

# TRANSCRIPT OF PROCEEDINGS

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UNITED STATES COMMISSION ON CIVIL RIGHTS

IOWA ADVISORY COMMITTEE TO THE U.S. COMMISSION ON CIVIL RIGHTS:

SELECTED CIVIL RIGHTS )  
ISSUES IN IOWA'S PUBLIC )  
EDUCATION. )

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## UNITED STATES COMMISSION ON CIVIL RIGHTS

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 ISSUES IN IOWA'S PUBLIC )  
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Wednesday  
 January 25, 1989

Des Moines Marriott Hotel  
 700 Grand Avenue  
 Des Moines, Iowa  
 Salon D, morning session  
 Waterloo Room, evening session

The above-entitled matter came on for hearing,  
 pursuant to notice, at 10:26 a.m.

## PARTICIPANTS:

Members of the Iowa Advisory Committee:

DR. LENOLA ALLEN-SOMMERVILLE, CHAIR

REPRESENTATIVE HORACE DAGGETT, MEMBER

MS. BERNICE JONES, MEMBER

MR. STEPHEN WOLF, MEMBER

MR. JAMES ANDREWS, MEMBER

MR. LEONARD DAVIS, MEMBER

DR. MAX MORRISON, MEMBER

~~MR. ASCENSION HERNANDEZ, MEMBER,~~  
<sup>STAFF</sup>  
 ^

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On behalf of the Central Regional Division of the  
Commission:

MR. WILLIAM MULDROW, ACTING DIRECTOR

Participants in the Forum:

DR. LEE WOLF, CONSULTANT TALENTED AND GIFTED  
PROGRAM

DR. CYNDY REED-STEWART, CONSULTANT RACE EQUITY

MS. SUE STRODTBECK, PARENT AND VICE PRESIDENT IOWA  
P.T.A.

MR. NICK REYES APPEARING WITH HENRY VARGAS,  
DAVENPORT LULAC COUNCIL #10

MS. ROCHELLE PERKINS, PRESIDENT METRO-COMM. NAACP

DR. DARYL SPAANS, DAVENPORT SCHOOL DISTRICT

DR. JOSEPH DEINES, DIRECTOR SECONDARY EDUCATION

MR. DARRELL LIETZ, DIRECTOR INSTRUCTIONAL SERVICES

MR. LARRY CARTER, PRESIDENT DES MOINES CHAPTER  
NAACP

MR. IAN BINNIE, FORMER SCHOOL BOARD MEMBER, SENIOR  
VICE PRESIDENT, ECONOMY FORMS CORPORATION

MS. CHRISTINA GONZALES, COMMISSIONER IOWA SPANISH-  
SPEAKING PEOPLE COMMISSION

DR. JIM BOWMAN, ASSISTANT SUPERINTENDENT FOR  
INSTRUCTION

DR. KEITH HYDE, DIRECTOR OF EDUCATIONAL SERVICES

MS. GLORIA HOFFMANN, BOARD MEMBER AND PRESIDENT,  
DES MOINES SCHOOL DISTRICT

MS. RUTH BLOME, VOLUNTEER, HEARTLINE TALENTED AND  
GIFTED HOTLINE

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P R O C E E D I N G S

10:26 a.m.

1  
2  
3 DR. ALLEN-SOMMERVILLE: This meeting of the Iowa  
4 Advisory Committee to the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights  
5 shall come to order.

6 For the benefit of those in our audience, I shall  
7 introduce myself and my colleagues. My name is Lenola  
8 Allen-Sommerville and I am the Chairperson of the Advisory  
9 Committee.

10 Members of the Committee are Dr. Max Morrison,  
11 Leonard Davis, James Andrews, Stephen Wolf, Bernice Jones,  
12 Representative Horace Daggett, Dr. Gregory Williams, Lee  
13 Furgerson.

14 Also present with us are William Muldrow, Acting  
15 Director of the Central Regional Division of the Commission,  
16 Ascension Hernandez, a civil rights analyst on the Regional  
17 Office Staff, JoAnne Daniels, a member of the Regional  
18 Office Staff, and Jim Corey, in the audience, Office of the  
19 Staff Director, Washington Headquarters.

20 We're here to conduct a community forum for the  
21 purpose of gathering information on selected civil rights  
22 issues in Iowa's public education, with a focus on the  
23 Talented and Gifted Programs and student suspensions. The  
24 jurisdiction of the Commission includes discrimination or  
25 denial of equal protection of the laws because of race,

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1 color, religion, sex, age, handicap or national origin. Or,  
2 in the administration of justice. Information which relates  
3 to the topic of the forum will be especially helpful to the  
4 Advisory Committee.

5 The proceedings of this forum, which are being  
6 recorded by a Public Stenographer, will be sent to the  
7 Commission for its advise and consideration. Information  
8 provided may also be used by the Advisory Committee to plan  
9 future activities.

10 At the onset, I want to remind everyone present of  
11 the ground rules. This is a public meeting, open to the  
12 media and the general public. But, we have a very full  
13 schedule of people who will be making presentations within  
14 the limited time we have available. The time allotted for  
15 each presentation must be strictly adhered to. This will  
16 include a presentation by each participant, followed by  
17 questions from Committee members.

18 To accommodate persons who have not been invited  
19 but wish to make statements, we have scheduled an open  
20 period on our agenda during the evening session, from 9:25  
21 p.m. through 10:00 p.m.. Anyone wishing to make a statement  
22 during that period should contact a Staff member for  
23 scheduling. Written statements may be submitted to  
24 Committee members or Staff here today, or by mail to the  
25 U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, 911 Walnut, Room 3100,

1 Kansas City, Missouri 64106. The record of this meeting  
2 will close on February 24, 1989.

3           Though some of the statements made today may be  
4 controversial, we want to ensure that all invited guests do  
5 not defame or degrade any person or organization. In order  
6 to ensure that all aspects of the issues are represented,  
7 knowledgeable persons with a wide variety of experience and  
8 viewpoints have been invited to share information with us.  
9 Any person or organization that feels defamed or degraded by  
10 statements made in these proceedings should contact our  
11 Staff during the meeting, so that we can provide a chance  
12 for a public response. Alternately, such persons or  
13 organizations can file written statements for inclusion in  
14 the proceedings. I urge all persons making presentations to  
15 be judicious in their statements.

16           The Advisory Committee appreciates the willingness  
17 of all participants to share their views and experiences  
18 with the Committee.

19           Mr. Muldrow will now share some opening remarks  
20 with you.

21           MR. MULDROW: Thank you, Lenola. I would just  
22 like to add a note of welcome to those who have come out to  
23 participate and to attend our forum this morning.

24           The Iowa Advisory Committee is one of 16 Advisory  
25 Committees in the Central Regional Division of the

1 Commission. Each of these Committees is charged with  
2 providing information on current civil rights issues to the  
3 Commissioners. These public forums, of which this is  
4 typical, others are conducted by other states in the region,  
5 are one means by which the Commission gathers its  
6 information. The Advisory Committee chooses topics and  
7 conducts community forums, and along with other methods of  
8 information collecting, provides the Commissioners with up  
9 to date information on issues, topics and concerns in each  
10 of the states.

11 I would like to emphasize that there will be an  
12 open period at the close of the session this evening for  
13 anyone who has not been especially invited to participate.  
14 And in addition, anyone who would like to submit for the  
15 record information which will help in rounding out this  
16 topic, are invited to do so in writing. Though we have  
17 rather strict time limits for participation by those who  
18 have been invited to speak, we invite them also to submit  
19 any written information to supplement their remarks if they  
20 would care to do so.

21 We are especially interested in matters which  
22 relate to the jurisdiction of the Commission. And  
23 especially matters which concern discrimination, lack of  
24 equal opportunity, disparate treatment or lack of equal  
25 protection of the laws from the citizens of this state. And



1 we will especially appreciate, as has been said, any  
2 information which bears specifically upon that aspect of our  
3 jurisdiction.

4 So again, I welcome each of you and we hope that  
5 we can be of service to you throughout the day. If you have  
6 any questions or need further information about the  
7 Commission, if you will contact Mr. Hernandez at the end of  
8 the table or myself, we will try to inform you of anything  
9 that you would like to know. Thank you.

10 DR. ALLEN-SOMMERVILLE: Our first presenter is  
11 Zack Hamlett, retired Dean of the Urban Campus, has not  
12 arrived. And the second presenter, Mary Robinson, the State  
13 Director of the NAACP from Cedar Rapids, is ill and will  
14 submit her written statements to the Office.

15 We do have a later scheduled presenter in the  
16 audience who has agreed to present at this time. And that  
17 is Dr. Cyndy Reed-Stewart. Dr. Stewart is a Race Equity  
18 Consultant for the State of Iowa, the Department of  
19 Education. And her presentation will give a picture of  
20 state-wide trends and patterns of suspension of students, an  
21 overview of state standards for student suspensions as well.

22 Dr. Cyndy Stewart. Cyndy Reed-Stewart.  
23  
24  
25

1           STATEMENT OF DR. CYNDY REED-STEWART, RACE EQUITY  
2           CONSULTANT FOR THE STATE OF IOWA, DEPARTMENT OF  
3           EDUCATION:

4           DR. REED-STEWART: Thank you.

5           The first thing I'd like to do is talk about the  
6           districts that are monitored closest, and give you some  
7           sense of who is representing it among those districts.  
8           There are 12 districts that are monitored annually. And  
9           those districts are called Iowa's desegregating districts.  
10          I'm reporting on ten of those districts today, of which  
11          Davenport and Des Moines are a part of the picture here.

12                 But of those districts, they represent 122,067  
13          students, of which 16,793 are a minority. They represent 70  
14          percent of minority students in the State of Iowa. 70  
15          percent of the minorities within the State of Iowa are in  
16          those ten districts. They represent 26 percent of the total  
17          student population in Iowa. So, we're talking about  
18          significant numbers of districts that are monitored, are a  
19          significant number of students that are affected by these  
20          districts.

21                 As far as suspensions. In the area of  
22          suspensions, minority students are adversely affected by  
23          state definition. And in our definition, we interpret  
24          disparate impact as meaning 10 percent beyond minority  
25          student population within any given district on a state-wide

1 basis. Well, I take that back. As far as those ten  
2 districts that represent 70 percent of minority students and  
3 24 percent of the total student population in the State of  
4 Iowa.

5       The minority student proportion that are being  
6 suspended is disparate. They would represent 13.7 percent  
7 of the students totally. And at the suspension level, they  
8 represent 25 percent of the students. So, that is  
9 disparate. And Davenport in particular, with a minority  
10 student population of 18.9 percent, the suspension impact on  
11 minority students is 36.3 percent. And Des Moines, where  
12 the minority student percentage is 18 percent, the minority  
13 student suspension rate is 29.6 percent.

14       So in summary, since I have what, two minutes,  
15 we're seeing some growth in a lot of the districts to  
16 address this area. However, these patterns in many of the  
17 districts have been patterns that we have been monitoring  
18 and recommending that they address for the last 10 or 12  
19 years. So, the issues are not new.

20       There are some new and innovative programs that  
21 some districts are employing that seem to address the  
22 problem. Davenport in particular, I can think of. Cedar  
23 Rapids is a district that is not being talked about here  
24 today, but is another district that has done some very  
25 innovative and creative ways of bringing down their

1 suspension rate, which was disparate, in a matter of a year  
2 or two. So, there is some need for growth in this area.

3 I'll entertain any questions that you might have.

4 DR. ALLEN-SOMMERVILLE: Are there questions from  
5 Committee members? James? Leonard?

6 MR. DAVIS: Dr. Stewart, I wanted to raise this  
7 question. You mentioned that the longstanding disparate  
8 suspensions rates, disparate suspension rates in Davenport,  
9 have a history over a 10 to 12 year period, during which  
10 time the Department of Education has monitored suspension  
11 activity.

12 DR. REED-STEWART: Yes. When I made that  
13 statement, I was speaking in generality. Davenport in  
14 particular -- and I do have copies of the race equity  
15 reviews from this year if you would like them.

16 MR. DAVIS: My question is, have you seen a  
17 reduction for any significant impact over the last three to  
18 four years, in a reduction in suspension rate of minority  
19 figures?

20 DR. REED-STEWART: No. It has continued to  
21 increase. I have the data. In '85-'86, the minority  
22 student suspension rate was 30 percent, 30.3 percent. In  
23 1986, that percentage was 35.4 percent. And this year, it's  
24 higher, it's 36.3 percent. So, it's increasing.

25 But, when I was speaking about the 10 to 12 year

1 span, we have noticed that in Des Moines in particular.

2 DR. ALLEN-SOMMERVILLE: Representative Daggett.

3 MR. DAGGETT: Yes. I apologize for missing most  
4 of your testimony. But, some of the past, for lack of a  
5 better word I'll say case history, as we've looked at the  
6 involvement of the minorities in the Gifted and Talented,  
7 there's been reports of lack of participation because of  
8 peer pressure. Now as a consultant, have you looked into  
9 that? Is that a factor or not?

10 DR. REED-STEWART: Some. My experience, and I've  
11 been in the Department four years, I would say that maybe  
12 it's a factor in about one percent of the cases. For 99  
13 percent of them, minority students that could be in Gifted  
14 education, and I'm here speaking about suspensions, but I  
15 can speak about gifted because that's one of the areas I  
16 monitor also, we find that there are not appropriate  
17 measures employed.

18 For example, when you use a standard Cognitive  
19 Abilities Test, the CAT, which is used in some districts to  
20 get students into a Gifted education program, that test is  
21 not normed on language diverse or minority students.  
22 Therefore, you already have an in-built bias when you give  
23 that test and interpret it. Just like you would for the  
24 average white student. So, we have a lot of that going on.

25 However, that has changed significantly in the

1 past two years. And it has been because of some of the  
2 initiatives that the districts have done and some of the  
3 initiatives that we have done to address that problem on a  
4 state level.

5 So, I would say most problems in Gifted education  
6 is the lack of appropriate measures to be utilized. There  
7 are appropriate measures being utilized to appropriately  
8 identify language and minority diverse students or  
9 ethnically diverse students.

10 MR. MULDROW: Dr. Reed-Stewart, we would be very  
11 interested in knowing your impressions or having any hard  
12 information which might help to explain the reason for the  
13 disparate suspension rate for minority students and the main  
14 population. And also, what efforts or programs might be  
15 aimed at correcting this disparate kind of rate that the  
16 statistics show.

17 DR. REED-STEWART: From my analysis in the  
18 district or in the reviews, there are a number of issues  
19 that are affecting why there is a disparate suspension rate.  
20 When we look totally at the way white students are affected  
21 by a suspension and the minority students are affected by a  
22 suspension, the ratio is about one to four. Where when you  
23 have a population as small as the population in Iowa, then  
24 you have to be cognizant that there must be something else  
25 happening.

1           And what we're finding is teacher sensitivity  
2 training may be an issue.

3           Another issues may be the interpretation of the  
4 district's discipline code. The discipline code may not be  
5 broad enough to entail, let's say, racially harassing type  
6 activities, which sometimes cause fights. One student calls  
7 a student a racially derogatory name and that student is for  
8 some reason not disciplined. The student who strikes, which  
9 happens to be the ethnically diverse student, is the student  
10 that is disciplined.

11           That is just one example. I don't want to blow  
12 that out of proportion. Because there are many other issues  
13 here. You have the issue of drugs in some of the districts.  
14 You have the issue of parental involvement in the school,  
15 the family environment, the community environment. There  
16 are a lot of issues that are coming into the picture here.

17           But, when we look at that, we see that in both  
18 white and non-white communities. And we know that it  
19 happens more often in non-white communities. But,  
20 somewhere, when students come to school, a minority student  
21 acting out is many times dealt with more harshly than a non-  
22 minority student acting out. And that's across the nation.  
23 That's not just peculiar to our's.

24           So, we are suggesting in most of our  
25 recommendations that they continue staff development

1 training, that they expand their discipline policies and  
2 that they make sure that teachers are aware of the problems.  
3 Because many times you have teachers acting out on instances  
4 that may not be a violation of the discipline code for the  
5 district.

6 And another issue is the lack of role models. We  
7 feel that has some indication as to why there may be an  
8 adverse impact on minority students being affected by  
9 suspension.

10 MR. DAVIS: Dr. Stewart, you alluded in your  
11 initial comments, to the rapid turnaround and reduction in  
12 disparate suspension rates in Cedar Rapids. What kinds of  
13 things could you tell us, in a capsule form, that occurred  
14 in that district that caused that fast turnaround?

15 DR. REED-STEWART: They began to require that  
16 schools submit discipline reports on a quarterly basis. And  
17 most districts have NCNS Advisory Committees. And that  
18 Committee asked that the schools submit quarterly discipline  
19 reports. And they wanted those reports broken down by  
20 class, building, teacher, sex and the violation.

21 And by monitoring that and holding district staff  
22 accountable when they saw something happening in one  
23 particular school or at one particular building, because  
24 their system is very sophisticated, that if they could  
25 seemingly -- one group of students, they demanded



1 intervention from the administration. And the  
2 administration did intervene.

3           Whether it was teacher training, they may have  
4 pulled a teacher out to be trained. They may train the  
5 entire staff over again. They may have done an in-service  
6 on their discipline code, what is a violation, what is not a  
7 violation. They have some effective school programs going  
8 on. They have some programs going on particularly for  
9 diverse children, to give them some empowerments and self-  
10 esteem building. They have minority counselors where they  
11 can, and a lot of them secondary schools. So, they did  
12 quite a bit of intervention to bring that down. And they  
13 did turn that around in a couple of years. But, it took the  
14 leadership from the top down.

15           DR. ALLEN-SOMMERVILLE: Mr. Andrews.

16           MR. ANDREWS: Was there a program that the state  
17 level to go in and advise local districts on techniques that  
18 they can use, plans that they could use to implement to  
19 improve their suspension rates or programs to decrease  
20 suspensions in their districts?

21           DR. REED-STEWART: Are there programs that we --

22           MR. ANDREWS: Do you have a program that you are  
23 director of race equity, and these are districts that you  
24 monitor, are there recommendations that DTI make or that you  
25 have available to assist these districts in problems where

1 they may not have some of the resources to do some of things  
2 that you're talking about here?

3 DR. REED-STEWART: Yes, we do. But, we work with  
4 districts, because it is a voluntary process, we work with  
5 them on a particular issue on request. Now, in the  
6 recommendation, the recommendation will simply cite that  
7 there is an area of disparate impact and that something  
8 should be done.

9 In some instances, for example Des Moines this  
10 year, there are very specific strategies recommended because  
11 of the long and the outstanding history of the suspension  
12 problem. But, superintendents and school officials  
13 typically like to be innovative and come up with their own  
14 programs in a number of ways. But, we do help, like I said,  
15 on assistance. So, if they don't ask specifically for help  
16 in that area, we don't provide it.

17 DR. ALLEN-SOMMERVILLE: Are there other questions?

18 (No response.)

19 DR. ALLEN-SOMMERVILLE: Do you have any kind of  
20 summary statement, Dr. Reed-Stewart?

21 DR. REED-STEWART: Yes. I think when you think  
22 about suspension, I think in terms of educational  
23 opportunity. And if one group of students, be they black,  
24 white, hispanic, asian, is adversely impacted by any  
25 suspension or negative program in the school district, then

1 it has to affect those student's involvement in the school.  
2 It has to affect their involvement as young adults later on.

3 And I think this is an area that really needs to  
4 be looked into closely and it needs to be addressed with as  
5 much immediacy as possible. Because it does affect students  
6 equal educational opportunities. If you're not there, you  
7 can't learn. And that's the bottom line.

8 DR. ALLEN-SOMMERVILLE: Mr. Davis has another  
9 question.

10 MR. DAVIS: Knowing that economics plays at least  
11 a sizeable role in the whole picture of students success  
12 potential, what kinds of rates could you tell us about that  
13 are a part of the Waterloo district? And I know that's not  
14 part of the focus. But, I look at Waterloo as being in some  
15 ways comparative to Davenport, because of some of the  
16 economic distress that has occurred. Would it be possible  
17 for you to give us some comparative disparate rates?

18 DR. REED-STEWART: As far as -- okay, yes.  
19 Waterloo has a 22 percent minority student population and  
20 their minority suspension rate is 41 percent. That's about  
21 a 19 percent variance. Davenport is 18 percent, and it has  
22 about 36 percent minority student minority suspension rate  
23 and it's an 18 percent variance. So, you would expect -- I  
24 mean from your statement -- that Waterloo would have been  
25 much higher because of the economy in the area, the policing

1 of the economy in the area.

2 I think other things come into play. Like I said,  
3 those things affect students and the attitudes they come to  
4 school. But, I think there are catalysts there to kind of  
5 screen some of that out. Students probably will be okay.

6 Now, I'm speaking as a consultant, someone not in  
7 the classroom. And I can certainly sympathize or empathize  
8 with the teacher who has to control 22, 23 students, get the  
9 work done for the day and have to attend to a student who is  
10 acting out. It just rings a bell to me when those students  
11 happen to be students of color more often than they are of  
12 white students. I think that's an issue to be resolved.

13 DR. ALLEN-SOMMERVILLE: Bill.

14 MR. MULDROW: Is there a uniform policy state-  
15 wide for suspension? Or, does it vary from district to  
16 district? And what kind of things are included in that  
17 policy?

18 DR. REED-STEWART: Because of the law that governs  
19 a lot of things like theft and weapons and drugs, there are  
20 many discipline codes that are very much the same. Like the  
21 use of alcohol and drugs on a campus, the use of weapons,  
22 the concealing of weapons, the concealing of drugs. There  
23 are standard discipline codes for all districts that come  
24 through federal and state legislations.

25 Some districts go beyond that and include issues

1 that affect them very specifically. The Department gives  
2 general advice on the discipline code. We don't give any  
3 specific measures. When we go in to do our audits, however,  
4 federal audits, we do make specific recommendations relative  
5 to, the discipline code should include issues such as racial  
6 and sex and handicapped slurs and harassment being  
7 prohibited. But, we don't give a uniform policy on to our  
8 districts and they adopt that. It is pretty individualized.

9 MR. MULDROW: Could you provide us with a state  
10 policy or statutes which determine the policy --

11 DR. REED-STEWART: Yes.

12 MR. MULDROW: -- regarding suspensions?

13 DR. REED-STEWART: Yes. Do I send that to you,  
14 Doctor?

15 MR. MULDROW: I beg your pardon?

16 DR. REED-STEWART: Oh.

17 DR. ALLEN-SOMMERVILLE: If you can give it to Mr.  
18 Hernandez.

19 DR. REED-STEWART: Okay.

20 DR. ALLEN-SOMMERVILLE: Are there other questions  
21 or comments?

22 (No response.)

23 DR. ALLEN-SOMMERVILLE: If not, thank you so much,  
24 Dr. Cyndy Reed-Stewart.

25 DR. REED-STEWART: You are quite welcome. I do

1 have some statistics that I drafted for you. So, I'll leave  
2 those. And I think it may be good for all of you to have a  
3 copy of the race equity reports and I will see that you get  
4 copies of those. Because they are much more detailed than  
5 what I have spoken about here today. Thank you.

6 DR. ALLEN-SOMMERVILLE: Thank you.

7 At this point, I would like to just introduce  
8 another person who is in the audience. And that is United  
9 States Commissioner Esther Buckley from Texas. She is one  
10 of the eight members of the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights.

