

# Partial Jones School Closing Urged

## Report Made Public On Racial Imbalance

By Larry Sullivan

The "confidential" report of the citizens' committee studying racial imbalance in Ann Arbor public schools was open to public inspection today.

Headlining 10½ pages of recommendations submitted two weeks ago to the Board of Education was that of closing Jones Elementary School for all except kindergarten classes.

The 175 pupils affected—with more than 75 per cent being Negro—would be transported by bus to other schools.

The committee, empowered to study racial implications throughout the school system, also recommended:

- 1) Close surveillance of Mack Elementary School, which has the second highest Negro enrollment (41 per cent);
- 2) Beginning of an exploratory pre-school program for three and four-year-old children to aid those "who are at a disadvantage so far as educational assistance at home."
- 3) Promoting of programs for greater racial understanding and remedial assistance at the high school and junior high school levels;
- 4) Consideration of racial balance in outlining attendance districts for future high schools and junior high schools;
- 5) More attention by the board as the prime school power to combat discrimination and bias throughout the community;
- 6) Creation of a school administrator specifically to handle intercultural relations;
- 7) Appointment of a citizens advisory committee to continue work on these matters; and
- 8) Concentration on "compensatory services and enrichment program" to offset the problems that racial discrimination presents.

Much of the seven-month study was concerned with Jones School. With a Negro percentage of enrollment 16 times greater than the overall percentage of Negroes in the community, the school had been declared a "de facto" segregated school by the Board of Education.

The committee indicated in its 38-page report, however, that it "has viewed its responsibility as extending to the problem of racial imbalance as it exists at other schools, particularly Mack School. Moreover, the committee has interpreted its charge to extend also to the related questions of the total contribution the public educational system can make in combatting the evils of racial discrimination."

The 12-member panel noted that it had held 22 meetings of the full committee, generally on a once-a-week basis, and numerous subcommittee meetings since appointments were made last September. It was given no deadline for its report, but the school board indicated at the time of the appointment that the suggestions might be put into effect for the 1964-65 year.

The report was submitted to the board two weeks ago and immediately labeled "confidential" by President Albert Coudron. He said it would not be made public until the last week in June, after the board had had adequate time to study its findings.

At The News' request, Coudron authorized release of the

report two weeks earlier than had been planned.

Closing of Jones School to all but kindergarten classes would result in higher costs to the school system both immediately to cover school bus transportation and ultimately to provide new classrooms to replace those being vacated at Jones. The school is a 16-classroom building.

The report, however, does not delve into comparative costs or the possible disposition of the Jones School building.

Several alternatives are explored to eliminate the racial imbalance at Jones School. Among them are enrolling additional white students at Jones

Beginning Monday, the entire report of the citizens' committee which studied racial imbalance in the Ann Arbor public school system will be published in installments by The News.

or making the school "superior" in number and talent of teachers and supportive services to compensate for the disadvantages of segregation.

The committee indicates three methods of redistributing Jones pupils in other schools:

- 1) "Open" enrollment under which students could attend other schools;
- 2) Pairing of Jones School with a predominantly white school, with all lower elementary children being assigned to one of the schools and all upper elementary children being assigned to the other; and
- 3) Closing the school program at Jones School and assigning the students to other schools.

The report summarizes: "As a practical matter, the alternatives reduce themselves to two principal plans—either maintaining the elementary school program at Jones, but seeking to enrich it in order to compensate for educational disadvantages inherent in the segregated school and the total environment of which it is a part, or assigning the children of Jones School to other schools..."

"The committee has concluded that the desirability of putting an end to the racial segregation resulting from the oper-

ation of Jones School as a neighborhood school is a primary and controlling consideration. No matter how much money is poured into improvement of educational facility and program at Jones School, it will remain a segregated school and be associated in the mind of the community with all the elements of disadvantage and deprivation that are the consequences of racial discrimination.

"The very fact that it is a Negro school, that it is known as such, that it is identified with a total environment that is a witness to discrimination, indicates to us that the children in this area cannot be expected to achieve their educational potentialities unless they share opportunities, expectations and motivations with children who because of a more advantageous environment are in the position to set the pace and standard for educational achievement..."

Tables included in the report show Negroes have a dropout average of 25.6 per cent as compared to 5.3 per cent for white students. College and university preparatory courses are taken by more than 75 per cent of the white students but only 36 per cent of the Negroes.

Statistics in the report also indicate Negro students scored considerably below white students on reading achievement throughout the elementary grades and on academic grade averages among seventh grade students.

Although still below the average of whites, the reading skills and academic records of Negroes from other schools is shown to be considerably higher than those of Negroes who had attended Jones and Mack Schools.

The report summarizes the table findings:

"This is not to suggest that the achievement of Negro children in predominantly white schools equals that of the white children in the particular school. It does, however, point to the conclusion that whatever all the educational factors involved and however they may be assessed, Negro children in the Ann Arbor School District are more likely to measure up to their educational potential when attending a racially mixed as distinguished from a segregated school."

Other statistical data show that 4.7 per cent of the population of Ann Arbor is Negro (3,176 of 67,340, according to the 1960 census). Negroes comprise six per cent of the total school enrollment (865 of 14,258).

In contrast to these percentages are Jones' 75.4 per cent Negro enrollment and Mack's 41.1 per cent. Next in line is Perry with 28.6 per cent Negroes and Northside with 12.6 per cent.

On the other end of the "racial imbalance" scale are Carpenter, Dicken, Meadowview, Mitchell, Pattengill and Pittsfield Elementary Schools with no Negroes, according to the report; Angell and Lakewood Elementary Schools, with one Negro each; Stone Elementary, with two, and Allen, three.

An irregular distribution also is indicated at the junior high level with the percentages of Negro enrollments being 8.9 at Forsythe, 7.9 at Slauson and only 1.7 at Tappan.

The Board of Education took its first hard look at the racial imbalance in school enrollments a year ago. Then a subcommittee of board members was given the responsibility of examining the situation and predicting future trends.

As a result of the subcommittee's study, the citizens committee to study racial distribution was appointed last September. Its recommendations were submitted as unanimous.

Members of the committee are Gale Jensen, Albert H. Wheeler, Richard Mann, and Rev. Lyman S. Parks, Leonard Hoag, Walter W. Hill, Mrs. Robert Lennon, the Rev. Richard Cockrell, Mrs. Ben F. Sleet, Carroll McFadden, Paul Kauper and Mrs. Sally Vinter. Mann is the chairman.