

McCURDY, JACK

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FRIVOLOUS TO FUNDAMENTAL

Demands Made by East Side High School Students Listed

BY JACK McCURDY

Times Education Writer

A long list of student grievances and demands for sweeping educational changes emerged from the boycotts and demonstrations which disrupted classes at the predominantly Mexican-American high schools in East Los Angeles during the last two weeks.

They range from the frivolous to the fundamental, from miniskirts to Mexican history courses.

Together, they represent the inve-

Student walkouts by Mexican-Americans could spell the beginning of a revolution. See Page 1, Section C.

terate dissatisfaction among students—and many parents, community leaders and teachers—with the way Mexican-American youngsters are being educated in the Los Angeles city school system.

And after the show of power and unity by the Mexican-American community, even the seemingly frivolous complaints are likely to assume larger proportions among school officials now.

Complaints charge that the school

district is failing to educate the Mexican-American children, as evidenced by the high dropout rate, and that predominantly Anglo areas of the system are receiving more construction funds at the expense of East Los Angeles schools.

School officials deny any prejudice in allocation of building funds and say that they agree with 99% of the students' demands—but that the district does not have the money to finance the kind of massive changes proposed.

In addition, even if the funds were available, the district says it could not find the number of personnel, particularly Spanish-speaking teachers, counselors and administrators, demanded for the Mexican-American schools.

"Our differences are a matter of degree," said a schools spokesman. "What they want involves huge masses of money and personnel which are both not available."

Here are the specific demands and the school district's reaction:

1—No student or teacher to be reprimanded or suspended for parti-

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East Side High School Students List Demands

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cipating in the recent demonstrations.

The Board of Education has promised an amnesty for students who boycotted classes through last Monday. No promises have been made about teachers.

2—Compulsory bilingual and bicultural education in all East Los Angeles schools, with teachers and administrators to receive training in speaking Spanish and Mexican cultural heritage.

The district now provides classes in Spanish on a voluntary basis for teachers who work in predominantly Mexican-American schools, but to make it compulsory would require a huge outlay of funds for special classes.

Teacher Prejudice

3—Teachers and administrators who show any form of prejudice toward students, including failure to recognize cultural traditions, will be transferred.

To prove prejudice is difficult, and to put a teacher with such attitudes in another school would simply shift the problem. The district's human relations program for its personnel is a better answer.

4—Textbooks and curriculum should be revised to show Mexican contributions to society, to show injustices they have suffered and to concentrate on Mexican folklore.

The district has been a leader in getting textbook publishers to make such changes and is printing many of its own supplementary books with such emphasis for use in minority areas.

Smaller Class Sizes

5—Class size must be reduced so teachers can devote more time to individual students. Team teaching should be used.

This involves not only the hiring of many more teachers but the construction of more classrooms, which would require more funds.

Supt. Jack Crowther already has urged a \$136 million program to reduce average class size in secondary schools from 34 students to one teacher to 30-1, to hire many more teacher aides and to provide the support services such as clerical help to make the smaller class size effective.

6—Counselor-student ratios must be reduced and counselors must speak Spanish and have a knowledge of Mexican cultural heritage.

Guidance Program

Crowther has proposed a reduction in the 1,000-1 counselor-student ratio in secondary schools to 250-1 under a \$16.5 million program. But whether this many qualified counselors can be found is doubtful. At present, Spanish-speaking counselors are placed in the East Side schools when possible.

7—The schools' guidance program for counseling students on post-high school endeavors must be improved.

The program has been

ing over of schools to community groups. The district already has a huge youth services program.

14—No teacher will be dismissed or transferred because of his or her political or philosophical views.

It is already almost impossible to have a teacher transferred against his or her will, particularly for such reasons.

Parents as Aides

15—Community parents will be engaged as teacher's aides.

The district pioneered the hiring of teacher aides and has the largest program in the nation.

16—The industrial arts program must be revitalized to provide training for entry into industry; modern equipment and techniques must be provided.

There is wide disagreement over whether these high school programs

should provide job readiness or provide general training for entry into advanced vocational schools and industry where the specialized training could be given.

17—New high schools in the area must be immediately built with renaming of existing schools after Mexican heroes to establish community identity.

A new Wilson High School is already being built, which will permit use of the present Wilson High as another junior high school for the junior high school students now attending Lincoln High School. Renaming of schools is board responsibility.