11 In looking at the agenda, Mr. Martinez has not  
12 arrived. We do have participants from Davenport, the  
13 Davenport community. Would you be willing to present at  
14 this time? Okay. We will ask for Sue Strodbeck, parent  
15 and Vice-President of the Iowa PTA, Nick Reyes, President of  
16 the Davenport LULAC council #10, and Rochelle Perkins,  
17 President of the Metro Community NAACP.

18  
19  
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21  
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25

1 STATEMENT OF SUSAN STRODTBECK, PARENT AND VICE PRESIDENT,  
2 IOWA PTA

3 MS. STRODTBECK: Good morning. I am Susan  
4 Strodbeck, a parent of a child in the Davenport Community  
5 School District. I am pleased to be here. I was hoping  
6 that I would be able to hear Leland Wolf's remarks regarding  
7 the Talented and Gifted Program. I noticed he is on the  
8 agenda before me and so I thought it might be a little bit  
9 more appropriate so that you would have some background on  
10 the state's Talented and Gifted Program before I gave my  
11 remarks. But let's pretend that we had that background, or  
12 something. I'm not exactly sure.

13 At any rate, we are discussing children here today  
14 and we must remember first and foremost that these children  
15 will shape our future. They are white, black, Hispanic,  
16 Native American and Asian but they are all children. And we  
17 must provide an opportunity for each child to develop his or  
18 her gifts and talents to the fullest whether they be  
19 academic, artistic or athletic. We as educators must  
20 develop tools that help us evaluate each student's talents  
21 and then help him or her develop those talents. This is a  
22 very challenging job for all of us and we must all work  
23 together.

24 I have included parents as part of educators  
25 because parents are our child's first teacher and hopefully

1 the most constant source of reinforcement. In order to be  
2 successful in cultivating the gifted, we must involve the  
3 parents in a positive, productive way. My comments today  
4 will be a parent's perspective on the Davenport community  
5 schools Talented and Gifted Program. My son, who is  
6 currently in 7th grade, has participated in our Talented and  
7 Gifted Program since he was identified in the 4th grade. For  
8 the most part, this has been a very positive experience for  
9 him and for us. The District provided two opportunities a  
10 year for the gifted students in the district to interact in  
11 the whole district. This was important because there were  
12 only two other identified students at his grade level in his  
13 school.

14 At these large group activities, the children  
15 could interact in a positive way and see that they were not  
16 such a minority. At these functions, I noticed that there  
17 were few minority students participating, but considering  
18 the size of the district, there were very few children  
19 participating.

20 At my son's school, all of the identified children  
21 were majority even though his class was about 30 percent  
22 minority.

23 Last year for the first time we had district-wide  
24 parent meetings. The meetings were all well attended and  
25 gave us an opportunity to meet other parents of gifted



1 children.

2 We also learned about the programs our children  
3 would be doing. There were very few minority parents at the  
4 meetings I attended but there was an optional site that I  
5 did not attend.

6 We were also told about the new identification  
7 program that went into effect this particular school year.  
8 I am basically pleased with the new program because it does  
9 allow for some difficulty in test taking and those  
10 traditional forms of talent identification.

11 I also like the program because it allows each  
12 attendant center to identify their talented children rather  
13 than district-wide identification. This gives each  
14 attendant center enough children to have a viable  
15 interactive weekly program. I also feel that the general  
16 philosophy of the program is very good. I have included and  
17 Mr. Hernandez has a copy of this, I hope he will share it  
18 with all of you, I have included a copy of what parents  
19 received last year.

20 I too believe that a child may be truly gifted  
21 but not test well on standardized tests. These tests do  
22 measure a child's background and what has been learned but  
23 do not necessarily measure potential in all areas. My child  
24 has tested very well so far. But I on the other hand as a  
25 child tested very poorly. I couldn't even remember my name

1 at times. So the idea of a test was very frightening.

2 I see testing as one tool in the identification  
3 list. I agree that students, teachers and parents should be  
4 allowed to recommend themselves or other peers as well.

5 We are truly blessed in Davenport with a very  
6 caring, professional teaching staff that takes that extra  
7 step to encourage the best from every student. I think  
8 the Davenport schools have done an excellent job of  
9 recognizing individual differences and incorporating new  
10 ways of identifying potential AGATES, as they are called in  
11 Davenport, in our population.

12 AGATES. Since you don't all have the program,  
13 it's the Alternatives for Gifted and Talented Education.

14 My son's AGATE teachers have been very, very good  
15 for him. They have broadened his perspectives and he is  
16 less likely to suffer from paradigm models. He looks for  
17 different ways to solve problems and enjoys thinking about  
18 things in a different way. I feel the program, particularly  
19 this year in 7th grade, has been extremely helpful in his  
20 transition, in a new school that merges four elementary  
21 buildings. Gifted children tend to stand out in a class and  
22 are sometimes ridiculed because they always have the  
23 answers. Having a support group as well as an exploration  
24 experience helps give these children the encouragement to  
25 continue to persevere even though it is not cool.

1           There are some problems however with the new  
2           identification system that I feel I need to share with you.  
3           Many of these problems I am sure will disappear in time but  
4           for the children now they are very real.

5           When our children were invited to joint the  
6           program at the end of 4th grade, they were told that once  
7           they became a part of this program they could continue until  
8           their work was not satisfactory or they chose to drop out.  
9           Now, at the end of 6th grade, the rules are changing and  
10          there may not be room for them any longer.

11          And what does this say to the child? You are  
12          gifted one year and you are not gifted the next. Parents  
13          may not fully understand why a child is dropped from the  
14          program and ask the child what didn't you do. I understand  
15          the idea of the Talent Pool and the advanced courses but  
16          the direct contact has been great.

17          I am not sure my son will be allowed to remain  
18          in the directly served 3 percent next year. I have tried  
19          to prepare him for that possibility. I understand the need  
20          to serve the children who have the greatest potential as  
21          well as the greatest need but other parents complain to me  
22          why can't my child be a part of the class this year? He was  
23          last year.

24          I explain that probably the child no longer has  
25          the need.

1           There is also the problem of delivery. My son is  
2 very, very lucky. He attends a school where the AGATE  
3 teacher is in the building all day every day. So if he has  
4 a concern or needs help or clarification during the week  
5 she is available to him.

6           He is not always pulled out of the same class  
7 every week so he doesn't miss much in any one subject area.

8           Four of the other junior high schools are served  
9 by a single traveling teacher who is only available to the  
10 children on one day per week. I see that as a disadvantage  
11 because the student works on AGATE all during the week, not  
12 just on one day. The child should be encouraged to use the  
13 skills explored in AGATE in all classes.

14           The curriculum calls for parent notification once  
15 per quarter since this is not a graded class. I feel that  
16 this is important but could be expanded to include a parent  
17 conference at the end of the first quarter.

18           Also a meeting of all the parents of children in  
19 the Talent Pool held early in the year outlining the  
20 opportunities available to their children at that particular  
21 attendance center. Parents are concerned about their  
22 children and want to help them any way they can. We need  
23 help to do that because we are not familiar with all the  
24 options that are available.

25           This would also help parents adjust to changes

1 that occur in the Talented and Gifted Program.

2 In closing, I must tell you that I feel that the  
3 Davenport schools are the best place to learn. This is not  
4 just a slogan, but a reality. There is more to learning  
5 than textbooks and test scores. The students in Davenport  
6 are given tools to become productive citizens in our  
7 society. The district is always looking for a better way to  
8 meet the changing student needs. When you look at education  
9 with a global view, and I have provided a handout for that  
10 as well, you will see that whites are the great minority and  
11 nonwhites are the vast majority. We cannot hope to educate  
12 the world but we should try to educate all children in  
13 America and encourage those children to reach their full  
14 potential. We cannot allow our expectations or our  
15 standards to drop. We must be able to learn to recognize  
16 the potential in each child and challenge that child to be  
17 the best that he can be without concern for race or  
18 religion. In the beginning, we must recognize cultural  
19 differences but in the end we want our children to be  
20 productive contributors to our society. This will require  
21 change for all of us and change is hard, but because our  
22 world is shrinking in terms of communication and travel, we  
23 must recognize the interdependence that comes as a result.  
24 We must all conform to some standards and it is the society  
25 that generates these standards. Tolerance for difference has

1 always been a goal for America, the melting pot. We have  
2 come toward that goal by recognizing differences, not as  
3 bad, but good. We are now recognizing that standardized  
4 tests are not the total answer to gifted identification.  
5 Now we need to polish those individuals so that the society  
6 in the future will be truly integrated and tolerant and we  
7 recognize that each of us has a talent and that it must be  
8 used to its full potential.

9 Those are some remarks on my philosophy and my  
10 feelings and my experiences with the Talented and Gifted  
11 Program better known as the AGATE program in the Davenport  
12 schools.

13 I welcome any questions that you may have with  
14 regard to my feelings and experiences.

15 DR. ALLEN-SOMMERVILLE: Thank you, Ms. Strodbeck.  
16 Any questions from the committee?

17 MS. JONES: I would like to ask one.

18 DR. ALLEN-SOMMERVILLE: Ms. Jones.

19 MS. JONES: Is there any effort being put forth to  
20 change the standardized tests so that they will be less  
21 culturally biased or what have you?

22 MS. STRODTBECK: Standardized tests, I would hope  
23 personally that they are working toward that. I know that  
24 the National PTA serves on the Educational Testing Service  
25 Board and we are very concerned about that particular issue.

1 As far as a Davenport parent, I don't know that the  
2 standardized tests have been addressed by parents in our  
3 community as a whole. I cannot say. But as a PTA member I  
4 do know that we are very concerned and past President Ann  
5 Kahn is on that Educational Testing Service and she is very  
6 articulate and very concerned about the not only minority  
7 bias but sex bias as well.

8 DR. ALLEN-SOMMERVILLE: Yes.

9 MR. MULDROW: Ms. Strodbeck, we have been given  
10 some statistics which include differences between the white  
11 and Hispanic participation rates in the Talented and Gifted  
12 Programs in the five districts where the disparity is the  
13 greatest.

14 For Hispanic students in the Davenport district,  
15 I note that their participation rate is less than 1 percent,  
16 like 0.72 percent whereas the white student participation  
17 rate is almost 3 percent as you have indicated, 2.73  
18 percent. That is almost four times as many white students  
19 are participating, a rate four times as high. Now, I am  
20 wondering if as an officer in the PTA and as a parent, I  
21 don't have the rates for black students by the way, because  
22 they are not listed in the five top districts.

23 But as a PTA officer and as a parent, if you could  
24 explain -- that is a very wide diversity difference and in  
25 my mind it reflects something perhaps of the quality of

1 educational programs that are being provided for students  
2 which would show some disparities there between Hispanic  
3 and white students.

4 How would you explain this difference? What do you  
5 think accounts for that and is it a matter of concern to the  
6 PTA, is anything being done to emphasize this and correct  
7 it?

8 MS. STRODTBECK: It is of course a concern of the  
9 PTA. It is a concern for me as a parent because my son  
10 will be living in a world that has all kinds of people and I  
11 think it is very important that he enjoy a good  
12 relationship with those people.

13 I do know that the program, within the program you  
14 have the opportunity to say no I do not want to participate  
15 in this program. In fact, I almost said no this year, I  
16 don't want my son involved in the program, because he is  
17 involved in a lot of things. And my son said, Mom, I really  
18 want to be, okay? So I said yes, but if we find it's too  
19 much, then we will have to make some choices. And  
20 something will have to drop.

21 I am awfully glad I said yes.

22 I think that part of it may be that culturally  
23 they may choose not to participate for one reason or  
24 another, whether it be because it is an exclusive club that  
25 they don't want their child a part of, whether it is because



1 the neighbor isn't being involved. I don't really know.  
2 And it is something that I hope Mr. Reyes or Mr. Vargas  
3 might be able to answer more clearly. We have been  
4 unsuccessful in Davenport and throughout the state in  
5 getting a great deal of minority participation in PTA.  
6 That's one of my goals is to be more inclusive, as one of  
7 our national goals this year, is inclusivity.

8           And we are by nature excluding the working parent  
9 because many of our meetings are during the day or during  
10 the week, during the day. And this is being exclusive and  
11 we are addressing that problem. Like everything else, it  
12 is taking time. And it is a concern but I cannot give you  
13 the answer and I apologize. But yes, we are concerned and  
14 we are working on that.

15                           (Continued on the next page)

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1 MS. STRODTBECK: Thank you for asking.

2 MR. MULDROW: Just a follow-up, if I may, briefly.  
3 You say perhaps one reason is that Hispanic parents choose  
4 not to enroll their students. Is the choice available to  
5 them? In other words, are students selected and their  
6 eligibility made known and then the parents have the option  
7 of deciding whether or not --

8 MS. STRODTBECK: That's correct. That's correct.  
9 The students are selected. A letter goes home to the parent  
10 saying that, "Your student has been selected to participate  
11 in the direct program. But we need your approval." And  
12 then a telephone number is also given and you can contact  
13 the teacher, which I did do, and discussed my concerns.

14 MR. MULDROW: Why would not a Hispanic parent want  
15 to enroll their child in this program? I mean why would  
16 they be more inclined to turn it down than the parents of  
17 white students?

18 MS. STRODTBECK: Well, I don't know that they  
19 would necessarily be more inclined. My suggestion was that  
20 I almost declined. And my son said, "Please call the  
21 teacher, Mom, and talk to her."

22 One of the concerns I had was that he would be  
23 pulled out of, for instance, mathematics every week. And I  
24 did not want him to lose a period of mathematics every week,  
25 because I feel that he needs to build everyday. School is

1 important. It is not something you just drop into. It is  
2 something that you need to go to everyday. Maybe that's  
3 their philosophy that they don't want, you know, they don't  
4 want them called out of a class for one reason or another.  
5 I can't say, but that was my reason. And, as I say, I found  
6 out that our program isn't the same class every week. So,  
7 that may be.

8 MR. MULDROW: You belong to the PTA which is  
9 comprised of parents who are involved in the system.

10 MS. STRODTBECK: Right.

11 MR. MULDROW: And knowledgeable about the  
12 regulation procedures, advantages and disadvantages.

13 MS. STRODTBECK: Right.

14 MR. MULDROW: Did I understand you to say that the  
15 minority parent participation is very low in that regard?

16 MS. STRODTBECK: That's correct. And I was just  
17 talking with Rochelle Perkins today asking her why I have  
18 been unsuccessful in talking to parents. Of course, I have  
19 been unsuccessful with white parents, too, in getting them  
20 to join PTA. I am not saying it is just minorities, but I  
21 guess it is something -- and she has given me some  
22 suggestions on how to maybe address that.

23 DR. ALLEN-SOMMERVILLE: Sue, would you re-explain  
24 the rule change and that process and the purpose of it?

25 MS. STRODTBECK: Yes. Okay, I didn't really

1 explain that and I will. The rule change came about and as  
2 I see it, as I said, I saw it was positive. When Wynn was  
3 first identified, three percent of the students were  
4 identified across the district. It did not matter which  
5 school they attended. Okay? It was across the district.  
6 If they were in fourth grade, the top three percent were  
7 identified. Then, this year, we have a new program which  
8 says that you will identify 20 percent of the students in  
9 each attendance center using different criteria,  
10 standardized tests being one, staff recommendation, student  
11 identification and parent identification. And a student can  
12 nominate himself, a teacher can nominate a student and a  
13 parent can nominate their own child.

14 Then, the pool is determined through race. It  
15 should racially represent that school attendance center.  
16 Race, sexually -- same male/female -- as well as  
17 socioeconomic guidelines. So that then you have that talent  
18 pool that is half chosen by test scores and half chosen by  
19 the subjective recommendations. And from that 20 percent,  
20 then you take 3 percent of the school's population, not 3  
21 percent of the 20 percent, but 3 percent of the school's  
22 population and those children receive the direct service.  
23 That's my understanding. And Mr. Lietz can correct me later  
24 on if I am wrong. But that's how I understood it.

25 And those children can participate, that 3 percent

1 that is identified, can participate for the full year or  
2 they can choose to drop out at the end of each quarter. And  
3 if a child does drop out, then that child would be replaced  
4 from a student in the talent pool. So, if they found that  
5 the child -- if I had found that my son was too busy and  
6 really did not need this program, then I could have said I  
7 would like to pull my child out. That would make room for  
8 one more child from that talent pool.

9           So, as I said, I think it's better this way  
10 because you are having a viable group of students that is  
11 racially socioeconomically, sexually balanced in your  
12 attendance center, rather than before, it was three little  
13 boys in the fourth grade and the fifth grade and the sixth  
14 grade. It was just, you know, three little children and you  
15 can't do a lot. Sure, they were all good friends. Don't  
16 misunderstand me. But this gives you a richer experience,  
17 which is what I hope we're driving at.

18           DR. ALLEN-SOMMERVILLE: Okay. Ms. Jones?

19           MS. JONES: One question I have is how well is the  
20 criteria for this program publicized?

21           MS. STRODTBECK: There, again, this is the first  
22 year that we have done this. I think we can do a better job  
23 of publicizing that and making the children aware of it.

24           MS. JONES: Not necessarily the children, but the  
25 parents. I think there has to be an exerted effort to let

1 the parents know what benefits are in this program for the  
2 individuals and so that they know what the criteria for  
3 selection is.

4 MS. STRODTBECK: I agree.

5 MS. JONES: And that's the first step, I think,  
6 because we can't just assume that the parents don't want  
7 their children in it. Anything better for the children, I  
8 can't agree that they elect not to allow them to participate  
9 in that. So, I think maybe you need to do a better job in  
10 selling the program and letting people know what the  
11 criteria for participation is.

12 MS. STRODTBECK: I agree.

13 MS. JONES: Maybe through the PTA or whatever.

14 MS. STRODTBECK: Well, certainly, we try; but  
15 there, again, you see, we have a limited membership and a  
16 limited attendance. But our school district -- I would say  
17 all of our junior highs send home through the mail a  
18 newsletter. And I was not in the junior high last year, so,  
19 I don't know if that particular item was put in the  
20 newsletter, but knowing our principal, I assume it was.

21 MS. JONES: But even in junior high, that's a  
22 little bit late. That's a little bit far removed from the  
23 fourth grade identification.

24 MS. STRODTBECK: True. But these children, now,  
25 are identified annually. So, just because Wynn is in it

1 this year does not mean he will be in it next year because  
2 there will be a whole new set of -- you know, a whole new  
3 set of identification things. It will be the same: parents  
4 can recommend, the child can recommend and the teachers can  
5 recommend. But there will be a whole new -- it will all be  
6 new next year. This group may not be, none of them may  
7 return or all of them may return. It depends on potential  
8 and need from the pool.

9 DR. ALLEN-SOMMERVILLE: One more question. Mr.  
10 Davis?

11 MR. DAVIS: Yes. You mentioned the student  
12 newspaper as a vehicle for communicating information. What  
13 other vehicles of communication were used to describe the  
14 rule changes in the G&T program?

15 MS. STRODTBECK: Well, public meetings, it was  
16 described carefully at a open school board meeting. It was  
17 -- there were, as I say, there was a meeting specifically  
18 for this parents of students currently involved. And it is  
19 my understanding that it went home through, not student  
20 newspapers, but building newspapers prepared by principals.  
21 There may be some student work in it, but a lot of it is  
22 building -- what's-going-on-the-school type of things.

23 Again, the PTA had a council meeting that was  
24 opened to all PTA members and it was published in the  
25 newspaper on the new AGATE program last spring. It was I

1 believe the April council meeting. Maybe it was the March,  
2 I can't remember. At any rate, that was -- it was explained  
3 there and people were encouraged to attend. There, again,  
4 that was held during the day. But the evening -- the AGATE  
5 meeting was held in the evening. The school board meetings  
6 are held in the evening. I must tell you, though, that  
7 school board meetings are not well attended in Davenport. I  
8 go, but not a lot of other people do. Those minutes are  
9 available to anyone who is interested and they are now being  
10 published in the newspaper.

11 DR. ALLEN-SOMMERVILLE: Do you have any last  
12 statement? If not, thank you.

13 MS. STRODTBECK: No. Thank you very much and I  
14 appreciate your interest and I appreciate your work for  
15 children and I hope that we can be team members.

16 DR. ALLEN-SOMMERVILLE: Thank you. Mr. Reyes?  
17 Nick Reyes? Mr. Reyes is the President of the Davenport  
18 LULAC Council No. 10, which is a civic organization active  
19 in the Hispanic community and advocates for higher education  
20 achievements of Quad City students. Mr. Reyes.

21 STATEMENT OF NICK REYES, PRESIDENT, DAVENPORT  
22 LULAC COUNCIL #10

23 MR. REYES: Good morning. This is a real bargain  
24 day for you people because for the price of one, you get two  
25 of us. I also brought along our Coordinator of Education



1 and our counsel. And he is going to address our G&T program  
2 within the School District of Davenport.

3 DR. ALLEN-SOMMERVILLE: Give us the name.

4 MR. REYES: Oh, Henry Vargas.

5 DR. ALLEN-SOMMERVILLE: Once again?

6 MR. REYES: Henry Vargas.

7 STATEMENT OF HENRY VARGAS, COORDINATOR OF  
8 EDUCATION, SCHOOL DISTRICT OF DAVENPORT

9 MR. VARGAS: What particular issue were we talking  
10 about? I thought we were going to divide this up.

11 MR. REYES: Well, we are. Henry is taking the  
12 first issue on the Gifted and Talented Program.

13 MR. VARGAS: Okay, what we have seen is a great  
14 improvement. First of all, I want to explain to you where I  
15 stand on this. I was not aware of these programs. And when  
16 we were invited to testify, I thought, "Well, the best thing  
17 I had better do is talk to some of the people that are in  
18 charge of this." So, I did that. And the information they  
19 gave me, that had been a deficient program, wasn't doing its  
20 job and they were making an attempt to correct that. Now,  
21 they have done that. They have improved the numbers. And  
22 as one of the gentleman here stated, the Hispanic  
23 participation was still down and I think another question  
24 that was just asked was, "Why? Why are they not  
25 participating?"

1           I think one of the reasons the Hispanic community  
2 is not participating, they are like myself: They were not  
3 aware of it and those students that would want to  
4 participate are either culturally or they have a language  
5 problem and the parents are out of it. They go home and  
6 maybe they hand their parents some instruction sheet on how  
7 they can apply or whatever it may be. The parents simply  
8 don't understand what their child is trying to tell them.  
9 That is the big problem right there.

10           And then I go and I talked to some of the students  
11 -- not so much the students, but some of the parents and the  
12 teachers as to why not only Hispanics, but Black and other  
13 minorities do not participate.

14           First of all, the basic skills -- is there a basic  
15 skills test that they have to take for this? Maybe somebody  
16 can answer that here? Is there an Iowa Basic Skills Test  
17 they have to take?

18           DR. REED-STEWART: Yes.

19           MR. VARGAS: All right. It is slanted to Anglos  
20 or white middle-class kids. The questions that they ask,  
21 they are not familiar at all to minorities. So, if you want  
22 minorities to participate, you have got to review that and  
23 revise that. You cannot tell me that regardless of -- if a  
24 minority from, let's say, Jefferson School or Washington  
25 School or Monroe, the kid doesn't have the intelligence to

1 be gifted or talented in comparison to a student at  
2 Eisenhower or perhaps Adams. I know we are making progress  
3 with it. I think there is room for improvement. I'm not  
4 here to more or less condemn anybody or angry. If I am  
5 angry, I am only angry at myself for not being aware of the  
6 situation. I didn't know there was a multi-cultural  
7 non-sexist education committee. I barely got this  
8 information yesterday. And I see where we're not having  
9 input on this. Hopefully, we can change that, too. But  
10 this is the information that I've gathered in the last two  
11 days from people that were in the program, definitely, there  
12 has been some improvement. I've got to applaud the  
13 Davenport District for doing that. But there is still --  
14 there is always room for improvement.

