

Poll reveals student exodus from Ravenswood district

By **BILL SHILSTONE**

Dissatisfaction with educational results in the Ravenswood City (elementary) School District has spurred an exodus of more than half the students in Suburban Park, according to a survey of the community of 244 homes between Bay Road and Bayshore Freeway in Menlo Park.

A survey of 218 homes was conducted Nov. 21 by the Suburban Park Association and showed that 82 of 118 first-through-eighth-grade children are attending parochial or public schools outside the Ravenswood district.

Dissatisfaction with the Ravenswood district was cited in 39 of the 47 households with children in other schools. Sixty-three students have been pulled out of Ravenswood schools in the past five years, according to the survey.

The financially troubled Ravenswood District loses nearly \$1,100 in income for every student attending outside the district.

The association conducted the survey in preparation for a petition for a transfer of Suburban Park from the Ravenswood to the Menlo Park School District.

The association is seeking a January meeting with the Ravenswood trustees to initiate their transfer request.

Neither Ravenswood Supt. Warren Hayman nor board president Robert Hoover was immediately available for

comment on the survey and annexation proposal this morning.

Mrs. Betty Johnson, former Ravenswood trustee and now a member of Suburban Park Association, met with the two men Tuesday. She said they had expressed interest in "concentrating their efforts in working with people who were willing to stay in the district and try to improve education."

The survey indicated that about 45 of the "sneak-out" students would be returned to their neighborhood school if annexation to Menlo Park were accomplished.

The closing of Flood and Menlo Oaks schools, which Suburban Park students attended last year, caused some of the sneak-out, the survey indicated.

Mrs. Johnson said the main reason for the exodus is parents giving up

hope that the uphill struggle by the 90% minority Ravenswood district with low-achieving students will be successful.

The 3,900 student district has had twin problems of low tax base and a high concentration of lower socioeconomic level students with educational handicaps.

Suburban Park is middle-income and predominantly white — 92 of the 118 children in the survey are Caucasian.

"Dissatisfaction with education in the junior high (Menlo Oaks) became apparent about six years ago," Mrs. Johnson said. "Students who were high achievers compared to their classmates in Ravenswood found they were unprepared academically and socially in high school."