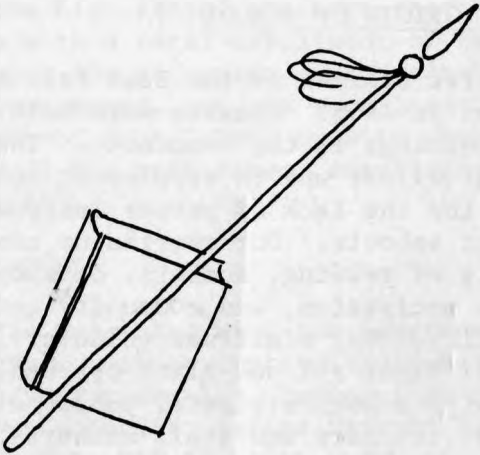


FACTS ABOUT THE NAIROBI SCHOOLS



## FACTS ABOUT NAIROBI SCHOOLS

### SCOPE OF EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM

Nairobi Schools include the Annette Latorre Pre-School, an elementary, and a high school. Thus, we have an educational system with a common philosophy and complementary educational programs extending from about ages four to eighteen. No other school system, public or private, offers such a unified educational program to our community.

Although we have established a full time school, we have continued our Saturday Day School Program.

### BRIEF ORIGIN OF SCHOOL

We first started as the East Palo Alto Day School in 1966. Classes were held on Saturday mornings in the community. The purpose of our effort was to supplement and compensate for the lack of proper instruction in public schools. Our curriculum consisted mainly of reading, numbers, developing personal motivation, and community and self-identity. Our staff was voluntary, consisting of Black and non-Black parents, college and high school students, public and private school teachers and staff members, and concerned parents. Our students, Black and non-Black, ranged from the age of five to sixteen. Our enrollment grew to over 250 by 1968. After the Day School had been in operation for a while, we felt that the day-to-day damage done by public schools was too severe for us to overcome within the short time we had the students on Saturday mornings. By that time we also knew we had sufficient numbers of parents and students who believed in us to start a full five day a week elementary school. This we did in 1969.

In 1969-70 the nursery school was founded. It is named after the late Mrs. Annette Latorre, who worked up until her death as one of our teachers.

In 1969 the high school was founded out of a crisis. Like Sojourner Truth, we had been sneaking students out of the local high school district to attend school in a neighboring school district in which the parents had more confidence. Shortly after this sneak-out program had been in operation, two young ladies were expelled from the school without being advised of the reason. Because of our inability to resolve the problem, the high school was born shortly afterwards with a total enrollment of two. Within a week the situation at the sneak-out school worsened, and the enrollment at the new Nairobi High School grew to about ten. 1970-71 the high school enrollment was twenty-six.

### WHY OUR SCHOOL

We are often presented with the question: "Why don't you work to improve the public schools in your community, rather than starting your own school?" Before Nairobi School began most of us met each other for the first time at school board meetings. Having been placed at the end of the agenda, we sat for hours on many nights to well after midnight, waiting to express our sincere concern about the failure of the public schools to educate our children, and to volunteer our assistance. We went through years of rejection, defeat, and humiliation. The emotional and physical drain was immense, but out of the process evolved a group of people who found themselves holding common beliefs about education.

Politically this predominantly Black community has no impact on the elementary and high school boards and trustees allegedly serving it. The community represents about 46 per cent of the registered voters of the elementary district. Never has a majority of this board been residents of this community, in spite of the fact that this community provides a sizeable majority of the student body. For the high school district, the community represents less than 6 per cent of the registered voters, and never has any person from this community been elected to the board. No community can be properly served by a school district if it has little or no control of its board. Nevertheless, we worked tirelessly for years with the public schools. Now we often reflect back: "Look how much further along Nairobi Schools could have been if we had not wasted precious years attempting to improve public schools!" We can't afford to make that statement again in 1980.

Whereas we are very much in support of efforts by others to improve public schools, we feel that one of our major contributions will be to try to salvage some of our youth until the quality of education in public schools is acceptable. Thus, our charge is not to attempt to educate all of the youth of our community. We can't. We merely want to save some so that at least, educationally, we are not totally annihilated.

But there are more general reasons why our school does and should exist. First, historically private education has been extremely beneficial in improving the quality of education provided the public in the United States.

Secondly, public schools have been tremendously unstable over the last 16 years. The principal reason is the on-again, off-again attempts toward racially desegregating schools. One cannot help but say that this has had a deleterious effect on the already-poor education of Black youth. Now a new problem has arisen to further complicate public school stability: inadequate financing.

There will be more legislation and court action on this subject than there presently is on the racial desegregation of schools. Inadequate financing is not a new problem to Nairobi Schools. We have never had much, don't intend to acquire much, and are not certain that much is required. So while the public schools are trying to settle down, we shall struggle on to educate as many as we can.

Competition among educational systems is essential because educational monopolies are just as undesirable as economic monopolies, if not moreso. Public schools have indeed enjoyed an unquestionable monopoly in communities of color and low-income. Increasing the opportunities for parental choice, through such actions as establishing alternative schools, is fundamental to the improvement of educational quality in these communities. We feel we can facilitate this in our community by developing the best possible alternative school for students and parents - and we are - and by encouraging others to follow our example throughout the state and nation. Pleasing and promising changes are emerging in the local elementary school district. We would like to believe that our existence has played a small part in bringing this about.

## SCHOOL PHILOSOPHY

We strive to develop and implement a curriculum that is ebonicentric, that is, based upon and centered around the lives and needs of Black people.