15 We certainly could start with having input from  
16 peer groups. We could have input from the parents, even.  
17 But this information has not gone out, to my knowledge.  
18 And, again, like I say, we are not here to raise heck or  
19 anything like that. We're just here to ask questions. And  
20 you want our testimony, we'll give it to you.

21 One of the reasons, again, like I said: The  
22 parents were not aware of it, particularly in the ghetto  
23 areas and the barrio areas is what we're talking about. And  
24 this is where I got my information. And the people that  
25 teach these kids and some of the parents. When some of

1 these students take that basic test, Iowa Basic Test, they  
2 just sit there and they just -- I'm not familiar with it,  
3 but I guess they just write anything and get out of the  
4 room. They don't know what they're doing. With that, I  
5 will leave it go because I think the other area where we  
6 thought we were going to speak on was in discipline and  
7 suspension. Thank you very much. If anybody has got any  
8 questions, I'll try to answer them.

9 MR. REYES: Just a moment. I would like to add to  
10 that: With the participation of Hispanics in both PTA and  
11 the G&T program. Just the other night, I think it was  
12 Tuesday night, I visited a family. In an effort to find  
13 better employment for the father of the family. Well, this  
14 is a family I'm talking about is a member of five. He works  
15 10 hours a day on one job. He gets home at 5:00 in the  
16 afternoon and goes to work at 6:00 and works from 6 to 9 on  
17 another job and the mother holds down an 8-hour job. So,  
18 the wage scale is very minimal. I think on his 10 hour or  
19 50-hour week, normal week, I think he was telling me he  
20 brings home something like, well, gross is something like  
21 \$280. So, with the income of the other job plus the wife,  
22 with Hispanics, family life is very important. And usually  
23 what happens is if it is not a single-parent family, the  
24 oldest child has the run of the household. And I am sure  
25 many minority groups experience the same type thing.

1           And this is due to the lack of participation from  
2 Hispanic groups. The child, the oldest child has ruled over  
3 the family household, so, if there are any fourth graders or  
4 whatever, they are to stay home.

5           I think that Henry hit it on the head. I think  
6 the lack of publication of this program, we were not aware  
7 of it. One of Council 10's top priority is education. And  
8 sometimes we speak of education, we do not only speak for  
9 the child, themselves, but we almost have to address the  
10 parents. And I feel that through LULAC's effort, we can  
11 both educate the child and the parent because we understand  
12 the grassroots people. We cannot send somebody to the home  
13 of the grassroots people that maybe their lifestyle is a  
14 little different and expect someone from a high middle-class  
15 income bracket to come down and persuade these people to  
16 join a program that they feel is so far beyond them or so  
17 isolated from them.

18           So, these are some of the efforts, and we talk  
19 about change. And everybody has got to change. And, again,  
20 LULAC's effort is education. And I think that we are going  
21 to a serious look at what efforts we can be to the community  
22 that we can get this word out and talk to the parents and  
23 see if we can't have an input to change some of the  
24 statistics. We are both here for questions, if there is  
25 any.

1 DR. ALLEN-SOMMERVILLE: Are there any questions  
2 from the committee?

3 MR. MULDROW: Mr. Vargas, you identified a couple  
4 of reasons why you felt the Hispanic student participate  
5 rate in the Gifted and Talented program was so far below  
6 that of whites. One was a testing bias which has to do with  
7 selection into the program. The other was the lack of  
8 knowledge of the program by parents. From Ms. Strodtbeck's  
9 information or remarks, she indicated that if a child is  
10 selected for the program, that a letter goes to the parents  
11 explaining the program and giving them the opportunity to  
12 enroll their child in the program. So, from what she said,  
13 it would indicate that the parents do receive the  
14 information if their child is eligible for the program and  
15 have the opportunity to choose. Are there any reasons that  
16 you feel why Hispanic parents might not choose to enroll  
17 their students in this program if they are notified of it  
18 and their child is eligible?

19 MR. VARGAS: Not really. Because, as I said, I  
20 didn't know about the program, and if a letter was sent to  
21 me, I could understand it if it was in English. I'm  
22 wondering if that parent when a letter was sent whether it  
23 was in Spanish or in Vietnamese or whatever language that  
24 would be required that they would fully understand that  
25 their child had passed all the criteria to go into this

1 program. I don't know. I'm looking at the bottom rung.  
2 I'm looking at the information I had was the fact that when  
3 these minority students and I am talking to people that are  
4 in the buildings, when they went to enroll, when they went  
5 to take these tests, they just simply skimmed over them just  
6 to get out of the room. And I am saying that we have got to  
7 start remembering that, too. We have got to remember that  
8 some of them do not fully realize the potential there and  
9 the opportunity.

10 Now, as far as this parent, you would have to turn  
11 around, if there was a parent that knew English and they  
12 were sent a letter, certainly they shouldn't have passed it  
13 up. Perhaps like she said, she would rather keep her child  
14 in math rather than the gifted. I can't speak for that  
15 parent, but if you're looking for reasons why it was turned  
16 down, it could be the language. I don't know.

17 MR. ANDREWS: I believe Mr. Reyes alluded to the  
18 fact that there are other ways in which maybe we need to  
19 communicate this information as educators to parents,  
20 recognizing the uniqueness of some of the situations -- the  
21 one that you just described with the working parent, where  
22 you have an older student interpreting probably a lot of  
23 this information to parents. And what may be important to a  
24 parent may not be important to that older student.

25 MR. REYES: Correct.

1           MR. ANDREWS: So, I hear you saying of the  
2 District, maybe we can better communicate or look at other  
3 ways of communicating with the population that we have in  
4 Davenport.

5           DR. ALLEN-SOMMERVILLE: Dr. Morrison?

6           DR. MORRISON: What would be your suggestion as to  
7 ways to improve the communication process?

8           MR. REYES: Well, I would like to utilize our  
9 council as one of the vehicles to relate information.  
10 Sometimes we, ourselves, have a tendency to get bogged down  
11 and don't make the steps in the right directions. And,  
12 sometimes, we need a little push. And I think today might  
13 provide that little push that we were looking for to provide  
14 the information and make sure it gets out to the right  
15 people and both -- we have many bilingual members that if  
16 there is a problem with the language that we could overcome  
17 that obstacle.

18           DR. ALLEN-SOMMERVILLE: Yes?

19           MR. DAVIS: Mr. Reyes, does your council have a  
20 newsletter?

21           MR. REYES: Yes, it does.

22           MR. DAVIS: Is your newsletter printed  
23 bilingually?

24           MR. REYES: No, it isn't. There are sections that  
25 if, like Henry, he takes care of the scholarship program and



1 if there is something that is vitally important that we  
2 think that both should be printed in Spanish and English, it  
3 is done.

4 MR. VARGAS: I might add that we do have a  
5 Spanish-speaking program, KALA in Davenport, that could  
6 assist and carry out that message in Spanish.

7 MR. REYES: The other thing that we would like to  
8 address is the suspensions in school. Again, when this was  
9 brought to our attention, we find ourselves asking: Why  
10 aren't we aware of this? If we have a problem on the trip  
11 up, it seems like the Davenport School System is doing an  
12 outstanding job to confront this problem. But, still, if we  
13 lose one student, that is one too many. And if we can be an  
14 assist to confront this problem, you know, we welcome you  
15 with open arms.

16 Again, I think it falls back on the communications  
17 problem, that sometimes we feel that, again, we could be an  
18 asset and a help. That through our education program that  
19 if we're aware of a student that is having problems in  
20 school, maybe one of us on a grassroots level can visit the  
21 family and maybe there is something that we can do to help  
22 turn the child's interest around. We do have role models  
23 that we can present to the student and show them through  
24 education what one can do with themselves.

25 The other problem we have is Saturday in the Quad

1 City area we sponsored a Hispanic education forum. And this  
2 took in the Quad City area. And we held this at Mary Christ  
3 College and we held it in the auditorium. And the  
4 auditorium had standing room only, both parents and  
5 students. So, we know that the interest is there.

6 One of the mothers had come up here, came to me  
7 after the meeting and she had a problem with her daughter  
8 who was enrolled in the Davenport's junior high school  
9 system. She is enrolled in a farm community outside the  
10 city, which is Wolcott Junior High. And she was telling me  
11 that her daughter came home very upset one day because at  
12 the school they have programs that are geared for Hispanic  
13 students. Okay. This mother with her maiden name being  
14 Garcia, married name being Robinson, her daughter was told  
15 by her counselor that she could not partake in these  
16 programs. And when the daughter asked why, the only remark  
17 that the counselor could give her was, "Because your surname  
18 isn't Hispanic."

19 So, again, I think the communications between  
20 counselor and their supervisors need to be -- there is a  
21 great need for improvement there. And with that, we will  
22 accept any questions.

23 DR. ALLEN-SOMMERVILLE: Are there other questions?  
24 Yes, Representative Daggett?

25 MR. DAGGETT: Is the Hispanic population there

1 mobile or is it stable that you basically deal with?

2 MR. REYES: Okay. We do have a large number of  
3 migrant farm workers falling out of the migrant system into  
4 the area of Quad City. Since the economic crunch and since  
5 the plant closing, you don't see quite as much, but it's  
6 still there. And we can usually identify with that by the  
7 way of dress. You can usually tell a new face in the  
8 community. But once they settle down, they don't seem to  
9 leave. They're there for awhile.

10 MR. DAGGETT: Okay. The main group of people you  
11 work with are citizens right in the community and that stay  
12 there.

13 MR. REYES: Right. One of the problems that faces  
14 us, too, is that a large part of our community, the Hispanic  
15 community, like in some of the larger metropolitan areas,  
16 you will find ghettos or barrios, well, we have a certain  
17 percentage that lives probably what would be called inner  
18 city and some would like to say it's a ghetto area. But we  
19 do not have a barrios area anymore. And a large percentage  
20 of the Hispanics are spread all over the Quad City area.  
21 So, you know, in our efforts to communicate, sometimes it  
22 becomes tough, because of trying to draw from all areas.

23 MR. DAGGETT: Okay. This leads up to my next  
24 question. In bilingual language availability, in  
25 Kindergarten through third grade it is very important. And

1 Johns Hopkins University of Maryland has done quite a study  
2 on this for a period of about 18 years where the foundation  
3 that you receive then is so important later in the at-risk.  
4 The rates drop if they have this good foundation. And my  
5 question is: Do you feel that the children are getting a  
6 good foundation down in the K through 3?

7 MR. REYES: Okay. Henry is a little more familiar  
8 than what I am with the bilingual program that we have in  
9 Davenport.

10 MR. VARGAS: I would think the Davenport District  
11 is doing a real good job from the bilingual programs that  
12 they have. Again, to touch again -- you were asking if they  
13 were stable. The older portion of our community is stable.  
14 But we do have that group that they were here before the  
15 early Eighties and some of them moved back to Texas or what  
16 have you, now, they are back again. But I think the  
17 Davenport District is doing an excellent job with the  
18 bilingual problem. But the problem may lie, if they move  
19 back to Texas, they have lost a lot of contact and a lot of  
20 knowledge, and they come back up again and it is a problem,  
21 again, for them to pick it up again. But I really have to  
22 applaud the Davenport system for their bilingual program.

23 MR. DAGGETT: Thank you.

24 DR. ALLEN-SOMMERVILLE: One other question, if  
25 not, do you have a final statement?

1 MR. REYES: Okay, our final statement, I think  
2 both -- it is both our opinion that Dr. Flynn, I think the  
3 Davenport School System is blessed with an individual that  
4 is caring and taking the steps in the right direction. And  
5 we want to commend them for that effort. We still see a lot  
6 of things that have to change and a lot of hard work ahead  
7 of us. But, we do recognize the steps in the right  
8 direction. Thank you.

9 DR. ALLEN-SOMMERVILLE: Thank you.

10 Rochelle Perkins is President of the Metropolitan  
11 Communities Branch, NAACP.

12 STATEMENT OF ROCHELLE PERKINS, PRESIDENT,  
13 METROPOLITAN COMMUNITIES BRANCH, NAACP

14 MS. PERKINS: Hello. Good morning. Thank you for  
15 inviting us to participate here this morning. I won't go  
16 over all the details that you have already discussed with  
17 Sue and the other two gentlemen, but I would just like to  
18 say the Metropolitan Branch NAACP has a distinct advantage.  
19 We share a unique and beautiful working relationship with  
20 the Davenport Community School Systems. Because we cover  
21 the whole metropolitan area, this is just one of the school  
22 systems that we deal with. But from the day Dr. Flynn came  
23 to Community, he came to us. And we have a lot of educators  
24 on my executive board. So, therefore, we are always going  
25 to keep that at a high priority.

1           We work on every committee that exists within the  
2 school system, 7:00 a.m., night, what have you. We have  
3 different people on those committees. The affirmative  
4 action plan, we've been working on -- I, as an individual,  
5 have been on that committee. But Dr. Flynn and the cabinet  
6 and the school system have determined that we carry out  
7 affirmative action prior to us really having that plan  
8 aboard.

9           We have the principal scholars, which is a  
10 community involvement and school involvement for minority  
11 students on both sides of the river. We also -- the gifted  
12 and talented, I'm not totally aware as much as I would like  
13 to be. But, as Sue and I were talking, we shared ideas  
14 about ways in which we can better serve the total community  
15 in that particular area.

16           We had an incident recently, like in a suspension,  
17 we usually don't look out for problem areas to go after.  
18 This one came out on the media and it seemed to be negative.  
19 So, I made the call. We had an open-door policy with the  
20 Superintendent of Schools to help resolve that situation  
21 before it got out of hand.

22           So, I am thinking -- I will just let you ask me  
23 some questions if you like. Any questions?

24           DR. ALLEN-SOMMERVILLE: Yes?

25           MR. DAVIS: I guess my first question is: What

1 kind, since you have the relationship that is very positive,  
2 what kinds of things has your relationship, two groups  
3 working together, produced the way of bringing down or at  
4 least moving toward bringing down the suspension rate in the  
5 Davenport School District?

6 MS. PERKINS: I'm not too sure that we have worked  
7 as closely at that as we possibly can. We are constantly a  
8 watch-dog agency. And I am sure that as we go back to  
9 Davenport, we will be coming together as groupings to  
10 address that problem. I just think we need to reach out  
11 more to the community. We need to require more of our  
12 educators, all across the board, all of us have to be  
13 involved in this process because we all owe something to our  
14 future leaders. And that's where I see us getting out  
15 there.

16 I, myself, in NAACP, initiated a program of  
17 tutoring at Jefferson School with the principal at that  
18 building. We are about four years into the process. We go  
19 there every Tuesday. You'll find me in that building  
20 because I personally like to be involved in that process.  
21 We need more bodies to be in these buildings to assist the  
22 teaching staff and for them to hear from community to see  
23 how we can overcome the language barriers and those kinds of  
24 things that we find ourselves forced to deal with.

25 DR. ALLEN-SOMMERVILLE: Bill?

1           MR. MULDROW: You indicated your appreciation for  
2 Dr. Flynn, the Superintendent of the Davenport School  
3 District, and indicated that he does have a caring attitude  
4 for these problems. Does that permeate the school entirely?  
5 What about the teachers or the students? What is the  
6 general climate from minority students in the school system?

7           MS. PERKINS: I think it carries over. When you  
8 lead by example, people tend to follow in a more positive  
9 way. The policy to an entry to those buildings in that  
10 school system is open. It has not always been that way.

11           When we have an open-door policy, we can come and  
12 reason together and make change. And I get a positive  
13 feedback in all aspects, whoever I talked to. We thought he  
14 was so good that we asked him to be the speaker at our  
15 Freedom Fund Banquet this past November. And he spoke  
16 highly of what he expects of this system and shared that  
17 throughout the metropolitan community. And we had people  
18 visiting from other school districts within the state. They  
19 were so pleased, they asked him for his speech to see how  
20 they could incorporate that kind of open-door effort within  
21 their own districts in Iowa.

22           MR. MULDROW: How would you then explain as a  
23 result of your familiarity with the system -- how would  
24 explain the disparities in the suspension rates and the  
25 Gifted and Talented Program participation? I mean they are



1 not minor differences. They are major: four and five  
2 times. What do you see as the reasons for these  
3 disparities?

4 MS. PERKINS: I think maybe timing is one. As we  
5 gained a new superintendent, and then in the interim, with  
6 Dr. Spaans, the process started; but we had been on the  
7 outside for a number of years. We had a lot of things that  
8 we had to address. And, so, we are coming on to these  
9 areas.

10 And one of the things, I think we don't have  
11 enough, maybe in Gifted and Talented, minority teachers. We  
12 don't have that role. I don't know that we have any. But  
13 we need to talk about that. My nephew was in Gifted and  
14 Talented in one of the schools. His teacher was a Black  
15 teacher. And she is out of that system. And, of course,  
16 he's go on to the junior high school, moving right on. He  
17 is going to achieve because his parents expect him to  
18 achieve. But I don't see any adult minority presence there.  
19 And I think we have to have that. And then we need to  
20 recruit more widely in all ways.

21 MR. DAVIS: I guess my question is: What kinds of  
22 sensitivity training have you seen that could move us in a  
23 direction of reducing those disparities and in suspension  
24 rates and are you satisfied with the level of progress in  
25 that sensitivity training area?

1 MS. PERKINS: Never satisfied. We are always --  
2 we always need to do more. Much of that is addressed in the  
3 affirmative action thrust. We really haven't gotten to  
4 that, but we really need a lot more of that because --  
5 because I'm in and out of buildings, you hear the people  
6 even talk to you. They talk to you based on your color as  
7 opposed to what you may have here. We need to be more  
8 sensitive all around, all of us, to open those doors to some  
9 positive progress, because both of these areas are extremely  
10 important and I feel strongly that we need to address them.

11 MR. DAVIS: As a follow-up, has the NAACP been  
12 involved in the planning of sensitivity training for  
13 educators?

14 MS. PERKINS: Not to this extent. Not in depth,  
15 no. A number of NAACP members sit on the affirmative action  
16 planning and committee, but we really haven't gone that next  
17 step, yet.

18 DR. ALLEN-SOMMERVILLE: Yes?

19 MR. DAGGETT: The Hispanic community that  
20 testified just before you indicated that they didn't feel  
21 they were well informed on the programs and all the  
22 opportunities. Do you feel that your folk are?

23 MS. PERKINS: Oh, not entirely, because we  
24 discussed it coming up from Davenport. And these gentlemen  
25 are showing me some things that, perhaps, if I looked back

1 through the files, I might find them. But, no, we are not  
2 nearly as -- we're not aware. Like the Gifted and Talented,  
3 we need more information. I know the suspension rate is  
4 something that we need to address. But, no, we don't always  
5 get all of the information. We try to, though.

6 MR. DAGGETT: And your group would be involved in  
7 helping with that?

8 MS. PERKINS: Oh, yes. See, because we have -- we  
9 think we need to extend and reach back into that building,  
10 that system. Those are our future leaders and we owe  
11 something. And I feel strongly about that. Everyone who is  
12 there is there because of the NAACP. And I say that proudly  
13 because this system did not have any minority teachers until  
14 this organization held their hands to the fire. Most of my  
15 adult life, I have been involved with this system. And, so,  
16 I guess I say we take credit for the very fact that they're  
17 here. And we say, "We expect something of them."

18 DR. ALLEN-SOMMERVILLE: Mr. Muldrow?

19 MR. MULDROW: Some of the Hispanic presenters  
20 indicated that they felt the tests for admission to the  
21 Gifted and Talented Program was biased so that Hispanic  
22 students were at a disadvantage in taking that test. Do you  
23 feel that is true for Black students?

24 MS. PERKINS: Probably. The norm, regular testing  
25 -- and NAACP holds to the fact that those tests are usually

1     biased.  I mean culturally, you know, we come from all walks  
2     of life.  We don't get to be part of the planning process,  
3     we don't know what's on the test, but we will be asking to  
4     look at it and help review it.  Yes, I believe it would be  
5     biased.  I don't have enough awareness of that committee.  
6     And one of the things I think we represent organizations,  
7     LULAC, NAACP, and other groups.  Minorities sit on those  
8     groups.  They are not necessarily members of either of the  
9     group.  There is not feedback.  We have no feedback to know  
10    what's going on.  And, so, we need to tighten that up, too,  
11    as we move through the process.

12                 DR. ALLEN-SOMMERVILLE:  Are there any other  
13    questions?

14                 (No response.)

15                 DR. ALLEN-SOMMERVILLE:  Would you like to make a  
16    final statement?

17                 MS. PERKINS:  Just that I am happy to be here.  
18    Always welcome the opportunity to talk before any group.  
19    And I feel strongly about the kind of relationship we have  
20    in Davenport.  And we still think it is the best place to  
21    learn, without a doubt.  Thank you very much.

22                 DR. ALLEN-SOMMERVILLE:  Thank you, Ms. Perkins.

23                 We had a selected sequence and now we have one of  
24    the persons from that sequence I think that will make  
25    Ms. Strodbeck very happy.  Dr. Lee Wolf from the State

1 Department of Education. And Dr. Wolf will provide  
2 statewide information on the Talented and Gifted Programs  
3 with a focus on policies as well as some of the data that  
4 are reported annually by the school districts. Dr. Wolf?

5 STATEMENT OF DR. LEE WOLF, STATE DEPARTMENT OF  
6 EDUCATION

7 MR. WOLF: All right. In the letter of  
8 invitation, I was asked to prepare something in writing if  
9 it would be helpful for the records afterwards. And I have  
10 that. I didn't know for sure how many people would be on  
11 the committee. We have a state requirement that if you use  
12 a copy machine, you can't make more than 9 copies. So, I  
13 guess I'm glad that the 10th person hasn't shown up today.  
14 I have exactly 9 copies of the stuff. I'll pass that out to  
15 you right now.

16 (Pause.)

17 My introductory remarks, I guess, will be confined  
18 mostly to telling you a bit of the background of the legal  
19 structure of gifted education programs in the state and some  
20 of the assumptions that I operate under in my job in  
21 approving program applications for districts that use what  
22 has long been and still is a voluntary procedure for funding  
23 schools.

24 In addition to that voluntary procedure, the state  
25 has just enacted a set of mandatory requirements for school

1 accreditation, one of which requires all school districts to  
2 have a gifted education program. I think that would  
3 somewhat change the picture of gifted education in general  
4 and especially participation of ethnic and language diverse  
5 students in the future. But just let me sort of paraphrase  
6 if you don't mind these paragraphs here.

7           Basically, the Department of Education has been  
8 involved for about 15 years in providing some sort of  
9 centralized state assistance or direction to local districts  
10 that would wish to adopt programs for gifted children. And  
11 there has probably been more change in the last year or two  
12 in what is happening in gifted programs than in the previous  
13 12, 13 or 14 years, in that not only have the state  
14 standards for the funding procedure that I administered,  
15 which is called Allowable Growth Funding. I won't try and  
16 define why that term was chosen. It is, let me say, the  
17 most unique funding system for gifted education that exists  
18 among the 50 states and, as such, it is very fitting, I  
19 guess, for the State of Iowa to have that be that unique.

