

Sequoia will finance black student exodus

REDWOOD CITY — Black students who contend they are educationally shortchanged in the Sequoia Union High School District may go elsewhere to school this year — and the district will help pay their way—trustees decided unanimously Thursday night.

The decision, which also includes other minority group students, marked the culmination of a three - year struggle by citizen groups that have criticized educational opportunities for minority students in the Sequoia district.

Notable among these groups was the Mothers for Equal Education (MEE), led by Mrs. Gertrude Wilks of 1189 Saratoga Ave., East Palo Alto, who has

conducted a "sneak-out" program for East Palo Alto youngsters who live weekdays in other districts and thus are legally eligible to attend schools elsewhere.

It was MEE that suggested the Sequoia board make some provision for paying other districts to accept Sequoia students and got the matter on the board agenda Thursday night.

TO SEEK PACTS

In its much - amended final decision, the Sequoia board agreed to seek interdistrict contracts under which the Sequoia district would pay "equitable costs" to any other district in the state for the education of "non - Caucasian or minority group" youngsters who would

otherwise attend Ravenswood or Menlo-Atherton high schools.

The decision was restricted to students attending Ravenswood or Menlo - Atherton. Transfers to other schools in the Sequoia district will not be allowed.

The interdistrict contracts would be limited to one year. No limit was set on the number of students who would be allowed to participate.

PALO ALTO

The Palo Alto Unified School District, which had almost 50 "sneak-out" students last year, probably would be the district most affected by the Sequoia decision.

Supt. Harold T. Santee, referring to Palo Alto's plan for a program of multicultural educa-

tion, said the district already "has indicated a willingness to study the total matter involving cooperation with the Ravenswood Elementary School District, the Sequoia Union High School District and other districts."

However, he expressed concern about the timing of Sequoia's decision just two weeks before the start of school and said movement of large numbers of students into the Palo Alto district would require long-range planning to provide additional teachers and classrooms.

He also noted there would be "a significant cost if any great numbers of students come."

The cost to a district of educating a student runs between

\$900 and \$1,200 a year, he said, and "if 250 kids were involved, it would cost them (Sequoia) a quarter of a million dollars."

Paul Major, associate superintendent of the Mountain View-Los Altos High School District, said any move on the part of the district along the lines indicated by the Sequoia move "would have to be discussed by the board of education."

He said that to his knowledge the Mountain View-Los Altos board has never discussed anything like the Sequoia proposal. Officials of other nearby districts were not available for comment.

Sequoia Trustee Mrs. Helen S. Kerwin said Thursday night

(Continued on page 2, col. 5)

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(Continued from page 1)

she felt the transfer program should be limited to black students. "I don't see any reason to allow white children, who can get a good education in this district, to transfer to another district," she said.

Mrs. Kerwin's remark elicited a satisfied rumble from some members of the overflow audience of about 200 persons, more than half of whom were black.

Mrs. Wilks told the trustees she has some nonblack students in the sneak out program and predicted there would be more who would desire to participate in the transfer program.

The scope of the transfer program was enlarged to include "minority group" students, after Robert S. Hoover of 196 Jasmine Way, East Palo Alto, stated that Mexican-Americans "are also getting the dirty end of the stick." Hoover is a trustee of the Ravenswood City School District.

Among the many reasons Mrs. Wilks stated for wanting the exodus were that staff and administration members at Ravenswood and Menlo-Atherton were "practicing discrimination," that there were "racists in the Sequoia school district administration," and that the Sequoia district establishment was "destroying black boys and girls by the hundreds."

Mrs. Wilks said, "just because Ravenswood is 99 per cent black doesn't mean something (good) can't happen there. It could if you got some of the racists out of that administration."

Although they seemed pleased with the success of their efforts, the black speakers left no doubt in anyone's mind that they felt the program should be unnecessary, that they would have preferred to see radical changes within the Sequoia district itself.

Similar feelings were expressed by a leader of Citizens United for Relevant Education (CURE), a predominantly white group dedicated to working toward integration within the Sequoia district.

CURE, she said, "regretfully supports this (MEE) request, since it means the district cannot handle" the education of the minority group youngsters.

One radical proposal to change the Sequoia district is pending

before the board. It is a master plan that would eliminate Ravenswood as a school and turn it into a community center for pilot educational programs.

Ravenswood's students would be shifted to two of four 3,500-student centers which would be established in the district.

The results of the \$68,000 study by Management and Economics Research, Inc., will be aired at three public hearings in September.

The study was undertaken to find a means to reduce the problem of de facto segregation in the district.

Black parents have indicated that the long-range solution might be a fine idea, but the sneak-out, and now the transfer program, are viewed as ways to educate their children in the meantime.

Three injured near Stanford golf course

Three persons were injured—one seriously—in a head-on collision on Junipero Serra Boulevard near Stanford Golf Course Thursday afternoon, the California Highway Patrol said.

Admitted to Stanford University Hospital with facial cuts and possible internal injuries was Mrs. Ethel Alma Asturias, 56, of 547 Hillcrest Way, Redwood City.

Her granddaughter, Michele Asturias, 4, of 2080 Arrowood Lane, San Jose, suffered a broken nose but was treated and released.

Also injured was the driver of the other car, Mrs. Dorothy Lillian Meyers, 50, of 565 Giannini Drive, Santa Clara. She was treated for cuts and bruises and released.

According to the Highway patrol, Mrs. Asturias was westbound on Junipero Serra about 4 p.m. when Michele tried to climb into the front seat from the back seat. Mrs. Asturias drifted across the double yellow line as she tried to prevent Michele from climbing over the seat.

Mrs. Asturias collided head-on with Mrs. Meyers's eastbound auto, the CHP said, although both drivers tried to swerve before the collision.