintendent, said the plan should "correct a number of

3, would be disclosed later.

He emphasized that the plan is not final.

"It may require refinements and compromises of equally legitimate interests," he said. The plan was presented yesterday evening to the new Regional Advisory Councils at a citywide meeting at Poly-Western. JAN 22 1975

Desegregation planners had considered exempting next fall's senior class, about half of which (3,800 students) would have to change schools. Statistics were presented yesterday, in fact, taking in only sophomores and juniors.

However, Dr. Crew said, "it appears the Department of Health, Education and Welfare will require all three grades (to be) involved, and from court cases, we understand and Welfare to submit a high-school desegregation plan by February 3.

Five high schools, four fewer than this year, would remain all-black or virtually all-black under the plan. They are Douglass, Dunbar, Walbrook and Forest Park among the zoned schools, and Carver among the citywide schools.

According to projections for fall enrollment under the plan, Lake Clifton would change from 99 to 61 per cent black, Southern from 18 to 60 per cent black, Eastern-City from 99 to 89 per cent black, Patterson from 8 to 29 per cent black, and Southwestern from 83 to 69 per cent black.

The school system is believed to be about 73 per cent black this fall.

The four citywide schools would have the same racial balance as now. Admissions to these facilities would be handled by an expanded central admissions office.

The officials were somewhat vague on the criteria for admission to the four schools, but John L. Crew, the chief school system planner, said that "when applications are screened against criteria and capacity, you automatically have some controls."

The plans unveiled yesterday applied only to grades 10, 11 and 12. Norman P. Ramsey, the school board president, said alterations in the junior high plan and elementary pairing plan, also required by the Department of Health, Education and Welfare by February

would increase the minority enrollment at the receiving school.

This "majority-to-minority" transfer policy presumably would make it impossible, except for reasons of program or change of residence, for blacks to transfer to any school but Patterson and Northern, the only two majority-white high schools that would be left in the city, excluding Poly. Mervo, according to the statistics released yesterday, became predominantly black this year. JAN 22 1975

Poly, Mervo and Carver would continue to specialize in engineering and vocational programs. Poly continuing the A, B and T courses; Western would add a B course described as "more structured than the special college prep courses in the zoned schools," to its A course and would expand its business program to include bilingual transcription, para-legal training and other advanced offerings.

Mr. Ramsey said peaceful implementation of the plan "will take the best of good will from all of us." He and Dr. Patterson refused to speculate on problem areas, emphasizing that the plan is preliminary and may be changed.

Asked if he expected "another Boston, where a federal judge's integration plan has been followed by bloody black-white clashes, Dr. Patterson said: "Baltimore students are a very mature group. With the proper explanation and understanding of what we have to do I'm sure there won't be another Boston."

"I expect the youth of Baltimore . . . They don't respond in a Boston fashion." SUN

Also at yesterday's press conference, Dr. Patterson released copies of a letter he mailed Monday to the HEW civil rights chief, Peter Holmes, in response to Mr. Holmes' highly critical evaluation of Baltimore's "interim" elementary and junior high plans.

The letter said the city is anxious to correct the "deficiencies" Mr. Holmes found in the city plans, but "you have not identified the asserted deficiencies with sufficient detail to permit the board and . . . administration to consider means for correcting whatever deficiencies may exist."

Dr. Patterson said, "We can not understand your assertion that a substantial portion of the transfers granted to seventh graders resulted in less

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Specific Desegregation Plan Shunned

By Patrick Gilbert

A sharply divided school task force last night voted not to send a specific desegregation plan to the School Board.

Instead, the desegregation task force decided to send five separate plans — two dealing with the elementary school level, one dealing with the elementary-intermediate level and two dealing with the intermediate-secondary level.

The decision, which prompted bitter debate puts the burden squarely on the city School Superintendent and the School Board to come up with a final proposal to meet the April 30 deadline set by the Federal Department of Health, Education and Welfare for desegregating the schools.

The task force also rejected, by a tie vote, a move to send along the five plans ranked in priority of preference.

This move was backed by those task force members favoring busing to achieve racial balance and clearly marked the division within the task force itself.

Five Plans Outlined

The five plans presented last night included:

1. A plan to pair elementary schools which have a disappportionate racial composition as a long-range solution to "wipe out the last vestiges of segregation in the city."

The committee which drew up this plan found 48 elementary schools with an overwhelmingly white school population and recommended the pairing of 92 elementary schools to achieve racial bal-

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Mrs. Joan Parker, who made the presentation, said the pairings would mean extensive busing at the elementary level. She said the average distance between the paired schools would be two miles.

The pairings would affect only grades 4 through 6. The committee recommended kindergarten through grade three be left in the present schools.

2. A plan which would leave

the elementary schools untouched with desegregation coming about through changing housing patterns and cultural exchange programs.

Neighborhood concepts

This committee report, presented by Thomas Abshire, stressed the concept of neighborhood schools and the adverse affect disrupting these schools would have on the pupils and parent participation.

3. A plan which would create a feeder system at the elementary-intermediate school level by placing several elementary schools in a zone feeding a particular junior high school.

This plan would also create middle schools when possible. This would be done by consolidating schools within a zone when it was found enough seats were not being utilized in the elementary schools.

HEW Guidelines

The zoning of the elementary schools would be done so that the students going into the junior high or middle schools would achieve a racial balance according to HEW guidelines.

The elementary schools themselves might not meet these guidelines but the racial balance would be improved, the committee report said.

4. A plan which would require pairing of junior high and senior high schools. This would involve 10 junior high schools and 13 senior highs.

Under this plan City and Eastern High Schools would be paired with Northern and all three would be co-educational.

Also, the committee recommended that Northwestern and Edmondson be done through districting.

5. A modified open enrollment plan for secondary schools whereby students would have their choice of schools until a racial balance of 50-50 was met.

Using Lottery Drawing

This plan would use a lottery drawing in instances where the 50 per cent racial composition is exceeded. The excess percentage of students would be drawn out and placed in a pool.

Then if the 50-50 ratio is not reached at a particular school these students would be given another choice until the school reached its capacity then put in the school of their second choice and so on until they are placed.

The racial balancing would be done in phases over a three-year period with each outgoing class from the junior high schools to the senior high schools.

The enrollment policy of the junior high schools would be on a zoned basis.

Exceptions to this plan were made for Poly and City, Eastern and Western High Schools, Carver and Mergenthaler and magnet schools.

'Yellow School Bus'

The plan for busing school children at the elementary school drew the most criticism by task force members who decried the use of the "yellow school bus."

Asked at one point if her committee had considered the monetary consequences of busing, Mrs. Parker replied, "Desegregation is just as costly as segregation."

'Acted Like Babies'

After the task force voted to send all five reports to the School Board, Mrs. Grace Hines berated the members for being timid.

"I agreed to be on the task force because I thought we

Under this plan City and Eastern High Schools would be paired with Northern and all three would be co-educational.

Baltimorean, ashamed to be a member of this body. You've acted like a bunch of babies,"

Mrs. Hines shouted angrily.

Mrs. Hines's remark started an emotional outpouring of remarks by task force members which sent last night's meeting past 1 A.M.

Herbert Goldman, task force chairman, said he would present the five plans to Dr. Roland N. Patterson, school superintendent, informally Friday.

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