20           But that procedure was put into place in 1979.  
21 The first year under which districts could have programs  
22 funded that way was about -- I think it was the '80-'81  
23 school year, and we grew slowly since it was a voluntary  
24 kind of a thing, but I have just finished approving program  
25 applications for the next school year and 75 percent of the

1 districts in the state have elected to use that set of --  
2 the procedure that I administer for funding their programs.

3           Districts that use that procedure fund their  
4 programs have to meet a set of some 35-40 criteria for the  
5 structure of their program. Iowa differs a little bit from  
6 some states in which the states say, "These shall be the  
7 instruments you use to identify students. This shall be the  
8 cut-off score. No one who has anything lower than that  
9 score, plus or minus x-percent will ever be identified."  
10 And so on. Those are what I kind of refer to offhand as a  
11 meat-grading system of identifying gifted youngsters which  
12 is you either have the choice in prime rating or you don't.  
13 Pardon me for my colloquial use of terms, but it is an  
14 attempt to discover the presence or absence of some sort of  
15 pre-defined quantity in the youngster which is called  
16 "giftedness".

17           Iowa's structure is quite different and I think it  
18 is on the leading edge of what is now becoming a major  
19 turning of opinion in gifted education across the nation.  
20 What we say is: Gifted education identification for  
21 programs is a diagnosis of need rather than simply a  
22 determination of whether this mysterious quantity called  
23 "giftedness" occurs or not.

24           That may not sound like much of a difference, but  
25 it makes all the difference because when you are talking

1 about identifying students for gifted programs based on a  
2 diagnosis of need, you are really not trying to prove beyond  
3 all doubt that they have an IQ of a certain amount or an  
4 achievement of a certain amount. You are simply trying to  
5 determine whether the child needs a program that is  
6 qualitatively differentiated from the regular program. As  
7 such, it is a lot easier to prove because it doesn't require  
8 having numbers in all the right places as people have  
9 sometimes said of gifted education things.

10 One of the assumptions that I operate under --  
11 it's the last paragraph on the front page of that set of  
12 remarks -- is that giftedness is a human trait, rather than  
13 a sociological phenomenon. I guess I have to operate under  
14 that assumption or otherwise it would be very difficult for  
15 me to stay in the job.

16 However, the identification of gifted youngsters  
17 is a sociological phenomenon. And if we find that there is  
18 a disproportionate number of youngsters who are found for  
19 gifted programs from one portion of the population than from  
20 others, that is really not an indication that gifted  
21 programs are wrong. Perhaps that was not anyone's  
22 assumption here on the committee, but I need to face it  
23 directly. It is an indication of how far we have yet to go  
24 in the science of identification.

25 Luckily, gifted education as a field, nationwide,



1 is changing, opening its ideas and attitudes towards a  
2 diversity of populations for gifted and also our own state  
3 policies and procedures are changing for the positive. So,  
4 I think we are in a situation where we are hopeful, but we  
5 are a long way from home, yet.

6 On page 2, here I talk about the two sets of  
7 standards that we have for rules in gifted education. The  
8 older set that is still voluntary is the one that I  
9 administer. The new set, which is the minimum school  
10 accreditation standards, will be administered by the Bureau  
11 of School Accreditation. And, so, even though I had a hand  
12 in writing that minimum standard -- which, by the way is at  
13 the last page of this packet that I handed out. Not the  
14 yellow packet, but the sheet that says, "Three Accreditation  
15 Standards Affecting Gifted Programs."

16 The first one on that stage is the new standard  
17 requiring a gifted education program. The other two things  
18 are things that happened to be on this page which I had  
19 printed for another purpose that were informing schools of  
20 other things that would benefit high-ability students. That  
21 standard is administered by a different bureau. So, even  
22 though I had something to do with it, I don't determine --  
23 at least I haven't been called on yet to determine whether  
24 programs comply with that standard. First of all, they are  
25 not required to comply with it until next July 1st.

1           In relation to the rules that I administer, there  
2 had long been a limit on the number of youngsters who could  
3 participate. If a district chose to fund its program with  
4 allowable growth -- that's the procedure I administer -- no  
5 more than 3 percent of their district enrollments could take  
6 part in the program at any one time. And, so, many  
7 districts, especially urban districts, were having the  
8 situation where their identification procedures could find  
9 many more than 3 percent of their population that would  
10 deserve the program, but the mandate was that they could not  
11 serve more than 3 percent. So, they were trying to figure  
12 out which 3 percent to serve.

13           That limit was eliminated last year by the  
14 legislature and the full effect of what it is going to do  
15 for opening up eligibility for program slots hasn't yet been  
16 felt. The first year under which that change will really  
17 effect programs is the next school year. But I think that's  
18 the hopeful part.

19           As you can perhaps see by the new standard for  
20 minimum school accreditation, the standard requires that the  
21 identification system find students, including ethnic and  
22 language diverse students if such students are enrolled.  
23 That provision was not in the older rules in relation to  
24 gifted education and still is not. However, the new  
25 standards, the creation of the new standards was an

1 opportunity to put those -- that rule in place. So, I am  
2 glad that we have got that because now there is at least  
3 something to hold up as an absolute requirement that is  
4 incumbent upon the schools.

5           Currently, the Department of Education has  
6 proposed to the legislature that gifted education be funded  
7 as part of the regular school foundation aid formula so that  
8 if every district in the state has to have a program, which  
9 they do, those programs can now be funded with state money  
10 Along with state money also comes the leverage that a person  
11 needs in order to enforce requirements and so on.

12 Currently, those districts that choose to use the procedure  
13 I administer -- and I just realize: I forgot to give you  
14 the information. This packet is an example of the  
15 requirements for districts that want to use allowable growth  
16 funding, the procedure I administer. And in the back of it  
17 is a several paged form printed horizontally that contains  
18 the criteria by which I judge the program for acceptability  
19 or not and just prior to that in the packet are the  
20 Department's rules that we use to define the gifted and  
21 talented provision in the law and just ahead of that is a  
22 copy of the code, itself, the Code of Iowa, which specifies  
23 what the program shall be constituted like.

24           We are in a situation, then, wherein the  
25 requirements for gifted and talented programs have broadened

1 somewhat. Also, a situation where every district in the  
2 state must now have a program and those programs must  
3 include procedures that are fair to ethnic and language  
4 diverse students. So, we are in a situation where I think  
5 it is going to be hopeful.

6 The next to the last page of this packet is the  
7 chart and I want to credit Cyndy Reed-Stewart for supplying  
8 me that. The Department has a policy or has long had one  
9 that unless you are specifically authorized to collect  
10 information from schools, you don't collect it. And, so,  
11 Cyndy has the authorization and has collected this  
12 information. This is, as I understand it, last year's or  
13 this current school year?

14 DR. REED-STEWART: Last.

15 MR. WOLF: This is last year's results from school  
16 districts. I think the picture probably has changed  
17 somewhat this year. I don't have the current year's data.  
18 On that chart it shows some 11 school districts in the state  
19 that have significant populations of ethnic or language  
20 diverse youngsters. And right next to the school district  
21 name, it gives the percentage of the population which is in  
22 one or more minorities.

23 The far right-hand column, then, is the proportion  
24 of that same minority population that is enrolled in the  
25 gifted program as of the last school year.

1           And I guess by way of summarizing that chart, just  
2 to make it a little easier to assimilate all that  
3 information, I went ahead and made some assumptions here and  
4 I will lay those out. I assumed that if say that parity in  
5 gifted programs is that the proportion of youngsters in the  
6 gifted program is equal to the proportion of those same  
7 youngsters in the regular population, then that is parity.

8           So, I went ahead and tried to figure out what  
9 percent of parity some of these districts were at last year.  
10 And that's not on this table. I didn't modify the table, I  
11 just came up with that. And they range from South Tamau  
12 which is 103 percent of parity, so, that is somewhat over-  
13 representing the ethnic and language diverse population in  
14 their district, to Sioux City School District which is at  
15 about 29 percent parity. So, that is the range. I do have  
16 that figured for the other districts if you're interested in  
17 that. And maybe I will just leave that as an opportunity  
18 for now for you to ask those kinds of questions, rather than  
19 tell you things that you might not be interested in.

20           MR. ANDREWS: Yes. I think we would like to have  
21 them for the districts.

22           MR. WOLF: All right. Starting at the top, then,  
23 in the same order: Burlington School District, 78 percent  
24 of parity. I don't want to have invented a new term here.  
25 So, excuse me. And, also, I am not trying to enunciate a

1 standard these have. I think that is beyond my right to say  
2 that there must be that same proportionate representation.  
3 That is a right, I think, reserved for the legislature.

4 Cedar Rapids School District, 63 percent. Council  
5 Bluff School District, 100 percent. Davenport School  
6 District, 83 percent, up quite a bit from what it had been  
7 previously. And I don't have the data for before -- excuse  
8 me, for now. But I understand there have been some real  
9 strides made there.

10 Des Moines School District, based on this data, 60  
11 percent of parity. Iowa City, 81 percent. Muscatine, 74  
12 percent. Sioux City, again, 29, South Tamau, 103 and  
13 Waterloo, 63.

14 I don't know exactly the source of this data. So,  
15 I can't answer questions in relation to that, but other  
16 kinds of things, especially in relation to policy and how it  
17 is interpreted, I will be glad to respond to questions.

18 DR. ALLEN-SOMMERVILLE: Okay. Are there  
19 questions? Representative Daggett?

20 MR. DAGGETT: On the first page of your testimony,  
21 the second to last paragraph, in this are those that would  
22 be identified, are there some that will not participate  
23 because of peer pressure?

24 MR. WOLF: Yes. We are finding especially with  
25 high school students and perhaps more so with gifted girls

1 than gifted boys once they reach adolescence. It doesn't  
2 even have to be open pressure. There can be just sort of a  
3 subtle peer pressure to conform and not be so unusual or so  
4 different from the group. We are finding some situations  
5 where youngsters are choosing not to participate in gifted  
6 programs.

7 And one other reason that some high school  
8 youngsters are choosing not to participate is that many of  
9 them would like to have scholarships and admission to  
10 prestigious institutions of higher learning. They fear that  
11 if they spend some time in the gifted program which either  
12 gives no grades or gives grades on a harder curve, that will  
13 effect their transcript and maybe effect their admission.  
14 So, we are finding some youngsters who -- it's almost a  
15 paradox, because they are highly motivated to succeed, they  
16 don't want to take the time in the gifted program.

17 MR. DAGGETT: Is there any reasonable answer to  
18 that? I mean is there something that can be done to help  
19 eliminate it?

20 MR. WOLF: Well, off the top of my head, I don't  
21 have one right now. That certainly is an area that could  
22 use some work. One of the things that I have suggested to  
23 some very highly able students is that perhaps they consider  
24 tailoring their high school program in such a way that they  
25 complete most of their requirements for graduation by the

1 time they have finished their sophomore year or the  
2 beginning of their junior year which would then allow them  
3 to take advantage of the Post-Secondary Enrollment Options  
4 Act, which is a new provision that we just now got rules  
5 written for. And although it is not limited to gifted  
6 students, it is something that gifted students could really  
7 take part in. And, in effect, that would not serve them in  
8 the local gifted program, but it would serve their needs by  
9 another method.

10 DR. ALLEN-SOMMERVILLE: Some of the presenters  
11 have indicated that they were unaware of selected programs  
12 and services. Are there any kind of state requirements  
13 regarding written communiques to linguistically diverse  
14 populations?

15 MR. WOLF: No. There hasn't been and, in fact, I  
16 guess it hadn't occurred as an area in which policy making  
17 might be appropriate. So, that is I guess something I am  
18 going to be taking away from today's session.

19 I am assuming, for example, if the legislature  
20 does create a funding procedure for gifted programs, the  
21 Department will be required or authorized, however you want  
22 to look at it, to create rules to enact that funding. So, we  
23 will have a new rule-making opportunity that hasn't existed  
24 now for about 10 years.

25 (Continued on the next page)



1 DR. ALLEN-SOMMERVILLE: Are there questions?

2 MR. MULDROW: With regard to some of the things  
3 that were said earlier and also with your philosophy that if  
4 one group is not represented adequately that there are  
5 problems in the identification process. It is obvious that  
6 there are disparities here, as you have indicated.

7 How would you pinpoint the problems there, are  
8 there biases that place minority students at a disadvantage  
9 in the selection process?

10 DR. WOLF: I think that there are not only in  
11 terms of unspoken or unrecognized biases in people's  
12 assumptions, but also we know that the test instruments  
13 themselves that are often used which work quite adequately  
14 for majority populations themselves contain perhaps an  
15 unintentional bias, but it is there nonetheless. Because of  
16 the fact, as one speaker previously said, they are normed on  
17 a different population.

18 What I suggested is that if schools have a  
19 reasonable belief that a given population within their  
20 district is systematically discriminated against by the  
21 procedures for identification, then they have the right to  
22 create another identification procedure that works better  
23 for that population.

24 For a long time, there has been a requirement in  
25 the rules that are in here that the identification system be

1 a uniform system. There are a few other terms, systematic,  
2 uniform and so on. And uniform has been defined for a long  
3 time, or not really defined, but has been thought of as  
4 meaning one set of standards applied to everybody who is  
5 nominated.

6 In the last three years, what we have begun to do  
7 is think of that uniform as meaning that the standards must  
8 be applied uniformly to everyone for whom those  
9 identification procedures are appropriate. So that an  
10 identification procedure that is appropriate for the  
11 majority population must be applied uniformly to everyone in  
12 the majority population, or otherwise it is not fair. But  
13 if we know that those same standards are not appropriate for  
14 say an American Indian population or a Hispanic population,  
15 then it is probably wrong to use those standards.

16 And the district is right to have or that it is  
17 all right to create another set of standards for admission  
18 to the program which are fair to that population, but then  
19 they must be applied uniformly to everyone in that  
20 population, so that it is fair to everyone there.

21 MR. MULDROW: Is there technical help provided to  
22 districts where they might be a concern?

23 DR. WOLF: In terms of direct help from the  
24 Department of Education, it has been limited. We did have a  
25 workshop where we brought in Dr. Suzanne Richard from the

1 Educational Service Center in New Jersey, and that was in  
2 the spring of 1985.

3 Most of the help has been in terms of me having  
4 meetings where we go around the state and talk about the  
5 standards, give some examples of what the identification  
6 could be like and so on.

7 We are fortunate that most of the direct service  
8 to local schools is through area education agencies. And so  
9 it is not all on my shoulders to carry out. There are about  
10 fifteen contacts and consultants for education around the  
11 state, and they do most of the direct in-service and provide  
12 most of the direct help.

13 MR. WOLF: Dr. Wolf, I want to ask you a couple of  
14 questions about the figures that you gave us. These figures  
15 are for the 1987-1988 school year, and I take it that those  
16 are under the new guidelines, correct, in your prepared  
17 statement, the chart?

18 DR. WOLF: Okay. The new accreditation standard  
19 that requires that the procedures be fair to ethnic and  
20 language minority students, are those the guidelines that  
21 you are speaking of?

22 MR. WOLF: Yes.

23 DR. WOLF: Okay. Those guidelines became official  
24 rules last July 1st, July 1st of 1988. They will be  
25 required of schools on July 1, 1989. So I think that the

1 answer is no, not yet.

2 MR. WOLF: Okay. Could you also at your  
3 convenience provide us perhaps with data from the previous  
4 year, from 1986-1987, so that we have a sense?

5 DR. WOLF: Yes, I can ask Cindy for that. I do  
6 not have that data.

7 DR. REED-STEWART: The reports that I will get to  
8 you, you will have that for the last three years.

9 MR. WOLF: Thank you.

10 What degree of similarity is there among the  
11 programs in the various school districts in terms of  
12 identification and in terms of the nature of the programs  
13 that are offered?

14 DR. WOLF: Okay. I think that the answer is  
15 passing similarity. What the state has done, since we do  
16 not have a particular set of tests that are the correct  
17 tests to use, and particular cutoff score and so on, we do  
18 have a wide diversity.

19 What the state has is a set of standards for what  
20 would be part of the identification procedure. For example,  
21 we require both objective and subjective measures. And  
22 schools may elect to use either objective or subjective, but  
23 they cannot have only one kind of procedure.

24 The reason for using subjective measures is that  
25 they are fairer to people for whom objective measures are

1 just the wrong kind of instrument to use. And so all of the  
2 programs in the state do have to have, they are similar in  
3 that they do have to meet those requirements.

4 No single instrument or no single data source can  
5 reject a youngster, I guess that that was not the word that  
6 I was going for, but no single data source can be used to  
7 exclude a youngster from further consideration say for being  
8 nominated for the program for example.

9 Another kind of similarity that they all have to  
10 have is that there has to be a three stage identification  
11 procedure, nomination, screening and placement, although  
12 they do not have to give them those exact names. But it  
13 does have to be a written procedure that has those three  
14 parts, and have objective and subjective criteria being  
15 used.

16 Now which criteria are used for example for IQ  
17 measurements, we have everything from the Whisk R in places  
18 like Area Education Agency 5 where a licensed school  
19 psychologist is hired to work with identifying students to  
20 the Otus-Lennon Group IQ test which is probably the least  
21 reliable to be used. You probably did not want that much of  
22 an answer.

23 MR. WOLF: That is fine.

24 DR. ALLEN-SOMMERVILLE: Are there other questions?

25 Mr. Muldrow.

1 MR. MULDROW: How would you react to the  
2 suggestion that minority parents are less likely to allow  
3 their children to be enrolled in a gifted and talented  
4 program even though they may be eligible than white parents?

5 DR. WOLF: I guess that I would react that that  
6 would probably depend on which minority population you were  
7 speaking of. There are some populations, I am thinking for  
8 example of the American Eskimo population, in which it is  
9 not a cultural value to be, what am I trying to say here,  
10 forthcoming and to be aggressive and so on. And that  
11 sometimes gifted programs can try to build those kind of  
12 characteristics, those active forward seeking  
13 characteristics. And it may be that parents would not want  
14 that in their youngsters.

15 So there are some populations I think that are not  
16 widely interested in having their youngsters participate in  
17 programs. I do not think that that excuses policy makers  
18 from creating procedures which do fairly identify them when  
19 it takes place.

20 MR. MULDROW: Do you think that that is true for  
21 Hispanic and black people possibly?

22 DR. WOLF: I cannot speak for black populations.  
23 In general, those people who I have had contact with who are  
24 interested in their own children being nominated and served  
25 in programs are nothing less than various assertive. So

1 those people do want that. I do not know that I could speak  
2 for the population in general though. I do see kind of a  
3 smaller segment of the whole population.

4 In Hispanic populations, I do not know. I think  
5 that I would be making some assumptions about the population  
6 in general that I am not terribly certain of. I think for  
7 example in second and third generation Hispanic families  
8 that probably the desire of those families to have their  
9 youngsters in programs is equal to that in the Anglo  
10 population. In terms of families that may have more Central  
11 American roots, they may still have ties being first  
12 generation and so on, and they may be thinking about old  
13 country values. They may have less interest in having their  
14 youngster take part. Perhaps one of your own panel members  
15 could answer that better.

16 DR. ALLEN-SOMMERVILLE: Steve Wolf.

17 MR. WOLF: Do you have any sense of the degree of  
18 participation by Asian students in talented and gifted  
19 programs? We do not have any figures on that.

20 DR. WOLF: There are no figures. But I think that  
21 there is no problem in terms of percentage representation of  
22 those youngsters. Again I think that you can lay some of  
23 that to family values in terms of wanting to as quickly as  
24 possible move into what they see as the empowered culture  
25 and a drive on their parts.

1 I have to assume that human intelligence is as  
2 equally distributed in the Asian population as in the other  
3 ones. And so if they happen to be found more often, it may  
4 be because it is of more value for those families to produce  
5 the characteristics that are easily found.

6 DR. ALLEN-SOMMERVILLE: Are there other questions?

7 Dr. Wolf, would you have any final statements?

8 DR. WOLF: I guess that I would again say that I  
9 think that it would be wrong to use the shortcomings of what  
10 is still a relatively new idea in education, which is that  
11 gifted children deserve equal treatment in terms of their  
12 potential abilities as do other children.

13 It would be wrong to use the shortcomings in our  
14 attainment of that as a justification for eliminating the  
15 provision. I think that it holds for all populations of our  
16 culture.

17 DR. ALLEN-SOMMERVILLE: Thank you.

18 Is David Martinez in the audience?

19 (No response.)

20 DR. ALLEN-SOMMERVILLE: We are running an hour  
21 ahead, and I guess I will go to the Davenport Community  
22 School District and ask if you would like to present now in  
23 the absence of Dr. Flynn?

24 DR. DEINES: Yes.

25 DR. ALLEN-SOMMERVILLE: We will have testimony



1 from the Davenport Community School District. Dr. Deines is  
2 Director of Secondary Education for the District, and he  
3 will speak with reference to suspensions of students.

4 DR. DEINES: Dr. Spaans is representing Dr. Flynn  
5 this morning, so I will let him make a few opening remarks.

6 DR. ALLEN-SOMMERVILLE: All right. Dr. Spaans.

7 Dr. Spaans, would you give us your full name and  
8 title?

9 DR. SPAANS: I am Daryl David Spaans, Associate  
10 Superintendent for Instruction and Personnel in the  
11 Davenport Community School District.

12 DR. ALLEN-SOMMERVILLE: Thank you.

13 DR. SPAANS: I have been keeping my eye on the  
14 doorway here. Because Dr. Flynn is in Des Moines today, and  
15 he does have a meeting scheduled with the Governor, and  
16 there is an urban education network. And he did say if time  
17 would jell in such a manner that he would try to be here,  
18 and I would not have to come up to the podium. I have had  
19 that kind of expectation.

20 But at this point, I will just merely say that  
21 Dr. Deines as Director of Secondary Education will talk on  
22 the topic of suspensions, and then I will follow it up with  
23 some brief comments that would resemble somewhat what  
24 Dr. Flynn might say.

25

1                   STATEMENT OF DR. JOSEPH DEINES, DIRECTOR OF  
2                   SECONDARY EDUCATION

3                   DR. DEINES: Before I make any comments about the  
4                   suspensions at Davenport and the dropouts, I would like to  
5                   make a few remarks. First of all, even though the rest of  
6                   the group did not want me to go along with them this  
7                   morning, I did catch up with them. And that was a very  
8                   fruitful for us, Rochelle, and Nick, and Mr. Vargas being  
9                   able to talk with us, and Sue Strodbeck, and it opened up  
10                  some avenues for improved communications. I can assure you  
11                  of that.

12                  We were able to discuss some of the problems that  
13                  have been on both sides, and we also conceded that there are  
14                  some possibilities for improving our communications in the  
15                  future.

16                  The other thing that I would like to comment on is  
17                  that I know that Ms. Stewart has given you the figures on  
18                  the suspensions and the disparity in the Davenport Schools.  
19                  I would like to say that it is a much more complex problem  
20                  than just dealing with numbers and dividing those numbers.

21                  Ms. Stewart cited one solution that could probably  
22                  lead to solving the problem, and that being having more role  
23                  models in our schools. That is a long-term approach. And  
24                  it is a real problem when you have got mandatory  
25                  negotiations, and there is no provision in the contracts for

1 saving positions for minorities and these kinds of things.