18—All condemned buildings will be razed and new structures erected.

None of the East Los Angeles school buildings have been condemned. Three were built before the Field Act of 1932 and

therefore do not meet this law's stringent earthquake specifications for school buildings. But neither do most old and new public buildings but that does not mean that they are dangerous. The three structures, a social sciences building at Garfield, a shop building at Lincoln and a classroom building at Roosevelt, are among 60 such buildings throughout the district. Two of the three East Los Angeles buildings are currently being replaced.

19—Library facilities must be expanded at all East Los Angeles high schools, and more library materials will be provided in Spanish.

All older high schools, including Canoga Park, Van Nuys and North Hollywood, have smaller libraries than new schools. Please Turn to Pg. 5, Col. 1

STUDENT DEMANDS

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They are being replaced as quickly as funds permit.

20—Open-air student eating areas should be roofed.

This is being done as soon as construction money is available.

21—Student lounges with jukeboxes should be provided and operated by paid students.

No schools have such facilities, which would require use of limited building funds.

22—All campuses will be open and fences removed.

Campuses Closed

All campuses are closed throughout the district to protect public property when school is not in session and to protect students from outsiders. Students must remain on campus during the day because the district has a legal responsibility for them all day.

23—School janitorial services should be restricted to employes and not assigned to students as punishment.

This is a harmless activity during detention which is used in most schools for minor infractions of rules.

24—Corporal punishment, which is carried out only in East Los Angeles schools, should be abolished throughout the district.

Corporal punishment is mostly used in the form of paddling, but it is unknown whether it is more common in East Los Angeles schools. Authorization of corporal punishment at the discretion of school personnel is the board's policy.

25—Teacher proficiency will be rated by students.

Teacher Autonomy

The trend is toward more autonomy for teachers to rate members of their own profession, as is done by college faculties, with less authority exercised by administrators and school boards. In view of growing teacher militancy for such rights, this would be difficult to reverse.

26—Students should have access to any type of literature on campus.

There presently is no restriction, except against the distribution or sale of literature or the possession of obscene materials.

27—Students who help

teachers should be paid or given credit.

Some credit is given in service organizations and paying jobs are available for students under some federal programs.

28—Students must be allowed to invite guest speakers to club meetings without approval.

The administration feels this activity should be supervised.

29—Dress and grooming standards will be determined by students, parents and teachers. Only administration-controlled student body officers, PTA representatives and teachers now do this.

These students are duly elected by the student body and PTA members are the designated representatives of parents.

Student Union

30—Student unions should be provided and run by students, and free speech areas designated on campuses.

Construction of student unions would require building funds. Many schools are providing forums for discussion in the campus auditoriums or malls.

31—Student body offices should be open to all students and a high grade average not considered a prerequisite for eligibility.

Grade requirements are used, as in athletics, in order to maintain an emphasis on educational activities over extracurricular affairs in school.

Open Restrooms

32—Restrooms should be open to students.

They are only closed under special circumstances to prevent illegal activities.

33—Lighted athletic fields should be provided at Lincoln, Wilson and Franklin high schools.

Because of a shortage of funds, only one lighted field is provided in each area throughout the city. Roosevelt is the East Side school. Some schools have had lights installed and paid for by community

groups or with student body funds.

34—Cafeteria menus should have more Mexican dishes and mothers should be allowed to help prepare the food.

The cafeteria menus throughout the city are the same but there is no reason why this request cannot be permitted.

Swimming Pools

35—All East Side schools should have swimming pools.

Funds are lacking. Only a few schools have pools and these were either built with community funds or were at the school when it joined the district.

36—All school athletic activities should be free.

School districts are prohibited by state law from financing interscholastic athletics so admissions must be charged to support them.

37—Student suspensions will be made by area superintendents instead of principals in order to prevent indiscriminate use of this action.

The district's aim is to decentralize authority to local schools and this proposal would be in contradiction.

Nonacademic Programs

38—Presentation of non-academic programs at the expense of class time should be prohibited.

This is the only way to have special events which students themselves have requested.

The students' demands won the support of a number of teachers at the East Side schools, including a few who walked out with them.

Later, the Los Angeles Teachers Assn. and the American Federation of Teachers, Local 1021, threw their support behind the proposals for more bilingual and bicultural training of school personnel, a reexamination of the schools' building needs, better cafeteria food, more Spanish-language library materials, an improved vocational program and more reading matter.