It is our strong belief that our children can learn and that they must learn! We believe that along with the rudiments of knowledge, they must be taught who they are. A child who knows how to read and figure and does not know who he is is already a loss to the community. We hope the students will dedicate their educational careers to their community. This means they will seek to acquire and maximize those high-priority skills and talents that are necessary to develop their community.

## EVALUATING OUR EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM

We are frequently asked: "How effective is your educational program?"

Most of our students have not been enrolled in Nairobi Schools long enough to acquire reliable data on our effectiveness. Measures of these students' performance at this stage would not be a true index of our effectiveness. We are now making longitudinal studies of our teaching effectiveness. The elementary students who have been enrolled in our school all or most of their school years are presently reading two to three years above grade level.

We are also asked: "How many graduates have you had; have they had difficulty getting into colleges and universities; and how have they done once enrolled?"

We have had only four graduates from Nairobi High School and none have had difficulty enrolling in college or in satisfying the scholastic requirements. Recall, however, that these graduates have spent most of their academic careers in public schools. Thus their performance is not a true and total reflection of the quality of our educational program. We shall, however, take credit for their determination to acquire and maximize the skills needed to help build Black communities.

## SCHOOL ACCREDITATION AND TEACHER CERTIFICATION

Nairobi Schools meet all of the education code requirements of California. Nairobi High School has applied for accreditation with the Accrediting Commission for Secondary Schools. We have received two visits from the Commission and do not anticipate any problems securing conventional accreditation. Our primary concern, however, is to become accredited by the people and the community we serve.

Some of our teachers are certified. Similarly, however, we are primarily concerned about the teachers becoming certified by the people and the community. In most cases "certified" teachers have not been adequately prepared to teach in communities of color and low-income. Therefore, we have had to de-certify and re-certify them.

## SOURCES OF FUNDING

Nairobi Schools are largely supported through fund-raising activities put on by the Schools: conferences, sales of everything imaginable, dinners and banquets, operating a book store,

consulting on educational and community problems, and hustling whatever is required to educate our youth. In addition, the preschool draws its principal support from the federally-funded Headstart Program; the elementary school received a grant last year from a Bay Area foundation. A small percentage of the Schools' income is through tuition (See section on Scholarship).

In addition to these fund-raising activities, the Schools are engaged in developing a program towards greater self-sustenance.

#### LEGAL STATUS

Nairobi Schools are joined in a non-profit, tax-exempt corporation. It is one of many activities founded by its parent organization, the Mothers For Equal Education - also a non-profit, tax-exempt corporation.

#### THE STUDENT BODY

The Nairobi Schools' student body reflects the socio-economic character of our community. Most of the students are from Nairobi, but some are from as far away as San Francisco, Los Angeles, and North Carolina. Whereas there is no racial discrimination in the Schools' admission policy, most of the students are Black.

#### SCHOLARSHIPS

Few of the parents and guardians are able to pay the Schools' tuition fee. Therefore, one of the major expenses of the Schools is providing sufficient scholarship funds. When funds are available, partial and full scholarships are provided to the most needy families. Special solicitations for scholarships are made to directors, friends of the Schools, and corporations.

#### SCHOOL DIRECTORS

There are 12 members on the Schools' Board of Directors. Membership on the Board is determined by belief in the Schools' Philosophy, and participation in the Schools' development. The Board, as well as its instructional staff is predominantly Black.

#### NAIROBI SCHOOLS CONSULTING TEAM

We have been approached by innumerable communities, organizations, schools, federal agencies, colleges, universities, etc., regarding our program. As a result we have established a consulting team, which can be retained for a nominal fee.

#### PHYSICAL FACILITIES

The thrust of the Nairobi Schools is, and shall continue to be, its educational program, not its physical facilities. However, some modest facilities have been acquired in Nairobi, California by Mothers For Equal Education for use by the Nairobi Schools. Their addresses are as follows:

- |  |                                      |
|--|--------------------------------------|
| -The Annette Latorre<br>Preschool  | 2358 University<br>Palo Alto, Calif. |
| -Nairobi Kindergarten  | 791 Runnymede<br>Palo Alto, Calif.   |
| -Nairobi Elementary<br>School and Eula M.<br>Dyer Administration<br>Building | 805 Runnymede<br>Palo Alto, Calif.   |
| -Nairobi High School   | 855 Runnymede<br>Palo Alto, Calif.   |

STUDENT BODY SIZE

	<u>High School</u>	<u>Elementary School</u>	<u>Preschool</u>	<u>Saturday School</u>
1966-67				22
1967-68				220
1968-69	2		22	300
1969-70	21	28	22	115
1970-71	26	29	20	75
1971-72	8	24	*	*

\*Published before school began.

Teaching And Administrative Staff

Mrs. Rachel Bell  
 Miss Rebecca Bibbs  
 J. Richard Blackmarr  
 James Crawford  
 Robert Hoover  
 Mrs. Barbara Mouton  
 Mrs. Martha Murray  
 Mrs. Mary Noyes  
 Henry Organ  
 Vernon Paige  
 Mrs. Shirley Powers  
 David Rages  
 Mrs. Sonia Reira Ferrer  
 Mrs. M. Ruth Sampson  
 Mrs. W. Gertrude Wilks  
 Dr. T. Lightfoote Wilson

Board of Directors

Mrs. W. Gertrude Wilks, Founder  
 Henry P. Organ, First Vice Ch.  
 George Grant, Second Vice Ch.  
 Mrs. Gelsomina Becks, Secretary  
 Mrs. Clarene Watts, Treasurer  
 Mrs. Hilda Aarons  
 Mrs. Rachel Bell  
 Mrs. Ida Daniels  
 Larry Fewell  
 Robert Hoover  
 Reverend Henry Milton  
 Mrs. Barbara Mouton

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