2 When you have a bidding process for teachers to  
3 fill open positions, it creates a real problem for us at our  
4 senior high schools in being able to have enough role models  
5 of minorities on those staffs. For some reason or another,  
6 those are looked on as the most sought after positions in  
7 the District and the most senior people are the ones that  
8 are able to get those positions.

9 A comment was made about in-servicing our teaching  
10 staffs and so forth about being understanding of minority  
11 problems and so forth. I would like to call your attention  
12 to the fact that in Davenport that no teacher suspends a  
13 student. The principals are the ones who impose suspensions  
14 on students. It is a limited situation. The maximum number  
15 of days by state law is that they can only suspend for ten  
16 days regardless of what the infraction is.

17 No principal can cause the expulsion of a student.  
18 It has to be by board action only. And then there is a  
19 prescribed hearing process that is involved. And so with  
20 respect to the in-servicing of staff, in all of my meetings  
21 with the secondary school principals who have that  
22 responsibility for imposing discipline on the students, we  
23 have been working constantly for the past three or four  
24 years in discussing these types of things, and talking about  
25 other kinds of discipline that could be applied.

1           We do have consistent discipline procedures in  
2 Davenport, and we impose those disciplinary measures  
3 consistently regardless of race. And let me talk about the  
4 numbers game again, that you just cannot look at numbers.

5           If two minority students are in a fight and our  
6 disciplinary procedures call for suspension from school, the  
7 principal has no control over this. We cannot control who  
8 gets in trouble. Now yes, with our counseling staff, we try  
9 to deal with modification of behavior and how to deal with  
10 conflict situations for those students that do become  
11 involved in conflicts, fights, or whatever the situation is.

12           But I just wanted to point out that we cannot  
13 control who it is that is involved in behavior that is  
14 unacceptable. So it is not as simple as just dividing  
15 numbers.

16           One of the things that I think would be good to  
17 look into, and I do not know the answer to us, is that they  
18 asked us the number of suspensions and the number of  
19 dropouts to be reported each year, but I do not know that  
20 there is a consistent understanding of what a suspension  
21 really is.

22           And the reason that I say that is that there was  
23 one report that we were asked to provide information about  
24 just this past fall, and I cannot tell you which one it was.  
25 But they asked for the number of suspensions in our District

1 and a suspension for that particular report was if a student  
2 was suspended during the course of the year regardless of  
3 how many times that was one suspension, and that is not the  
4 way that we report ours.

5 Every time and every instance that there is a  
6 particular student suspended from school, we count that as a  
7 suspension. Now perhaps that is not the consistent  
8 procedure throughout the state, and I would encourage that  
9 to be investigated.

10 The comment was made about Waterloo. I think that  
11 they have just as great a problem if not a greater problem  
12 than we do. That is just an off the cuff remark.

13 Let me talk about what we are doing in the  
14 Davenport schools. The Davenport Community School District  
15 is concerned about the suspension rate and the dropout rate.  
16 We are concerned about the disparity in the percentage of  
17 minorities that are being suspended and the number of  
18 dropouts that we have.

19 We are not only concerned about the number but  
20 also the percentage, as I said. In 1985-1986, we had a peak  
21 year. I would like to indicate some numbers, and we are  
22 making progress, even though it is moving slowly. The total  
23 number of suspensions that we had in the 1985-1986 school  
24 year, there were 751 suspensions for a variety of reasons.  
25 In the following year, 1986-1987, we had 659. The figures

1 that we have reported for the 1987-1988 school year, which  
2 the report has not been accepted by the state department and  
3 so forth, but we dropped to 542.

4 One of the things that we are doing with  
5 suspensions is that we are concerned about finding other  
6 forms of discipline for infractions of the rules and  
7 regulations of the school. My philosophy is that if we have  
8 no suspensions that we are not going to have any disparity.  
9 Now that is very idealistic. I do not think that we can  
10 actually arrive at that. But we are looking at other forms  
11 of discipline.

12 As an example, we have what we call supervised  
13 study centers. And for discipline situations, we may put  
14 the student in that supervised study center for a day and  
15 get the assignments for each one of the students, and they  
16 are supervised by a teacher to make sure that they are  
17 working on the assignments. And they are there for the  
18 whole day, even their study periods and everything.

19 And we are encouraging that way of dealing with  
20 problems in place of sending the students home, which in  
21 many cases that is what they want.

22 I think that I talked with you folks several years  
23 ago, and we were at that time talking about dealing with at  
24 risk students. We did not call them at risk students at  
25 that time, but we were talking about the potential dropouts.

1           And since that meeting, we have been working and  
2 we have a dropout prevention committee. And this committee  
3 have been meeting regularly in the Davenport Community  
4 School District. And we have been dealing with the early  
5 identification process of potential dropouts, or what you  
6 have heard many times as the at risk student.

7           There are many characteristics. And I think that  
8 in your readings that you have seen that there are many  
9 characteristics that are earmarks of a student that could be  
10 a potential dropout or identified as an at risk student.

11           And we have in the process of our committee  
12 actions developed what we call a matrix that includes all of  
13 these identifiers. And at risk students or potential  
14 dropouts generally have more than one of these  
15 characteristics.

16           We have also developed a list of the signals that  
17 appear in early elementary. At the time that I talked to  
18 you last time, we indicated that we were going to be  
19 concerned about not just talking about junior and senior  
20 high students as being potential dropouts, but that we were  
21 concerned about clear down when they first start school.

22           Why do we talk about the identification of at risk  
23 students when we are looking at suspensions and dropouts. I  
24 think that it goes all hand in hand. Successful students  
25 are not and do not end up as suspensions and dropouts.

1 Those students who are successful and pass their courses,  
2 they do not end up as suspensions and dropouts.

3 So it is important that we take a look at the at  
4 risk student, those who could develop into the dropouts or  
5 the potential dropout category.

6 The successful students, they have good opinions  
7 of themselves and good self-esteem. They have no failing  
8 grades. They participate in extracurricular activities.  
9 They have many friends. They have high goals and high  
10 expectations for themselves, and their teachers have high  
11 expectations for their performance.

12 Successful students like school and they feel that  
13 the teachers are there to help. They are on track with  
14 their other classmates. And they have not fallen behind,  
15 and they have not been retained at any one particular grade.

16 We have also in our program developed a system  
17 that we are going to follow to deal with those students once  
18 they are identified as being at risk. What can be done to  
19 prevent them from becoming suspensions or a dropout. Are  
20 there some things that make it impossible for them to be  
21 successful.

22 We want to intervene early. If we identify a  
23 student. One of the characteristics is a student that is  
24 from a single parent family. Let me give you a bit of  
25 statistics. I got this secondhand, but I think that it is



1 approximately right. I am sure it is close. This is  
2 talking about single parent families.

3 We think that we have some problems in Iowa, and  
4 we think that we have problems in Davenport. But the  
5 superintendent of schools of the New York City school system  
6 said, "We are concerned about having parent involvement, and  
7 parents encouraging their children to do well in school."  
8 He said, "Do you realize that fifty percent of my  
9 kindergartners next year, their parent will be no older than  
10 my seniors." That is devastating, fifty percent.

11 As I mentioned, that is one of the identifiers, a  
12 single parent family, and I thought that I would share the  
13 other with you.

14 There are many strategies that we have developed  
15 in the Davenport schools to deal with the person or the  
16 student who has been identified as at risk. Let me share  
17 with you a few of these.

18 There are differences in learning styles. Some  
19 students learn differently. We are working with our staffs  
20 now, our teaching staffs, to help our teachers recognize if  
21 one student does not learn the way that the lesson is being  
22 prepared that they can come right back and apply the message  
23 that is in a different learning style, and all the students  
24 that way will be able to understand the presentation.

25 We have to teach differently for different kids.

1 And this is one of the things that we are working on with  
2 our staffs at the present time, looking at the difference in  
3 learning styles.

4 Of course, parent and teacher counseling sessions.  
5 One of the things that we are doing in the elementary  
6 program as an example, this past year we hired three, not  
7 counselors, but the way that you would normally refer to  
8 counselors, they are family counselors, where we are trying  
9 to work with the parents in helping them be good parents and  
10 good helpers for their children. Because we all know that  
11 it is a cooperative project to make it possible for children  
12 to succeed.

13 We are developing peer tutoring programs. We are  
14 not just taking students and saying would you help Johnny.  
15 We are saying would you be interested in being a tutor to  
16 some of your classmates. If you are interested, we want you  
17 to come to some training sessions, and we teach them to be  
18 good tutors, valuable tutors to their peers.

19 Teacher assistance, of course. In some agencies,  
20 we have to have agency referrals. In some situations when  
21 we analyze what the problem of each individual is, we find  
22 that some need some schedule modifications, that they cannot  
23 handle a full schedule.

24 Referral to alternative programs. We are  
25 developing a system of alternative programs. As an example,

1 a school within a school in our secondary schools. In our  
2 junior highs, we will have a program in each one of our  
3 buildings next year. We have them in four of the buildings  
4 at the present time.

5 Special education programs, of course. We have an  
6 alternative program called 2001: The School of the Future.  
7 And we found that there are a lot of students that cannot  
8 get up in the morning to come to school, they just do not  
9 get there. And as a result, they fail their courses.

10 We have got an alternative program that starts at  
11 1:30 in the afternoon and goes to 9:30 at night. And  
12 everybody said that it would not work. That the kids that  
13 could not go to school, that their friends are going to be  
14 getting out of school a couple of hours later, and they are  
15 not going to want to attend.

16 Here are students attending now in a situation  
17 with a different approach, and they are ones that missed  
18 thirty and forty days the previous year. We say if they are  
19 absent two days that they are out. I mean at the third  
20 absence they are done for the quarter. And we had 46 of our  
21 students in that program the first nine weeks that had  
22 perfect attendance.

23 (Continued on next page.)

24

25

1           A different approach, a different time, these  
2 types of things. Different approaches dealing with the  
3 student's problems.

4           A career assessment program. We're going to have  
5 one of those operating in our school next year.

6           Job-related instruction. In some instances we  
7 need that to solve some problems for the students.

8           Again, we get back to basic skills instruction.  
9 There are some students that, they got to the point that  
10 they're at, and they're way behind in their understanding of  
11 the basic skills to be successful, good citizens. And so we  
12 go back, and in most situations we're trying to provide them  
13 with opportunities.

14           One of the things that I'd like to mention with  
15 you: there are three categories, four categories, five,  
16 that are high-risk categories. Those students with low  
17 family income. They have been deprived, in many cases, of  
18 the background to be successful right from before they even  
19 start to school. Minorities are high-risk group. That's  
20 been proven by statistics. Teen parents is another  
21 category; they're a high-risk category. Special education  
22 students are a high-risk category. There are -- I think I  
23 saw statistics the other day that only 30 percent of those  
24 that graduate are equipped to conduct their lives  
25 successfully themselves. And, of course, a big problem for

1 all of us are substance abusers.

2 And I think those five categories and our  
3 knowledge about these things and the individual  
4 characteristics that are characteristic of high-risk  
5 students, these kind of bits of knowledge are going to  
6 enable us to turn some things around.

7 As I stated to you, we are starting some programs,  
8 early elementary education to help these at risk. I  
9 mentioned the family counselors. We're starting pre-school  
10 programs. And we have other things that are in motion at  
11 the present time.

12 One of the things that we're going on is that,  
13 basic to everything, is that nothing succeeds like success.  
14 If we can have these children be successful, we're going to  
15 reduce the number of suspensions.

16 Thank you.

17 DR. ALLEN-SOMMERVILLE: Thank you.

18 We'd like to ask some questions.

19 DR. DEINES: Oh, okay.

20 DR. ALLEN-SOMMERVILLE: I have one, I guess, to  
21 begin with.

22 In your earlier statement, you spoke of a non-  
23 uniform state definition for suspensions. And, as we  
24 utilized data that have been submitted to us from the state  
25 department regarding Davenport, may we be assured that there

1 was some uniformity in the use of the definition?

2 DR. DEINES: Yes. Ours is a situation where we  
3 take, we count every suspension. Even if one student were  
4 suspended five times, that would be five suspensions.

5 DR. ALLEN-SOMMERVILLE: Questions?

6 Mr. Muldrow?

7 MR. MULDROW: With reference to a couple of  
8 remarks you made at the beginning of your talk, you  
9 indicated that you felt the school district cannot control  
10 behavior of various groups, which might result in  
11 suspension.

12 And then, also, you said that individual teachers  
13 do not make the decision about whether a student is  
14 suspended or not.

15 I find those remarks a little bit disturbing, in  
16 that -- well, the implication of course, if -- it is a  
17 statistical fact that there is a higher suspension rate for  
18 minority students than white students. The implication  
19 might be that this is somehow related to the behavior of  
20 those students which is unacceptable and which results in  
21 suspension. But it would seem to me that behavior does  
22 correlate with the general atmosphere and climate in the  
23 school system, perhaps to a certain degree, and might  
24 reflect attitudes in the school system which might, indeed,  
25 be reflected in abnormal behavior.

1 DR. DEINES: Let me clarify what my first comment  
2 was. I said that we cannot control who's involved in the  
3 fight. And, since we can't control who's in the fight, we  
4 can't control what that final number is. It could be two  
5 whites that are in a fight. It could be a white and a  
6 black, but I can assure, in Davenport, we do not have any  
7 racial problems, such as that. Most of our fights are  
8 either two majority students or two minority students  
9 fighting. So I wasn't -- I don't want you to misinterpret  
10 what I was saying.

11 MR. MULDROW: Well, no. I guess what I'm saying  
12 is that it seems to me behavior may, indeed, be affected  
13 somewhat by attitudes, programs, the environment of the  
14 school situation, that that may be -- behavior may be --  
15 partially within the control of the system.

16 And, secondly, though individual teachers don't  
17 have the final say-so or make the decision as to whether a  
18 student would be suspended, still, don't individual teachers  
19 have a primary role in this decision. And, if they're the  
20 ones who, perhaps, do the evaluating of the circumstances  
21 which might result in a suspension --

22 DR. DEINES: Well, certainly, the teacher's input  
23 is taken into consideration, but what I was getting to is  
24 the final determination is the responsibility of the  
25 principal.

1           Even though a teacher recommends that a student be  
2 suspended, that student will not necessarily be suspended.  
3 It's the assessment of the principal that is final.

4           DR. SOMMERVILLE: Mr. Davis?

5           MR. DAVIS: Dr. Deines, I'd like to spin off or  
6 follow up with the questions concerning two students  
7 fighting. I happen to know some very definitive details of  
8 a situation involving, recently, a black student and a white  
9 student, involving a fight breaking out on some steps in one  
10 of the high school, in which one of the individuals fell,  
11 unconscious.

12           Without getting into any more detail there, there  
13 was an immediate assessment that one of the individuals was  
14 more responsible than the other. And that individual was  
15 suspended.

16           I'm told, by staffers and others, that further  
17 investigation indicated that the other individual may have  
18 initiated that altercation.

19           I'm back to the question of sensitivity. What  
20 kinds of sensitivity training in an ongoing manner occur for  
21 administrators, counselors, so that those snap decisions,  
22 snap judgments, are less likely to be made with any sense of  
23 lack of sensitivity as it relates to an incident where there  
24 are two racially different individuals involved?

25           DR. DEINES: As I said before, we have, with our



1 principals, ongoing discussions about these very same  
2 things, about the sensitivity for any opportunities for  
3 disparity in dealings with minority or majority discipline  
4 situations.

5 I would guess that we probably have discussions  
6 about these things and our disciplinary guidelines probably  
7 two or three times a year. And it's an ongoing thing. And  
8 we are constantly talking about situations as they evolve,  
9 and are we being objective in dealing with our students  
10 fairly and not -- it doesn't make any difference as far as  
11 race is concerned, or sex, or anything like that.

12 The situation that you cited was an unfortunate  
13 situation. And I think that the whole situation has been  
14 corrected. Each individual is going on with some  
15 counseling, how to deal with conflict-type situations. So  
16 that was just an unfortunate situation, and we're dealing  
17 with it.

18 MR. DAVIS: Just a slight follow-up, if I may.

19 What I guess I was speaking to in that particular  
20 incident was the visual experience that caused a conclusion  
21 to be drawn based on that piece of the action that was seen,  
22 or the outcome of that action. And those kinds of things  
23 happen in everyday life, where law enforcement people are  
24 asked to make some sort of a quick, snap evaluation. And  
25 what I'm looking at is the kind of training that will cause

1 one to not place so much weight on that kind of an  
2 observation.

3 And so I hope --

4 DR. DEINES: I can assure you that that is going  
5 to be a topic of discussion with our secondary principals, I  
6 know:

7 What can we do in order to avoid those types of  
8 situations from evolving in the future.

9 DR. SOMMERVILLE: Other questions?

10 (No response.)

11 Thank you.

12 Dr. Spaans, do you have a brief final statement?

13 DR. DEINES: I'm sorry. I took too much time.

14 DR. SOMMERVILLE: Yes.

15 A brief statement, Dr. Spaans.

16 STATEMENT OF DR. DARYL SPAANS

17 DR. SPAANS: I did catch the word "brief" and I  
18 will try to wrap it up.

19 In some respects, I think it's maybe a good thing  
20 that Dr. Flynn is not here, because I think that he wouldn't  
21 be able to speak as well for himself as some of the plaudits  
22 that have been handed him, his way, by some of the speakers  
23 before this.

24 I want to say that, since he has arrived over in  
25 the Davenport district, there's been a real thrust in trying

1 to work in many areas. Many minority concerns we have put  
2 in place:

3 . An affirmative action committee that has prepared  
4 a report, a goals report, that will be going to the board of  
5 education shortly for approval.

6 The MCNS has, as we heard this morning -- LULAS  
7 was not aware of it -- we do have two Hispanic faculty  
8 members on this committee. It did meet last night, and it  
9 is monitoring, reviewing, different activities. And I think  
10 we are, indeed, trying to get more of a parent involvement  
11 in that particular committee.

12 We have the Quad City scholars program which is  
13 operated on both sides of the river and was referred to  
14 earlier.

15 There is a committee that's called Minority  
16 Achievement. And this is a committee that I am chairing at  
17 the present time. We have approximately five key faculty  
18 members at Central High School, and we're using Central more  
19 or less as a case-type study, and we're trying to look --  
20 and it is an outgrowth over the fact that we do not have the  
21 kind of minority representation in such things as honor  
22 rolls, in such things as National Honor Societies -- at the  
23 underrepresentation. And we had a meeting yesterday, and it  
24 was a lot of give-and-take. We are dealing with attitudes,  
25 and it is something that's not going turn the table around

1 100 percent overnight. It's going to be a longer-range type  
2 of thing. But the fact that we are working on these types  
3 of things.

4 There's a project MORE, with the Univerisity of  
5 Iowa, trying to get more minority students involved in the  
6 science education and mathematics.

7 We have a UNI, a partnership, which we've been  
8 working on, and we did indeed take two busloads of minority  
9 parents and students up to the University of Northern Iowa,  
10 on a Saturday last October, to try to create a desire to  
11 follow the teaching profession and develop more mentors  
12 within the profession for role models. Even though it's  
13 long range, we were talking about parents and children of  
14 elementary schools, as well, making this trip. It was a  
15 beautiful kind of experience.

16 We had minority college students talking in a real  
17 informal manner with other students. And we are seeing some  
18 students already, the older ones, making some plans and  
19 going to the University of Northern Iowa and pursuing a  
20 teaching career.

21 I could go on in more detail in some of those  
22 areas.

23 Our efforts in the bilingual and ESL areas. The  
24 elementary family counselors which have been introduced to  
25 work with families that are families that have risk. Our

1 efforts in monitoring. Our efforts in the effective schools  
2 research has been dramatic, and here we're talking about  
3 school climate.

4 We're talking about high expectations; we're  
5 talking about self-esteem and all of those different kinds  
6 of things that -- it's been a very vigorous type of an  
7 effort, and sometimes I think our people would like to have  
8 more breathers, but it is a broad thrust in school. And I  
9 think we are seeing some positive kinds of things happening.

10 In the area of gifted and talented -- and Darrell  
11 Lietz will talk a little bit about that shortly -- but in  
12 the area of gifted and talented, we had a concern in the  
13 district because in the equity reports we were getting  
14 charged with the fact that we did not have enough minority  
15 representation. However, the guidelines that we were  
16 working with that were coming from the state department were  
17 of such a matter that we were keying in only on the test  
18 scores, which we've heard and discussed about the bias that  
19 test score in their simplest element and condition exist.

20 So we did raise these kinds of questions, and I'm  
21 not sure if we were the only district, but we were certainly  
22 one of the forerunner to try to challenge the disparity  
23 issue from that standpoint.

24 So I just merely, from an overview, I just wanted  
25 to say that I think a lot of things are happening in

1 Davenport, and I think it's in a very positive direction.

2 DR. SOMMERVILLE: Thank you, Dr. Spaans.

3 MR. MULDROW: Can I respond?

4 DR. SOMMERVILLE: Just one question.

5 ~~MR. MULDROW: It's my understanding that school~~  
6 districts are required to report periodically to the office  
7 for civil rights of the U.S. Department of Education  
8 regarding suspension rates and enrollment in special  
9 programs for minority students. I mean, minority  
10 participation as well as majority.

11 Have you had any feedback or contact with the  
12 office for civil rights, as a school district, regarding  
13 these matters?

14 DR. SPAANS: Nothing that I could identify. Our  
15 reporting mechanism is basically to the state department and  
16 what they're -- to the desegregation or equity division of  
17 the Department of Education. And I think they, in turn, do  
18 report to the Federal Government.

19 MR. MULDROW: To your knowledge, there has been no  
20 review of your district by the office for civil rights?

21 DR. SPAANS: There has not been in recent years,  
22 that I'm aware of. I do believe we are coming up for an  
23 audit this year, in April.

24 MR. MULDROW: Thank you.

25 DR. SOMMERVILLE: Thank you.

1 Darrell Lietz, the director of instructional  
2 services, will present information on talented and gifted  
3 programs.

4 (Continued on the next page.)

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1 DR. ALLEN-SOMMERVILLE: To deal with the Davenport  
2 school district.

3 STATEMENT OF DARRELL LIETZ, DIRECTOR, INSTRUCTIONAL  
4 SERVICES, DAVENPORT COMMUNITY SCHOOL DISTRICT

5 ~~MR. LIETZ: I appreciate the opportunity to meet~~  
6 with you to share information. Before I begin, on a  
7 personal note, I feel that it is appropriate perhaps for me  
8 to appear before this group as a different type of minority.  
9 During the last two years, I have gone through a tremendous  
10 loss of hearing and I have had to learn some coping skills  
11 that I didn't know I had. And as a minority in that group  
12 often referred to as the invisible minority, I would like to  
13 happily report that my colleagues have been great, the  
14 citizens that I worked with have been great, and I think  
15 that I have developed some coping skills that I didn't know  
16 I had and I do know that my colleagues have. And I  
17 appreciate that very much.

18 Talking about Project AGATE, which is our district  
19 program, back in 1987, we had the opportunity, as Lee Wolf  
20 explained to you, to write a grant to update our plan. We  
21 were dissatisfied with many components in our previous plan.  
22 Primarily we were dissatisfied with the number of minorities  
23 that we were reaching, even though we were using an  
24 identification system that was recommended by Alex Baldwin  
25 who happened to be a minority. Since that report came out



1 from the national headquarters on identification, national  
2 report on identification in 1982, we learned a lot about  
3 identification procedures.

4 When we wrote our plan which was submitted to the  
5 state for implementation in '88-'89, we developed some  
6 guidelines that we wanted to state right upfront, and those  
7 guidelines are listed on the front page of the handout I  
8 gave you.

9 Basically we are saying that the criteria for  
10 entering our program is one tied to potential and need. I  
11 want to repeat that. Potential and need. It just means  
12 that we are not necessarily looking for students with high  
13 scores. We are looking for students who have potential to  
14 achieve and also have a need for programs above that which  
15 is in our regular curriculum. So therefore it is very  
16 possible that a student might be at the 99th percentile and  
17 have 150 IQ and not necessarily be in our program because  
18 one of the things that the national report said that you  
19 want to stay away from a score. Rather, what we are  
20 trying to do is develop a profile for students to enter the  
21 program rather than to have prerequisites for entering the  
22 program.

23 As you look at the guidelines also, you will  
24 notice Number 3, that our goal is to have the program  
25 reflect racial, socioeconomic and sex ratios. We have made

1 progress in that. We are not where we would like to be.  
2 Interestingly enough, one area where we have the greatest  
3 problem is in the disadvantaged. We are looking for the  
4 students who aren't qualified for free and reduced lunches  
5 and that is one of the things we are looking at and we have  
6 not been able to entice those people into the Gifted and  
7 Talented Program. that is an effort that we are trying to  
8 do.

9 Number four talks about program options that we  
10 have. And then the rest of it talks about the role of the  
11 program and how we identify the students in the program.

12 If you would look at the third page of the  
13 handout, I mentioned program options that we have and you  
14 have a sheet in front of you for elementary, junior high and  
15 senior high. I am asking you to look at the junior high  
16 only at this time.

17 Our program is designed to reflect these kinds of  
18 options at the junior high. First of all, at the bottom we  
19 have the enrichment in the regular classroom, and we have a  
20 lot of in-service with our teachers to make sure that they  
21 provide enrichment in the classroom.

22 Then, the second step up the pyramid is the Talent  
23 Pool option which consists of advanced courses, extra-  
24 curricular activities and co-curricular activities.

25 The students enter those programs and exit those

1 programs according to the requirements for those various  
2 programs. For example, if I wanted to be in the band  
3 program, which is a co-curricular program, at the junior  
4 high, then I have to meet the requirements for the band  
5 program being able to play a musical instrument, for  
6 example.

7 If I am going to be in the algebra program, then  
8 I have to meet the entrance requirements for that algebra  
9 program, and so forth.

10 Once the student has done that, we are looking for  
11 the 20 percent and then we are saying, who wants to go  
12 beyond that. And that is the 5 percent option package.  
13 And on the left side, we can see various options that are  
14 open to the students.

15 The students select from those options. The one  
16 thing we expect the student to do, when he or she enters  
17 that program, they must produce. And we say you must  
18 produce some kind of activity each semester. If you do not  
19 want to do that, maybe you want to stop at the Talent Pool  
20 level. But if you want to go to that 5 percent which is  
21 constantly changing that the student says I want to enter in  
22 one semester, I may not want to enter the second semester,  
23 and that is perfectly permissible. So we will not  
24 necessarily have the same students in both programs.

25 Now, I mentioned -- in both semesters, I meant.

1 senior high students are black.

2 At the Hispanic rate, we have 7 Hispanic students  
3 at the elementary, which is 2.8 percent. Our district  
4 enrollment of Hispanic is 3.6. So we are not that far off,  
5 2.8 compared to 3.6.

6 ~~Our junior high Hispanic enrollment is 3.7. We~~  
7 only have 1.8 at the junior high level.

8 Senior high, our Hispanic enrollment is 3.5  
9 percent. We only have 1.8 percent.

10 That, too, is a little misleading because of the  
11 fact that we have Hispanic students at the secondary level.  
12 When I say secondary I am talking about Junior High and  
13 Senior High, who are in the Talent Pool who have been asked  
14 to move to that 5 percent and they have chosen not to do  
15 that.

16 And the reason they have chosen not to do that  
17 might be because of their extracurricular activities, the  
18 academic load they are carrying, lack of interest and so  
19 forth.

20 Yes?

21 MR. DAVIS: Did I hear you, sir, give the junior  
22 high number of Hispanics and the senior high number of  
23 Hispanics in the program?

24 MR. LIETZ: Yes. I can give that to you again.

25 MR. DAVIS: Thank you.

1 MR. LIETZ: Hispanics, we have 7 at the  
2 elementary, 2 at the junior high and 3 at the senior high.  
3 Just about two months ago we asked three students at West  
4 High who were Hispanic to be in the program and they chose  
5 ~~not to be in it. Now, they may want to be in this~~  
6 semester. Depends upon this schedule and so forth. But we  
7 know we have a profile list of all the students who might be  
8 in that top quartile above and beyond. I forgot to mention  
9 two other things that we've considered. If you were a  
10 senior high student and wanted to be in our Gifted and  
11 Talented Program, we would put a lot of weight on self-  
12 nomination. And you would say I want to be in the  
13 program. And we would ask you to fill out a questionnaire  
14 that would tel us two things. Why do you want to be in the  
15 program? If you were in the program, what would you do,  
16 what kind of interests, what kind of tasks would you  
17 complete?

18 Okay. And then they have an interview with the  
19 AGATE teacher. At the primary level especially strong  
20 consideration is given to parent nomination because we know  
21 that parents know those students better than anyone else.  
22 And again, we have a form that parents or teachers can  
23 nominate students that they feel we don't have in our pool.  
24 So a student can enter the pool a lot of different ways --  
25 teacher nominations, parent nominations, self-nominations,

1 plus scores.

2 We very excited about the progress we've made. If  
3 you looked at the numbers, one that stands out is that of  
4 the increased enrollment in the senior high level through  
5 the years. And that pleases me a great deal.

6 I can't take any credit for that. I just happen  
7 to have some teachers who attract a lot of kids and can  
8 provide a lot of options, and like any program, the teacher  
9 makes a difference.

10 And we have some outstanding teachers in our  
11 program and they do a great job.

12 But they frequently call themselves VWs -- visible  
13 when working. And I like that slogan.

14 DR. ALLEN-SOMMERVILLE: Are there questions?

15 (No response)

16 DR. ALLEN-SOMMERVILLE: Thank you.

17 Mr. Martinez did not arrive.

18 We have concluded the agenda presentations for our  
19 morning session and we will recess until 6:30 p.m. At that  
20 time we will address the Des Moines community participants  
21 as well as the school districts.

22 We stand recessed.

23 (Whereupon, at 1:25 p.m. the afternoon recess was  
24 taken, the hearing to reconvene at 6:30 p.m. on the same  
25 day, Wednesday, January 25, 1989 .)

EVENING SESSION

1  
2 DR. ALLEN-SOMMERVILLE: The Iowa Advising  
3 Committee to the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights will  
4 reconvene. For the benefit of those of you in the audience  
5 ~~who were not here this morning, I shall introduce some of~~  
6 the committee persons as well as myself. I am Lenola Allen  
7 Sommerville, chairperson of the Advisory Committee. Some of  
8 the committee persons are Bernice Jones, Dr. Max Morrison,  
9 Steve Wolf. Present with us is William Muldrow, Acting  
10 Director of the Central Regional Division of the Commission,  
11 and Ascension Hernandez, the civil rights analyst on the  
12 regional staff.

13 Also present in the audience is Jim Corey, from  
14 the Washington headquarters, as well as, I thought I saw  
15 Commissioner Ester Bucklêy from Texas.

16 We followed the format of having the presents to  
17 give at least 15 minutes of testimony, and then we were to  
18 open it up for about 10 minutes of questions, unless they  
19 got very carried away and wanted to give us some extra  
20 stuff. As we look at our agenda tonight, we're beginning  
21 with the Des Moines community participants, and one of our  
22 speakers I know is here and we're going to go directly to  
23 him, and that is Larry Carter, who is President of the Des  
24 Moines branch of the NAACP. And Mr. Carter is very  
25 knowledgeable of the needs of the black community with

1 reference to civil rights and educational needs in our  
2 school district. And Mr. Carter, if you would step the  
3 podium, you may present us with your information.

4 STATEMENT OF LARRY CARTER, PRESIDENT, DES MOINES

5 CHAPTER NAACP

6 MR. CARTER: Thank you very much. I don't know  
7 that I need a mic, but if I do and my voice seems to deflect  
8 somewhat, please let me know and I can lower it or raise it  
9 as needed, okay?

10 But I am very delighted that you have asked me to  
11 come tonight to present some of the concerns that I have as  
12 it relates to education in the Des Moines public school  
13 district, and I know that there were some who indicated that  
14 they were more interested in what was happening throughout  
15 the state. But as I looked at the agenda here, that it seems  
16 to me that you're probably going to get a pretty wide view  
17 of what is going on in the state as you compile all of the  
18 information that you will be gathering. But for the matter  
19 of what I intend to do here tonight which is that I guess  
20 that I'm more knowledgeable here about the things here in  
21 the city as opposed to those things that are happening in  
22 other districts.

23 I was also told that you wanted me to more or less  
24 keep my remarks around education as it relates to  
25 employment, suspension, TAG programs, that sort of thing,



1 and that's exactly what I intend to do. And if I stray,  
2 then of course, just raise your hand and I can pull back in  
3 line sometimes. And I've been known to do that.

4 But, first of all one of the major problems as I  
5 ~~see it with respect to the district, the problem is more~~  
6 ~~than just one-fold, but one of the major ones is that if we~~  
7 can identify the students that would be participated in the  
8 TAG program, the talented and gifted program here in the  
9 city, that there are a total of, and my stats go back to  
10 about September of 1988, which is perhaps the most recent  
11 stats that you can get right now. There were 784 total  
12 participants in the talented and gifted program. Of these,  
13 there were 694 or 95 that were non-minorities in this  
14 program, and only 90 were members of the minority community.  
15 This is 11.4% of the total participants in the TAG program,  
16 that would be classified as minority.

17 Now, that in and of itself, you say well, maybe  
18 it's not all that bad because there's only 18% minority  
19 enrollment in the total district. I think we have a total  
20 of about 5,350 or so minority students in the district.  
21 Which doesn't suggest that perhaps maybe that's that far out  
22 of whack. As we all know, we're not concerned, based on the  
23 federal guidelines about the disparate impact until that  
24 impact exceeds 10% of the total minority enrollment, within  
25 that district. Well, obviously 11% or 11.4 or 11.5% would

1 be less than the 10% of 18%, which would create a disparate  
2 impact, which it would not lead one to become so much  
3 concerned about it, because we do come within that overall  
4 guideline. But I guess maybe the thing that really bothers  
5 me, when we look at the stats on the talented and gifted  
6 program, as compared with what's happening in the special  
7 education program, then I am somewhat concerned. Because  
8 then that's where the figures really take a quantum leap in  
9 terms of being more or less disparate with respect to those  
10 that are participating in the TAG program versus those that  
11 are in the mental disability programs or the learning  
12 disability program. That's where I really have some major  
13 problems.

14 And in the special ed program, if we look at the  
15 mental disability, that figure is around 24.3%, and the  
16 learning disability is 17.9% or just a little bit below the  
17 total percentage within the district. But if you look at  
18 that figure versus what we had in the talented and gifted  
19 program, then certainly those figures really began to really  
20 focus in and say something to you. What is happening to the  
21 minority students as it relates to the talented and gifted  
22 program versus what's happening to the minority students as  
23 it relates to the special education type program. That's  
24 where I have a real concern. Not in total, but certainly it  
25 makes me kind of, you know, perk up.

1 All we really identify on those students that need  
2 to be a part of the talent and gifted program at the same  
3 level that we're identifying those students that are a part  
4 of the special education type programs. That, to me, is a  
5 major concern. I think something ought to be done to bring  
6 those more in line with each other.

7 Now, while none of these really suggest that there  
8 is a disparate impact, because of the 18% of the total  
9 population of the student enrollment, but if you look at the  
10 11.4% versus the 17.9% and the 24.3% then it begins to say  
11 something to you.

12 Now, the next category that I look at certainly  
13 would suggest to me that there's something radically wrong,  
14 and maybe that's what's impacting the TAG program and what's  
15 impacting the special ed program, and that is this monster  
16 called suspension. That it's almost atrocious that nearly  
17 30% of all of the students in this district that are  
18 suspended are minorities. Something's wrong. Now, that  
19 does exceed the disparate impact level. But I think that if  
20 we look at the number of suspension versus the number in the  
21 special education programs such as mental disability,  
22 learning disability and also those that are involved in a  
23 TAG program, that this 29.6% or .7% almost literally goes  
24 off the richter scale in terms of suspension. Something's  
25 happening down there, and as you know, all of us know, the

1 richter scale has no top. So how in the hell are you going  
2 to go over the top of it.

3 But this certainly would suggest to me that  
4 there's something inherently wrong within the district that  
5 ~~would cause this kind of a disparate impact upon the~~  
6 student. I think the next thing that I would get into that  
7 would probably lend itself to having some relationship  
8 between the number, the high number of suspension, the  
9 number that are in LD and MD and TAG programs would  
10 certainly indicate that could have some bearing on this with  
11 respect to the employment situation within our district.

12 Now the total employment in the district, these  
13 are non-certificated people, would be about 8.0 or 8.1 or  
14 8.2% total, within the district. But I think where it really  
15 reflects adversely best is right there on the border line.  
16 Or where it really reflects is the certificated teachers or  
17 the certificated people which would be your teachers, your  
18 counselors, your administrators, the figure drops down to  
19 6.3%, which again is reflective of the disparate impact that  
20 I see as a lay person in the community between the  
21 suspensions, the LD, the MD's and the TAGs that it seems to  
22 me that if we could bring some of these employment  
23 situations into focus, that maybe we could do better. And  
24 I've looked at some of the other districts, which I'm sure  
25 you're not concerned about, but where they have a large

1 concentration of minorities in the certificated position,  
2 that we find that the number of students that are suspended  
3 that are minority students decreases. That is fewer.

4 So are minorities more sensitized to other ethnic  
5 minorities? I don't know. But I do suggest that it's  
6 something maybe worth looking into. That the minorities  
7 that are involved in the educational system here in the city  
8 of Des Moines are doing an outstanding job. But my only  
9 point, that if I could make it to the commission here would  
10 be that we just don't have enough of them. If we had more  
11 of those minorities that could counsel our students, we've  
12 had situations within the district where students were being  
13 discouraged or dissuaded, if you please, from taking college  
14 prep courses because there wasn't really opportunities  
15 available for them in these kind of areas. So you take some  
16 other courses or just not make available to ethnic  
17 minorities certain courses that any counselor worth their  
18 salt would know that in order to complete their college  
19 courses, that they will have to take certain courses in high  
20 school. And they have not been counseled to take these  
21 courses.

22 Now, we are getting better along those lines. Now  
23 the last count that I had, and I don't know how accurate  
24 this is, but I believe that we have three counselors now in  
25 the Des Moines district. Now, it may be less, it may be

1 more, but not much more, not much less.

2 But at any rate, we're at least making some effort  
3 to try to bring into focus the disparate impact upon  
4 employment. I talked to the assistant superintendent, and I  
5 ~~certainly don't want to try to steal his thunder here now,~~  
6 but in talking to him he said that they're making a  
7 concerted effort to try to bring into focus the employment  
8 situation by taking the students at the junior high or  
9 middle school level on into senior high and work with them  
10 and walk with them, and tutor them and mentor them so that  
11 they will go on to schools like UNI, Iowa State, etcetera,  
12 to become teachers. And then once they graduate, then they  
13 will come back to Des Moines, hopefully, and become  
14 teachers.

15 Part of the problem that they have said, and I  
16 certainly agree with it to some degree, that it's hard to  
17 take a kid who was raised in Chicago or New York, and then  
18 bring them here to Des Moines and expect for them to have a  
19 good experience. It's almost a cultural shock. So they said  
20 instead of taking the kid from the "Gay Paris" and trying to  
21 bring them to the farm, then of course they would take the  
22 farm kid and send them off the school, and then bring them  
23 back to the farm. And maybe they're not missing so much.

24 I think that this program will help tremendously  
25 in raising the number of ethnic minorities that are

1 participating at the teaching, administrating, counseling  
2 level in our district. But as we look at it, certainly we're  
3 thinking probably, the quickest turn around on that would be  
4 seven years from now. That would be absolutely minimal. If  
5 ~~we started yesterday. That it's going to take seven years to~~  
6 get those kids through the system and get them back to the  
7 district as teachers, and counselors, etcetera.

8 Counselors, it would be a little more because  
9 there's more requirement and educational requirement to get  
10 them into that kind of exercise. But I think that we ought  
11 to do something now to try to turn this trend around. And  
12 some of the suggestions that I have certainly may not be  
13 what the district has in mind, but each year, maybe twice a  
14 year they have programs they call in-service training  
15 programs, in the district. And it seems to me that if we  
16 can raise the level of sensitivity in these in-service  
17 training meetings or groups, that they have each year, that  
18 maybe we can cut down on some of this.

19 Now, so far as the suspension rate and I've been  
20 at the district on any number of occasions to visit with  
21 them about some of the concerns that I have with respect to  
22 this high suspension rate. There's no question about it  
23 that they make very legitimate, very valid arguments. That a  
24 number of these suspensions are not necessary started at the  
25 school level. They start in the neighborhood and they spill

1 over into the school. I totally agree with that.

2 But we can't expect the district to be the cure-  
3 all, or the panacea for all of our ills of our society. I  
4 think that we have to do more to try to bring about a better  
5 ~~understanding between the community and the district. There~~  
6 ~~have been some olive branches extended from the district to~~  
7 the community to try to bring about this change in terms of  
8 the understanding. However, I do believe, very deeply and  
9 very strongly that there are programs in the district that  
10 by nature exclude ethnic minorities from participation.

11 And you say "what is that?" Well, quite frankly I  
12 have visited with several of the building advisory committee  
13 presidents and it seems to me that they conveniently hold  
14 those meetings at a time of day where a person like Larry  
15 Carter, who would have the latitude, perhaps, to get away  
16 for a moment or two during the day, I would find it somewhat  
17 difficult to leave with the BOBAC's. There's no way that  
18 you can expect for a person that's working on an assembly  
19 line at John Deere or Firestone to be able to get away at  
20 10:00 in the morning, or 2:00 in the afternoon, unless that  
21 person just happens to be on a night shift or graveyard  
22 shift, or swing shift or graveyard shift, and then that  
23 person could probably make that.

24 They would just as well hold that thing at 3:00 in  
25 the morning. I think you'd get the same level of



1 participation of a person having to get up at 7:00 to go to  
2 work.

3 So what I'm saying is that isn't there some way  
4 that maybe we can do something in the district now, to bring  
5 about a change in terms of when they meet? And where they  
6 meet. I think it's important for those people who are  
7 impacted by the system to feel free to go to that system, to  
8 visit with those administrators, the building  
9 administrators, the teachers, etcetera.

10 I had an occasion to visit with one of the  
11 parents, a grandparent, it was, in the black community.  
12 You've got to understand we've got what we call an extended  
13 family. So it's not unusual for a grandmother to be  
14 involved. Am I running past my time? Just hold your hand  
15 up.

16 DR. ALLEN-SOMMERVILLE: Just a couple of minutes.

17 MR. CARTER: A couple of minutes, okay and then  
18 I'll cut it. But I just love to talk as you can probably  
19 well see. But it's not unusual to be involved in that  
20 extended family, but a grandmother called me, it was the day  
21 after Martin Luther King's birthday. And in the school that  
22 her granddaughter was attending, that she had indicated that  
23 the teacher in the class had said about Martin Luther King  
24 said this was great, that he was a great man, and that we  
25 have, back in those days -- these are words of a reasonable

1 facsimile -- back in those days he was considered an  
2 educated nigger because they didn't have them.

3 Well, the kid went home, told the grandparent.

4 The grandparent immediately called me. I said wait, I don't  
5 ~~think that that happened. I said let's try to check it out~~  
6 first. They probably misunderstood what happened. So the  
7 grandmother assured me that the kid didn't misunderstand,  
8 because the grandmother also has a young lad, who is a  
9 grandson, same grade level, 6th grade level, that heard the  
10 same thing from the same teacher.

11 But I said I think that that person also  
12 misunderstood what was said. But at any rate a meeting was  
13 set up with the principal and those kinds of things, and  
14 they began to talk about this thing, and talk it over. And  
15 as it stands right now, it looks like those kids really did  
16 misunderstand what the teacher said? However, if we didn't  
17 have that contact with me, they would have gone off half-  
18 cocked, and probably would have caused more problems in what  
19 really existed there. But as a result of this, we were able  
20 to talk this thing out, the grandparents feel good, they're  
21 plugged into the system.

22 So I think those are the kinds of things that we  
23 need within the district to have people that are concerned  
24 that not necessarily will have kids or grandkids that are  
25 students in the district, that maybe will bring about a

1 change in that kind of understanding.

2 And I'm sorry that I took more time.

3 DR. ALLEN-SOMMERVILLE: Thank you, Mr. Carter.

4 MR. CARTER: Thank you very much.

5 DR. ALLEN-SOMMERVILLE: Are there any questions?

6 MR. CARTER: I give just as long answers as I do,  
7 you know, do --

8 MR. MULDROW: Mr. Carter?

9 MR. CARTER: Yes.

10 MR. MULDROW: You referred to the extremely high  
11 suspension rate from minority students as one of the key  
12 problems, and then you followed that by indicating that you  
13 saw the lack of minority staff and faculty as perhaps being  
14 related to some of the disparities and the programs. Do you  
15 relate that also to the suspension rate, and how is minority  
16 and faculty staff related to suspension rates?

17 MR. CARTER: Okay, I think that when, if you have  
18 -- and if I can give you a hypothetical situation, okay?  
19 What if you have a minority staff person there, much like  
20 what you have when the grandmother called me about what they  
21 perceived that the principal had said, that I gave them a  
22 different perspective on a different slant. I looked at it  
23 a little more philosophical. I wasn't all tied up into it  
24 emotionally, I felt as though the grandparents were, because  
25 they were so close to it. I think that a minority teacher

1 that has a depth of field and understanding for the problems  
2 that that young black lad or young black lass would bring to  
3 the school would probably be-able to deal with it a lot.  
4 better, because they understand, from a personal standpoint  
5 of you please, maybe those problems as they spill over, and  
6 thereby being able to deal with some of those problems that  
7 those kids bring that they're majority teacher probably  
8 would not understand.

9 And I think that's why I think that there would be  
10 a better or lower suspension rate because I think many of  
11 these suspensions are caused due to the fact that those  
12 majority teachers, counselors, advisors, etcetera, do not  
13 have the depth of field to understand the problems that are  
14 inherent in the black community that every black knows,  
15 irrespective of the level they're at.

16 If they're the president of a company, or if  
17 they're the type that's on skid row, they understand  
18 problems that are inherent in being black in America that  
19 I'm sure that the anglos would not know. And I think that's  
20 what would help us.

21 DR. ALLEN-SOMMERVILLE: Are there any other  
22 questions? Thank you, Mr. Carter.

23 MR. CARTER: Thank you. Now I have another  
24 meeting to attend so I better leave.

25 DR. ALLEN-SOMMERVILLE: We'll excuse you.

1 MR. CARTER: Thank you for inviting me.

2 DR. ALLEN-SOMMERVILLE: Our next presenter is Ian  
3 Binnie, a former school board member.

4 STATEMENT OF IAN BINNIE, FORMER SCHOOL BOARD

5 MEMBER, SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT, ECONOMY FORMS

6 CORPORATION

7 MR. BINNIE: I think if Larry can manage without a  
8 mic, I probably can. My name is Ian Binnie. My two line  
9 bio probably tells you all you need to know. If you are a  
10 reader of the Register, you probably know I'm better at  
11 writing, at least I hope you think I'm better at writing  
12 than I am at talking. So I have a prepared speech here  
13 which I might deviate from time to time. I hope you'll  
14 forgive me if I read it. I have copies here if anyone wants  
15 one in the future.

16 Statistics show that minority children as less  
17 likely to be enrolled in programs for the talented and  
18 gifted and are more likely to be subject to suspensions than  
19 are majority children. I think Larry has adequately covered  
20 the statistics, we don't need to repeat them.

21 While the general accuracy of these statistics is  
22 not in doubt, the conclusions that some would seek to draw  
23 from them should be approached with caution.

24 Statistics demonstrate only disparate results, not  
25 necessarily disparate treatment. For example, the

1 disproportionate number of black players in the NBA cannot  
2 safely be used to conclude that NBA teams discriminate  
3 against white players.

4 Other statistics and other conclusions can be  
5 drawn from the same data which has been presented. I  
6 suggest that an analysis of the pupils in the talented and  
7 gifted program on the basis of family income would show that  
8 a high proportion of these children come from middle and  
9 upper middle class families.

10 This is not surprising. If you set an essay  
11 homework problem, for example, the middle class child goes  
12 home to an environment of dictionaries, encyclopedias, other  
13 books, and the well educated parents are able to help. the  
14 chances are that a poor child goes home to none of these.

15 We have no magic method of determining raw talent  
16 and giftedness. I hesitate to get into this because Ruth  
17 Blome, who I acknowledge as the expert on this subject, and  
18 no doubt she'll tell me later if I'm wrong. I believe that  
19 the choice of children for these programs is determined  
20 largely by past performance, which is what you really have  
21 to go on. These children chosen are probably not so much  
22 talented and gifted, as better prepared academically.

23 Minorities are disproportionately poor; because of  
24 that they are also disproportionately unprepared  
25 academically, for the reasons I have given, and therefore

1 don't make it into these programs.

2 The claim is sometimes made that admission  
3 standards are set deliberately to exclude minorities but  
4 this would not explain why these same standards also exclude  
5 most majority students.

6 ~~Those who claim discrimination on the basis of~~  
7 race in assignment to talented and gifted programs must also  
8 propose a remedy. There seems to me to be only three  
9 choices:

10 1) Set a racial quota which must be filled  
11 regardless of ability or preparedness, and I once again  
12 believe that preparedness, not ability is the key in the  
13 choice of these children. This would effectively destroy  
14 the program which is designed to meet the needs of children  
15 who, for whatever reason, move to the beat of a distant  
16 drummer.

17 2) You could lower admission standards. This  
18 would have the same effect as the previous option.

19 3) Or you could abandon the program. And I think  
20 this would at least be a more honest way of getting rid of  
21 them, if that is what people desire.

22 For the destruction and abandonment of these  
23 programs would not be unacceptable to a section of the  
24 liberal community which regards the programs as elitist and  
25 undemocratic. These are the people who are devoted to the

1 levelling down theory or equal rights.

2 But even if we were to achieve equality of  
3 opportunity based on the quality of family life, family  
4 income we would still be faced with the intractable fact  
5 that some people are smarter academically than others. This  
6 does not make them "better" or more valuable citizens than  
7 their less talented brethren -- merely different.

8 In a democratic society we should cherish  
9 diversity and accommodate it, which is what these programs  
10 do. These children in the TAG programs have the right to  
11 develop at their own speed.

12 Turning to the even thornier matter of suspensions  
13 and other disciplines. Minorities are proportionately  
14 overrepresented in suspensions and other disciplinary  
15 actions. The tragic circumstance is repeated in later years  
16 in our prison systems.

17 While the schools present a closed society in  
18 which discrimination would certainly be possible, the  
19 criminal justice system operates in the glare of publicity  
20 and with all the safeguards of the law and the constitution.  
21 I believe the parallels are obvious; some reason other than  
22 discrimination must be sought for the present situation, the  
23 disparate disciplining of minorities.

24 My own experience as a board member of the Des  
25 Moines school system convinced me that there was in fact no



1 racial discrimination practiced by either the teaching staff  
2 or the administration. The members of the administration  
3 who are sitting here today are probably wondering what stick  
4 I am going to use to beat them over the head with, because I  
5 normally do that. But as their more vocal critic over the  
6 past 12 years, I think I have to honestly come to their  
7 defense when they deserve it.

8 As a matter of fact in my experience the reverse  
9 was the case. Minority students guilty of rule infractions  
10 were, in my opinion, treated with more than average  
11 leniency.

12 In addition the school board certainly represented  
13 a more liberal viewpoint than that of the community as a  
14 whole. And it does not appear to have changed.

15 In addition, disciplinary cases are decided on an  
16 individual basis and on the basis of evidence. The student  
17 is accorded every opportunity to present his side of the  
18 story. Short of setting quotas, which is manifestly  
19 observed in discipline cases, there seems to be no way of  
20 altering the statistics other than by an improvement in the  
21 behavior of those involved.

22 We must always remember that the group is merely a  
23 statistical concept and what we are dealing with are  
24 individuals. If no discrimination is practiced against the  
25 individual, as I am persuaded is the case, then the

1 statistics of the various arbitrarily defined groups is  
2 irrelevant.

3 The very concept of racial groupings is in itself  
4 racist, in my opinion. Expressions such as the "black  
5 community", which we all find ourselves using, assumes,  
6 albeit unwittingly, the same basic mindset as the redneck,  
7 "they all look alike to me."

8 Nor is there any clearly defined referent for  
9 "minority". Even if we accept the concept there are, in  
10 fact, various minorities who seem to have little in common.  
11 Asians it would appear are doing very well in the education  
12 system. This is generally attributed to the importance of  
13 the family in that culture though the evidence for this is,  
14 of course, only anecdotal.

15 At the other end of the scale there are real  
16 problems within the black student population. Before taking  
17 sides in a shouting match we should take a look at the  
18 history of the treatment of African-Americans here in  
19 America. Blacks have always been victims in this country.

20 First they were victims of slave traders and slave  
21 owners. Next they were victims of overt and legal  
22 discrimination under the Jim Crow laws, which treated them  
23 as second class citizens. Then, and I expect to be  
24 controversial here, under the guise of white civil rights  
25 activism, they became the victims of an insulting white

1 liberal paternalism which, assuming black inferiority while  
2 mouthing equality offered welfare instead of work, excuses  
3 instead of opportunity.

4 NOR is this white liberal paternalism as  
5 disinterested as it would have us believe. the "Great  
6 Society" since 1963 has in fact done little for blacks. It  
7 has certainly done nothing for the bulk of blacks. But it  
8 has provided employment for the sons and daughters of the  
9 white middle class with their otherwise unmarketable degrees  
10 in the social sciences.

11 Professor Walter Williams of George Mason  
12 University, himself black, scathingly but accurately refers  
13 to them as "poverty pimps".

14 The statistics are telling us something if we are  
15 wise enough and mentally honest enough to listen. They are  
16 warning us that yet another generation of minorities,  
17 particularly blacks, is at risk.

18 They are not telling us that we can fix everything  
19 by blaming it on schools, that would be much too easy. The  
20 problem goes much deeper. In the words of Professor  
21 Williams again, "in the sixties we declared war on poverty.  
22 Poverty won." That, not discrimination, is the source of  
23 our minority problems in the public schools.

24 Thank you ladies and gentlemen for listening. I  
25 apologize for reading. If anyone has a question, I'd like

1 to try and answer them.

2 DR. ALLEN-SOMMERVILLE: Are there any questions?

3 MR. MULDROW: Mr. Binnie, to back up a little bit  
4 to what you said. You indicated you felt that preparedness,  
5 not ability, should be the standard for the talented and  
6 gifted programs. And some of the testimony we've heard or  
7 the information we've received this morning would indicate  
8 there are different philosophies about that, different  
9 thoughts about the purpose of the talented and gifted  
10 program. What I would like to pursue with you a little bit  
11 was, were your remarks that the lack of preparedness, which  
12 is evident in many minority students, stems from the home or  
13 the community or the income level situation of the students  
14 involved. Don't you feel that if there is this academic  
15 deficient among minority students for whatever reason, that  
16 it's part of the responsibility of the school system to  
17 correct that deficiency, so that minority students would be  
18 prepared to enter the talented and gifted program of others,  
19 which might benefit them specifically?

20 MR. BINNIE: If I may correct you on a minor  
21 point, I am not saying that the entry to the TAG program  
22 should be based on preparedness. I am saying they are based  
23 on preparedness. Because that's all that they can measure.  
24 And certainly I am stating that the problem is with the  
25 family. And it is not limited to minorities, as we all know.

1 It's disproportionately limited there, I think.

2 The schools have a job to do, to do it to the best  
3 of their abilities, and we shouldn't ask them to do the  
4 impossible. I think the schools, I don't think that the  
5 word is totally in on the Headstart program, but I think  
6 it's a good program. I think that it is an attempt by the  
7 schools to do it.

8 But I think we ask the schools to do too much. And  
9 I think that is being part of the reason for what I see as  
10 declining standards in the school, because we're asking the  
11 schools to fix a social problem that we can't fix. We just  
12 ask too much of them.

13 MR. MULDROW: Do you feel the school has some  
14 responsibility to make the effort to rectify the disparities  
15 and preparedness, and are they making that attempt in your  
16 opinion?

17 MR. BINNIE: It's been eight or nine years since  
18 I've been involved with the school district. But I know the  
19 people who are still there. And I think yes, they are  
20 making that effort. But consider all the things we ask them  
21 to do. We're not asking them to be the spear carriers in  
22 the war against drugs. We complain because they don't teach  
23 history, yet we expect them to cure the ills of 300 years of  
24 history.

25 It's unrealistic, I think, to expect the schools

1 to do any more than they're doing now.

2 MR. MULDROW: Now, related to that, the matter of  
3 suspension, which also you related to behavioral problems,  
4 which may stem from community or family situations,  
5 disproportionately affecting minority students. Isn't there  
6 something to be said also for the need to provide an  
7 environment in the school system which might mitigate or  
8 rectify some of this behavior due to an exciting involved  
9 learning experience? Do you feel that that might be part of  
10 the answer, or is there an effort made to deal with what you  
11 feel to be behavioral problems which result in the high  
12 suspension disparities?

13 MR. BINNIE: Well, I think that's a counsel  
14 imperfection. I don't think we fully realize how difficult  
15 it is to teach kids to read and write. Schools have their  
16 problems there and they're not doing terribly successfully,  
17 and one of the reasons they're not doing terribly  
18 successfully is that we have continually lauded them with  
19 these burdens. And I remember when I went to school a half  
20 a century or more ago, the teachers were all upset because  
21 there was a free milk program, and they had to take 10  
22 minutes a day. Well, magnify that with what they have to do  
23 now. And I can speak from past experience, I believe in the  
24 primacy of the individual, and I really have difficulty in  
25 dealing with crooks. As you know, the suspension requires

the hearing in the action on the part of the school board.

I could sympathize with some of the students who came before me if I should have come in. I can think of one who had punched out a teacher. That student was a minority student. There were others that weren't. But the student came in. He had punched out a teacher and maybe he was at the end of a long road or something like that, maybe something should have been done before. But you're faced with a situation of what do you do? You can't have a quota system. You can understand that he probably came from a broken home, was from a tough neighborhood, and was a member of a gang. So was I when I was that age. I just got lucky. But I really don't know what you expect schools to do.

MR. MULDROW: I don't want to monopolize the questioning, but I wanted to follow up with a question. We heard information or allegations this morning that some of the reason for the disproportionate disparity rate is that there is a lack of sensitivity on the part of counselors or teachers and staff to the sociological culture, background and situation of minority students so that things are attributed to them in terms of inappropriate behavior, which would not be attributed to majority students under the similar circumstances. Do you feel that is an accurate perception?

MR. BINNIE: Obviously you're quoting somebody

1 else. And I think that's slanderous, in my opinion, toward  
2 the school. I have no doubt that sitting in Fort Madison  
3 Jail are a number of innocent men. I'm sure of that. I am  
4 sure there have been suspensions which have not been  
5 justified. But that happens. But to suggest there is any  
6 pattern of discrimination I think is totally wrong. As a  
7 matter of fact I find the teachers and administrators all  
8 the way up to the school board are not only sensitive to the  
9 possibilities of charges of racism, but they're actually  
10 terrified of them. And in my opinion they fall over  
11 backwards to give the minorities a fair shake.

12 (Continued on next page.)

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1           MR. BINNIE:    We have to decide what the community  
2 standards are, you know.    No matter what, I lived in a  
3 neighborhood where the chosen weapon of argument was the  
4 open razor, in Glasgow, and I don't think if I had slashed  
5 anybody in the throat or in the face -- they were always  
6 smart enough not to kill anybody there, because there was a  
7 death penalty.    But I could have pleaded that in my  
8 neighborhood this was the weapon of choice.    And we have to  
9 decide what the community standards are and live by them.

10           DR. ALLEN-SOMMERVILLE:    Mr. Binnie, you referred  
11 to the more than average leniency regarding minority  
12 students.    And would you generalize that the suspension  
13 rates for minority students would be even higher were it not  
14 for the more than average leniency among the staff and  
15 administrators?

16           MR. BINNIE:    Marginally, yes.

17           DR. ALLEN-SOMMERVILLE:    You see that as positive  
18 or negative?

19           MR. BINNIE:    Well, I don't try to be judgmental  
20 about the thing.    I think if someone is disadvantaged for  
21 whatever reason, I don't see anything wrong with trying to  
22 lean towards that person a little.    I couldn't criticize  
23 anybody for that.

24                            And yet, you have to remember that we have to be  
25 blunt about it, that minorities do get two bites of the

1 apple. They do in industry. If we fire a majority or a  
2 minority person for exactly the -- well, I can think of  
3 examples. Two of them get into a fight. They are fired.  
4 Both head for the union hall. If there is no success there,  
5 that is the end of the road for the majority. The black  
6 knows to go to the Civil Rights Commission. And the schools  
7 are well aware of this thing. I mean, it's a fact of life.  
8 I have no objection to Civil Rights Commissions. I think  
9 they were there to redress wrongs. But some people are very  
10 smart at using the system, both blacks and whites. And the  
11 blacks have an extra bite at the apple.

12 DR. ALLEN-SOMMERVILLE: Other questions?

13 (No response)

14 MR. BINNIE: Thank you very much.

15 DR. ALLEN-SOMMERVILLE: Thank you, Mr. Binnie.

16 Is Christina Gonzales present?

17 Ms. Gonzales is a Commissioner for the Iowa  
18 Spanish-Speaking Peoples Commission and she will share some  
19 views regarding the Hispanic community with reference to  
20 the TAG program and suspension rates.

21 STATEMENT OF CHRISTINA GONZALES, COMMISSIONER,  
22 IOWA SPANISH-SPEAKING PEOPLES COMMISSION

23 MS. GONZALES: Thank you. Is there a microphone  
24 nearby?

25 DR. ALLEN-SOMMERVILLE: There is not one. If you

1 could just speak a little louder.

2 MS. GONZALES: I'll try to project my voice.

3 When I was initially asked to participate in this  
4 forum as representative of the LULAC Community, and as a  
5 Commissioner of the Spanish-Speaking Peoples Commission, I  
6 have to admit that there was a slight ignorance regarding  
7 the Des Moines public school system.

8 Number one, I have no children. So therefore, I  
9 have no children involved in the system. Secondly, I am a  
10 product of the parochial school system. So this is an  
11 enlightening experience, to say the very least, and I want  
12 to at this time thank individuals in the school district  
13 such as Dr. Rhodes and Marilyn Jones and Debbie Carter, whom  
14 I thank for their assistance and their enlightenment.

15 Some of the items that I was going to discuss to  
16 you, Mr. Carter eloquently discussed prior to myself. There  
17 was a second concern that I had to follow both Mr. Carter  
18 and Mr. Binnie. So hopefully the saying that the third one  
19 is charmed is true. But maybe not in this case.

20 Regarding suspensions, I think he addressed the  
21 point regarding suspension amongst minorities within the  
22 school district. I think that we need to have an increased  
23 awareness among board members, administrators, staff and  
24 counselors regarding the cultural and the social  
25 backgrounds, and specifically I'm going to address

1 Hispanics.

2 If you've never been poor, then you don't know  
3 what it's like to be poor. If you've never had to  
4 experience prejudice, then you don't know what it's like to  
5 be prejudiced against. And you take that, you cannot help  
6 but take that into a classroom environment. And I think  
7 that we need to, if not increase the counselors, the  
8 minority counselors, then we need to increase the awareness.  
9 And I agree that we need forums such as this where we can  
10 get together with the community, and the school board  
11 members, and to address our concerns. I think this is  
12 positive. And I appreciate the fact that you are here.

13 What I do have is some concerns regarding the TAG  
14 program, that Mr. Carter did not address.

15 When I was talking to the individuals in the  
16 school board, the school system, I noticed that there was  
17 some disparity regarding the TAG system, specifically with  
18 minorities, with Hispanic minorities.

19 One of the arguments was that initially, of the  
20 TAG, students involved in TAG, of Hispanics, 1 percent,  
21 there were 1 percent Hispanics, where in the Des Moines  
22 community there are 2 percent Hispanics in the Des Moines  
23 school system.

24 However, if you look at the total Hispanic  
25 community, we have less than 1 percent of the total Hispanic

1 community that is in the TAG program.

2 I disagree with Mr. Binnie's assessment as to if  
3 these individuals are not programmed, they are not trained,  
4 then if they are not scoring well in the criteria then  
5 therefore we should not lower our standards. I agree we  
6 shouldn't lower our standards. But I think we can't just  
7 eliminate the program.

8 I guess what I'm trying to say is I don't agree  
9 with his three options.

10 His option was, number one, to eliminate the  
11 program; number two, to lower the standards; number three,  
12 to set quotas.

13 I disagree. I think there is a fourth option. I  
14 think it is the community and the school board's joint  
15 venture to elevate those individuals so that they are able  
16 to get into the TAG program.

17 We do not necessarily have to get the individuals  
18 into the TAG program. We have to ensure their  
19 successfulness in that program. And that is what I would  
20 like to see come out of this forum is a communication and a  
21 trust with my community, your community and the Board's  
22 community, and the school board.

23 I guess since I was in the parochial school  
24 system, I think I have envisioned some things in the Des  
25 Moines public school system that I would like to share, some

1 suggestions. And perhaps you can take them for what they  
2 are worth.

3 What I envision is a joint venture in which number  
4 one, the school board will provide for the Hispanic  
5 community and other communities an individual who is  
6 Hispanic who is a coordinator or an assistant to us so that  
7 the community can go and take these individuals, these  
8 students, and we can prepare them for the TAG program.

9 I think there are some Hispanics that are gifted  
10 and talented, but they do not pass the criteria. They don't  
11 understand the tests, number one, or perhaps they don't have  
12 the background. But that doesn't mean they are not  
13 talented. We just have to bring that talent out of them.  
14 But we need the School Board's help.

15 So if we can have an assistant from the School  
16 Board, the community, the Hispanic community -- we have a  
17 UMEC center. We can go together and take the high school  
18 graduates, the Hispanic high school graduates, and college  
19 graduates from within the community, those people that have  
20 proved successful, and with that coordinator and with the  
21 Des Moines School Board teaching us how to be tutors, we can  
22 tutor the Hispanic students and we can get them ready for  
23 the test, we can get them ready for the program. But we  
24 need the cooperation and the help of the School Board.

25 I'm not a teacher. I would like to tutor fellow

1 Hispanic students. But I don't know how to tutor them  
2 adequately. I need the Des Moines School Board to show me  
3 the way, to help me.

4 Also, I don't know how to establish an agenda for  
5 the student. There are certain plans that they have at  
6 school. I wouldn't know how to follow those plans. The  
7 assistance could help me regarding those plans.

8 Also, I think to make the TAG program work, they  
9 need staffing that is representative of the community. They  
10 need minority staffing that is the same proportion to the  
11 community.

12 Again, as Mr. Carter articulated, you cannot have  
13 an individual, a non-Hispanic or a non-African American talk  
14 to a Hispanic or African-American and understand and  
15 empathize where that person came from. You need to have the  
16 staffing in that system, in the TAG program.

17 I would also -- currently, the Des Moines school  
18 system has what we call -- I'm moving through my notes, and  
19 I apologize -- the counseling for smoother singling.  
20 However, the bilingual counsel is only a part time position.

21 I understand the School Board doesn't have the  
22 funding. I work for a corporation, and I would love to have  
23 numerous full time positions, equipment. But we don't have  
24 the budget so we have to make do.

25 We need to know what the School Board, we need

1 their assistance again. How do we get the Federal grants  
2 and Federal funds so we can elevate that part time position  
3 to a full time position? And we just need to be working  
4 together.

5 That's all.

6 DR. ALLEN-SOMMERVILLE: Thank you. Do we have  
7 questions? Mr. Muldrow.

8 MR. MULDROW: Well, again, I would like to raise a  
9 similar question that I raised with Mr. Binnie. You  
10 emphasize responsibility of community and parents in helping  
11 prepare students to enter the Gifted and Talented Program.  
12 My question is, what about the responsibility of the school  
13 system? What responsibility do they have in that regard?

14 The name of the program for example is Gifted and  
15 Talented. It's a program. It's not a program for the  
16 academically superior, superiorally prepared student.

17 How do you see the responsibility of the school  
18 versus what you point out to be the need for assistance from  
19 the community and the parents?

20 MS. GONZALES: In the Gifted and Talented, and I'm  
21 sure if I'm wrong I will be quickly corrected, there are  
22 five areas that they look at. That is mathematics, science,  
23 creativity, leadership, visual and performing arts. If I'm  
24 wrong, I'm sure I will be corrected.

25 One of the concerns I have is that there are, in



1 looking at the statistics in Des Moines, there are no  
2 leaders, there are no Hispanics in a leadership aspect.

3 I think we need Hispanics in that leadership  
4 program in order to set role models for fellow Hispanics.

5 Regarding your initial question, I think that it  
6 has to be a joint venture. I think it would be unrealistic  
7 for me to stand here and say that it is totally the  
8 responsibility of the school district to prepare the  
9 individuals so that they are, that the gifted and talented  
10 aspects of them comes out.

11 I agree with Mr. Binnie to a certain degree. But  
12 I also think that it is also the community's responsibility.  
13 It has to be, in order for it to succeed it has to be a  
14 joint venture on behalf of both of them.

15 The School Board or the school system will bring  
16 out that giftedness. But within the Hispanics, for example,  
17 it is a cultural issue. It is also, we cannot, we have  
18 difficulty meeting the criteria, especially with regard to  
19 the math and sciences, because it is objective, it is a  
20 testing. And usually, when you test a third grader,  
21 Hispanic third grader, they don't have a firm grasp on the  
22 grammar of English and also the little quirks of the English  
23 language.

24 In addition, they don't have a firm grasp on the  
25 grammar of the Spanish language. So how can you administer

1 a test to them that is culturally not a fair test culturally  
2 to them?

3 So we need to -- but again, if you administer a  
4 fairer test, that is culturally non-biased, are they going  
5 to be prepared when they get into that program? They still  
6 have those same problems that they had prior to the program.

7 So we need, the community needs to work with these  
8 students. The school needs to work with these students. It  
9 had to be a joint venture.

10 We don't have the teaching expertise. You don't  
11 have the funding to do the program. Let's get together. We  
12 will provide the manpower, you provide the expertise. So  
13 that I guess I am just, in all honesty, tired of one saying  
14 that you do it and the other saying you do it. And I'm  
15 saying we have to find a viable solution. We have to get  
16 this thing resolved. It's the future of our children at  
17 stake.

18 DR. ALLEN-SOMMERVILLE: And you do have a resource  
19 pool to work with the district in the tutoring, and  
20 whatever?

21 MS. GONZALES: We have, the Hispanic community  
22 has a center. In that center we can -- and we also have  
23 businesses. And we can go to the businesses and we can for  
24 example, if it is -- I play the clarinet. I am sure there  
25 are others that have played musical instruments. I am sure

1 that there are those that have, that are artists. There are  
2 those that are singers or in theater and drama. My major  
3 is economics. I scored high in math. But again, we have t  
4 he resources in our community and we have the facility. We  
5 just don't know how to go about teaching adequately.

6 And then there is also a plan, there is a school  
7 plan. I don't want to teach them something that they are  
8 not ready to be taught.

9 DR. ALLEN-SOMMERVILLE: Dr. Morrison?

10 DR. MORRISON: Do I hear you saying that you are  
11 willing to work with these students if the Des Moines school  
12 system would provide you with the skills necessary to help  
13 these kids, you and others would work with these students  
14 outside of school hours, or whenever?

15 MS. GONZALES: I think so. But I think we need a  
16 coordinator. And if the School Board could give us a  
17 coordinator, and even readjust her schedule, for example, so  
18 she doesn't teach a morning class on Mondays, Wednesdays and  
19 Fridays because she is going to be teaching evenings on  
20 Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays at our center. So she  
21 coordinates that, so that she is watching us so we're not  
22 giving them bad habits.

23 We do that right now with regards to English. We  
24 have people such as myself who teach the Hispanic use of the  
25 English. So we are doing that now. We can do it even

1 more.

2 I guess I don't know if it is practical for other  
3 cultures. I am assuming it is going to be very difficult  
4 because of the numbers involved. We don't have -- you're  
5 talking 2 percent. You're talking 500-plus students right  
6 now. So you're not talking that much numbers.

7 When you get into the other cultures, when you are  
8 talking into the thousands, and they are so diversified over  
9 the city, this program may not be a workable solution.

10 DR. ALLEN-SOMMERVILLE: Are there other questions?

11 Yes.

12 MS. JONES: I'd just like to ask one question. Do  
13 you, are you familiar with the TAG program and the  
14 requirements?

15 MS. GONZALES: I'm familiar with the criteria of  
16 the program, the objective and the subjective. I disagree  
17 with the subjective with regards to leadership. I think  
18 when you -- number one, we do not have any Hispanics in the  
19 leadership aspect of the -- I may be wrong, but from the  
20 information that I was given. And that is basically  
21 subjective. And it sends out a message to the community  
22 that may not be true but it is a perception that is real to  
23 us t hat perhaps it is not a fair subjective criteria.

24 MR. WOLF: What I would like to follow up on, how  
25 effective do you think the district has been in

1 communicating the nature of the program and the opportunity  
2 that it presents to members of the Hispanic community? We  
3 heard testimony this morning regarding that report and there  
4 was some question about the effectiveness of communication  
5 in that regard.

6 MS. GONZALES: ~~I don't think that it has.~~ I think  
7 that the School Board or the members have to go out to the  
8 community. I think there should be a forum such as this --  
9 McKinley. I don't know if you are familiar with McKinley.  
10 It's a school here in Des Moines that is going to be having a  
11 forum with parents, Hispanic parents and faculty. And we  
12 are going to be addressing some of these issues there and  
13 also addressing some of the concerns that the parents have.

14 We need more things like that, not only because we  
15 can tell you our concerns but you can inform us of the  
16 programs, the School Board can inform us of the programs  
17 that they have available and how we can participate. We  
18 need that communication. We need to establish those bridges  
19 between the two groups, and then also to bridge the mistrust  
20 that there is.

21 DR. ALLEN-SOMMERVILLE: Other questions? Yes, Mr.  
22 Muldrow.

23 MR. MULDROW: Ms. Gonzales, do you have any  
24 observations or impressions regarding the disparate  
25 suspension rate of minority students, especially Hispanic

1 students, which seems to be even greater than the admission  
2 to the Gifted and Talented programs?

3 MS. GONZALES: Again, I do have those concerns. I  
4 didn't address them because the same concerns that I had Mr.  
5 Carter addressed.

6 I think there is a disparity there. However, in  
7 all honesty, I would like to, number one, see what was the  
8 reasoning for the suspension.

9 To me, if you are going to talk about disparity,,  
10 I want to be I think fair for both sides.

11 If you are going to talk about disparity, then you  
12 have to look at whether or not you have a non-minority and a  
13 minority that were suspended for the same reason. If not,  
14 if one minority was, if both performed the same act and one  
15 was not suspended and the other one was, then you have a  
16 disparity.

17 I agree with Mr. Binnie that you cannot just look  
18 at the numbers. I think there are other extenuating  
19 circumstances that perhaps why it is a higher rate amongst  
20 Hispanics than the non-minorities.

21 However, like Mr. Carter says, you inherit that,  
22 you bring that into the classroom. But we need teachers, we  
23 need counselors, we need administrators that are empathetic  
24 to that, to our inheritance.

25 MR. MULDROW: Why aren't there more Hispanic

1 faculty and staff in the system? Are they not available, or  
2 what is your impression of the reason for this?

3 MS. GONZALES: I have two opinions regarding that.

4 Number one, I think we are now starting to see the  
5 educated Hispanics, that they are now available to get into  
6 that. The Hispanics are now going onto college, getting  
7 their degree, and they are now getting into the education  
8 field. So hopefully we will see more Hispanics involved.

9 Unfortunately, with Hispanics, and it is probably  
10 evident here, is we by I guess our history or whatever, we  
11 do not do well in interviews. And that is a problem that we  
12 have had in the school district here in Des Moines. If  
13 there have been promotions, it has gone to a non-Hispanic,  
14 usually the statement as to why the Hispanic did not get it  
15 was because he did poorly, he or she did poorly in the  
16 interview.

17 I think the School Board needs to look at  
18 something other -- again, it's the criteria. They need to  
19 look at something other than the interviews. The job  
20 performance, you know, other things, you know, how did they  
21 perform, what was their educational experience, their other  
22 type of, their work experience. And then base it upon that.

23 So I think the two reasons is number one, we are  
24 starting to get the education and I think we were lacking  
25 that beforehand, whether it was economic or whatever. And

1 the other one is because I think we need to train ourselves  
2 to be better interviewers. And the School Board needs to  
3 also be aware, an increased awareness that there is some  
4 difficulty there and to look at other measures.

5 DR. ALLEN-SOMMERVILLE: Are there any other  
6 questions?

7 (No response)

8 DR. ALLEN-SOMMERVILLE: Thank you, Ms. Gonzales.

9 I might want to say that in order to accommodate  
10 individuals who are not on the agenda, we have a scheduled  
11 open period during the time between 9:25 and 10:00 O'clock.  
12 And if there is anyone who wishes to make a statement during  
13 that period then you may contact a staff member who is on  
14 the outside, or Mr. Ascension Hernandez at the end of the  
15 table.

16 We just listened to testimony and presentations  
17 from the Des Moines community. And at this point we would  
18 like to divert our attention or turn our attention rather to  
19 the Des Moines school district officials.

20 We have four individuals. We will begin with Dr.  
21 Jim Bowman.

22 I think this is the order in which we will go.  
23 Dr. Bowman is the Assistant Superintendent, and he will  
24 speak with reference to the Talented and Gifted Program.

25 Dr. Bowman.



1 all grades.

2 Therefore, a more immediate solution is needed. A  
3 proposal we developed last Fall grants secondary schools  
4 additional placements equal to the 3 percent of their  
5 minority enrollment.

6 These added placements must be used to ensure t  
7 hat an appropriate proportion of minority youngsters are  
8 identified. The specific students identified should reflect  
9 the ethnic composition of the school.

10 If the Minority Identification Pilot is not  
11 successful in the elementary schools, this approach might be  
12 employed there as well.

13 We do not anticipate that the proposed practice  
14 will increase district identification beyond 3 percent,  
15 overall district participation or identification. The G/T  
16 program currently has slots which are not filled. In other  
17 words, we have about 150 that we had at the time that we  
18 developed this proposal.

19 So the plan is to use those slots. This will  
20 bring us more in line with the 3 percent identification.

21 The proposals were developed and reviewed with the  
22 Gifted and Talented Program staff last year, the Gifted and  
23 Talented City Advisory Council, the Educational Equity  
24 Advisory Committee, our Instructional Cabinet and  
25 Superintendent's Cabinet.

1           On April 19 of 1988, the proposal to improve  
2 Gifted and Talented services to underserved groups was sent  
3 to the Board of Education after having been sent to all of  
4 the aforementioned groups. Our Board of Education did  
5 review it at their meeting on April 19th and placed it on  
6 the agenda at the May 3 meeting, where the item was tabled,  
7 due to the lack of time. Somehow, a change in  
8 organizational structure at the administrative level has  
9 delayed the item which will be resubmitted to the Board of  
10 Education during this semester for the final approval.

11           Should this proposal be approved, the percentage  
12 of minority students served by the program will be  
13 substantially increased. In the meantime, the Gifted and  
14 Talented staff is working with building teams to increase  
15 the identification of and services to minority students at  
16 the secondary level.

17           In our view, the District has made some specific  
18 efforts to improve and provide Gifted and Talented services  
19 to underserved groups, that is, minorities. It is felt,  
20 however, that certain efforts must continue. Some of them  
21 are provided below:

22           One. More district-wide minority staff would be  
23 helpful as a constant reminder that our minority populations  
24 represent a significant portion of this community.

25           This would also keep all staff members aware that

1 the diversity in our student body suggests a need for such a  
2 diversity of staff. Minority recruitment must continue as a  
3 priority.

4 And I can say a couple of things that we are doing  
5 to recruit minorities. Someone asked a little bit ago  
6 about aren't they easy to get or whatever. Our School Board  
7 has just adopted this this past meeting, a resolution for a  
8 minorities in teaching program in cooperation with  
9 University of Northern Iowa, and we have made several  
10 specific efforts to recruit minorities.

11 We have information that suggests that minority  
12 staff are, I think one of the papers we had said something  
13 like they are becoming the dinosaurs of the century because  
14 of additional opportunities for minorities in other areas.

15 But we have made some rather significant efforts  
16 to recruit minority staff and those will continue.

17 The second item. Equity issues must be kept alive  
18 with existing staff, with staff development and in-services  
19 highlighting the cultural and ethnic diversity both within  
20 our school district and our community.

21 Plans are underway to expand our awareness  
22 sessions for our instructional staffs yet t his Spring.  
23 I've mentioned that already.

24 Thirdly, the administration must continue to  
25 develop minority identification pilots such as those already

1 in place in our 15 elementary schools, Central Academy and  
2 our proposed plan for secondary schools. And we must follow  
3 through to ensure that those pilots and plan modifications  
4 are fully implemented and in place.

5 Finally, the District has made some progress with  
6 respect to providing services to underserved groups. We  
7 must be vigilant to provide all the necessary guidance and  
8 support to see them through to fruition.

9 I just need to point out a couple of other things  
10 I think are important. Gifted and Talented programs, we  
11 feel we have a good program and we have done as you can  
12 tell by the information I have provided to you a number of  
13 things to ensure that we continue to expand the opportunity  
14 structure for all of our students.

15 However, I don't think it ever should be assume  
16 that because a youngster is bright, and meets certain  
17 criteria, that always he or she must go to the Gifted and  
18 Talented Program.

19 We have quite a fine regular academic program for  
20 students in place already. I think our program should be  
21 targeted to those youngsters whose needs can better be met  
22 by extra services. But the program that we have in place  
23 is indeed a good program.

24 Again, I think another item that has addressed I  
25 think by some of the previous speakers is the parent

1 participation. And I think that is something that we have  
2 to continue to struggle through to accommodate because I  
3 think the active parent groups, where we have active parent  
4 groups I think we have more awareness, more understanding  
5 and sensitivity to this as an issue.

6 So there are a number of things that the District  
7 has done and I think can continue to do to respond to the  
8 needs of our culturally diverse school population.

9 On that I will stop and take any questions.

10 DR. ALLEN-SOMMERVILLE: We are prepared for  
11 questions.

12 Dr. Bowman, does the District have a situation in  
13 which a significant number of students are identified for  
14 the program but fail to participate?

15 DR. BOWMAN: Most youngsters that are identified  
16 do participate. There are occasions where particularly with  
17 something like the Central Academy, that means that a  
18 youngster has to leave his building for half a day. And  
19 very often one of the problems that they get into is they  
20 have to give up something. Scheduling is very difficult and  
21 a lot of people just don't like to go from one building to  
22 another.

23 I would hesitate -- the Coordinator of the program  
24 is present. I might ask her. But I would hesitate to give  
25 you a number. We have some who don't. But a good many of

1 them do. Most do.

2 DR. ALLEN-SOMMERVILLE: But it's not that  
3 significant. Okay. Representative Daggett.

4 MR. DAGGETT: You mentioned in your presentation  
5 there was approximately 100 open slots below the --

6 DR. BOWMAN: 100 to 150.

7 MR. DAGGETT: -- below 3 percent. Now, is this  
8 common every year?

9 DR. BOWMAN: Yes. Because all parents don't want  
10 their youngsters participating. It depends on whether the  
11 program is responsive to the perceived needs by the parents  
12 as well as the staff. And then of course in the early  
13 grades, we have had to have some teachers, I think 10, to  
14 identify youngsters beyond 2nd and 3rd grade more readily  
15 than they do in the primary grades. So when you look at 3  
16 percent of a total population I think our program is funded  
17 for something like 950 or so youngsters.

18 Somewhere in the material that we had, we pointed  
19 out we had about 800 youngsters in the program. That is why  
20 we would be able -- and the details of the plan, the  
21 secondary proposal, are in this material that I've given you  
22 -- we would be able to have with that 800 -- in Section B of  
23 the material there is a proposal to improve. It points out  
24 that week, without exceeding the 3 percent of our district,  
25 we could add 150 slots and still be under the 3 percent.

1           MR. DAGGETT: One reason I asked, there have been  
2 schools come to the legislative body and say look, 3 percent  
3 is an arbitrary figure. It is too low, it should be  
4 removed. It was put there you know basically for financial  
5 reasons and some criteria that we had at the time that  
6 indicated that was an approximate number of students that  
7 would be identified. And now do you, once you identify a  
8 student does -- and I asked this question of the folk at  
9 Davenport -- does peer pressure keep some from  
10 participating?

11           DR. BOWMAN: Yes. And it also works the opposite  
12 way. If a youngster is excluded peer pressure is a  
13 concern, too. It is very, very difficult to have a program  
14 of this sort not be perceived as an elitist program, and  
15 either you're in or you're out. I think that very often  
16 there are people who are inclined to want those students in  
17 the program because they want them identified with other  
18 students who are in the program, and it is perceived that  
19 they can best learn from students that they consider to be  
20 more like themselves.

21           So you have, I think you have some perceptions on  
22 both sides. Youngsters on the one hand, as many of us know,  
23 many of the youngsters don't want to be called the egghead  
24 or the bright kid or the square or the unusual kind of  
25 person. On the other hand, if most of the youngsters in his

1 group or her group are like that, they want to identify with  
2 that group. I can remember some of my own school  
3 experiences where youngsters, I worked with youngsters, some  
4 of whom were identified, some were not. And it's pretty  
5 distressing for the youngsters who are not, too.

6 So you have that. The peer pressure is a very  
7 significant factor in it.

8 MR. DAGGETT: With your new program, do you feel  
9 that you will be more nearly filling your 3 percent?

10 DR. BOWMAN: Well, should the program be  
11 ultimately approved, yes. But I think you have said or  
12 someone here said that the 3 percent you did, the 3 percent  
13 is something of an arbitrary. I mean, data indicates that  
14 it ought to be somewhere around there. But we do feel that  
15 we can call more attention to the need and we have done, the  
16 things that we have done here call more attention to the  
17 need to look at youngsters as being bright in this range of  
18 5 areas that we are talking about.

19 One of the things that I think we -- when people  
20 talk about sensitivity, one of the things that we all have  
21 to face is there sometimes is a perception, is a perception  
22 that a minority youngster is not expected to measure up in  
23 certain areas and having had long experience with that  
24 myself, I know that is a very real thing in many minority  
25 households.



1           The reason why I feel the need to mention it,  
2 because it happened to my own kid, who ended up in a Gifted  
3 and Talented Program but was perceived to be very average.

4           I don't think we have as much of that today as we  
5 once had but I think we still have some of it and we need to  
6 continue to be vigilant about it.

7           As Mr. Binnie indicated, I don't think we have  
8 anybody, hardly anyone in our system, that is wilfully  
9 biased or overtly prejudiced. But I think that sometimes  
10 because of socio-economic status or because of certain  
11 characteristics, cultural or language or otherwise, socio-  
12 economic, people sometimes, it is difficult to overcome the  
13 perception you have of some groups. And so that is when I  
14 say be vigilant, that's what we have to work at.

15           DR. ALLEN-SOMMERVILLE: Dr. Bowman, speak to the  
16 concern of communication between the District and the  
17 community regarding the programs.

18           DR. BOWMAN: Okay. I just signed a letter just  
19 this week sending out information to parents with respect to  
20 the Academy and the awareness programs. We do a lot. We  
21 have building advisory councils in all of our schools, and  
22 our PTAs for the most part are pretty active, but the school  
23 district even has expanded its communications department to  
24 make sure that we are making every possible contact with  
25 families that we need to, not only with this program but

1 with all programs.

2 Last Winter we were in the midst of, about this  
3 time we were in the midst of going around giving workshop  
4 activities, some of which were in South Side community, East  
5 Side community, West Side community, on our Des Moines plan,  
6 a newly initiated program that was sort of an expansion of  
7 our Chapter 1 programs.

8 Our staff does, we take a lot of pride in the  
9 fact that we do reach out with respect to virtually all of  
10 our programs to communicate with parents. And if it is a  
11 perception on the part of any of the groups that we are not  
12 doing that as sufficiently as we need to we would like to be  
13 made aware of it, because we are certainly willing to do it.

14 DR. ALLEN-SOMMERVILLE: Steve.

15 MR. WOLF: To what extent do you have arrangements  
16 whereby parents can nominate their children for this program  
17 or the students themselves can nominate themselves?

18 DR. BOWMAN: Yes. That is mentioned in the,  
19 through our BACs and through our parent groups at schools,  
20 and the various meetings, PTAs, or others, parents are made  
21 aware -- or they can join the ITAG group is they are  
22 interested, if they are interested in those programs, and  
23 they are made aware of criteria for selection.

24 We ask them to visit with the Principal with  
25 respect to how that ought to be done. And they can ask for

1 testing or ask to be recommended. And in the material that  
2 you have we point out that peers can nominate as well.

3 So typically, as you might suspect, most of this  
4 comes through the teachers. But we are at it constantly on  
5 our staff to be on the lookout for youngsters who show gifts  
6 in all of these areas.

7 One of the things that we are going to be wanting  
8 to do in the future is get a big spread in terms of all of  
9 the categories in which we identify students.

10 MR. WOLF: One concern that I have with regard to  
11 the identification of students is that there is not an  
12 overemphasis especially upon testing scores. And I think  
13 parental and student nomination address that. And you  
14 mention in your plan for the secondary schools, in the  
15 proposed plan, that you are concerned that there is a group  
16 of students who are not being identified because they don't  
17 do well on tests, and this would especially affect minority  
18 students.

19 I want to make sure that that is broader than  
20 just minority students. And I raise that because it seemed  
21 to me in using these additional slots, in the statement that  
22 you made, in the question and answer sheet that you have, it  
23 seems to me that it is being used, there is one statement  
24 that these extra slots will be used to bring up minority  
25 representation to a full 3 percent and there was also a

1 statement that majority student participation will not  
2 exceed 3 percent.

3 That seems to me to be a specific quota. Could  
4 you address that?

5 DR. BOWMAN: Yes. I said more nearly. More  
6 nearly. We didn't say -- I mean, that is one way to get it  
7 accomplished.

8 MR. WOLF: Right.

9 DR. BOWMAN: I think our staff of course is  
10 advised that we are not just trying to fill slots just for  
11 the sake of filling the slot.

12 But we do feel that there is a need to put a  
13 special emphasis on just looking at minority students  
14 irrespective of non-minority students to begin to identify.  
15 Because some of these students will weed themselves out, if  
16 they can't, if they're not -- the programs are not  
17 responsive to their needs.

18 For example, our Summer pilots that we have had  
19 the last couple of Summers. Some of those student would not  
20 have been identified otherwise. They have been identified,  
21 they have gotten in the program and they are succeeding.

22 Some of them dropped out. And that would happen  
23 in this instance, also.

24 But I think to just wait on -- you see, we've  
25 tried. We've tried to just do this by what you might call

1 just a number of natural ways of accomplishing it and I  
2 think if you are really going to make a change you have to  
3 make some kind of an impact..

4 Now, we, by making some specific rules, targeted  
5 at accomplishing that purpose, that task that you set out,  
6 we don't want to impose any program on minority or non-  
7 minority students that can't cope with it.

8 But what we are trying to do is develop a plan to  
9 give more youngsters an opportunity.

10 Thank you.

11 (Continued on the next page)

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1 DR. ALLEN-SOMMERVILLE: Are there other questions?

2 Thank you, Dr. Bowman.

3 DR. BOWMAN: Thank you.

4 DR. ALLEN-SOMMERVILLE: Our second  
5 representative -- Dr. Morrison is acting up.

6 (Laughter.)

7 DR. ALLEN-SOMMERVILLE: Is Dr. Keith Hyde, who is  
8 Director of Educational Services for the districts, and he  
9 will focus on the suspension of students.

10 Dr. Hyde.

11 STATEMENT OF DR. KEITH HYDE, DIRECTOR OF  
12 EDUCATIONAL SERVICES, DES MOINES IOWA SCHOOL  
13 DISTRICT

14 DR. HYDE: Thank you. A copy of what I intend to  
15 say, and I, too, will read it so that you can either read  
16 along or not have to take notes. I may add some things as I  
17 go along that I wish I had written and fill them in, so I  
18 may be saying something that's not on the paper, but that's  
19 fine.

20 DR. ALLEN-SOMMERVILLE: Could you speak a little  
21 longer?

22 DR. HYDE: I shall. I don't think it will take  
23 too long, and we'll have some times for questions then.

24 In the 1986-87 school year, summary reports  
25 showing information about the number of student suspensions

1 issued in the Des Moines schools received a lot of  
2 attention, both by board members and administrators in the  
3 district and by agencies outside the district. Much of the  
4 attention was focused on that part of the issue that related  
5 to the high numbers of minority students who had been  
6 suspended from schools.

7 The total issue of the use of suspension was  
8 broader than that and other components of the issue were  
9 equally bothersome to us.

10 The other factors, besides the race issue,  
11 included the high incidence of suspensions for fighting and  
12 truancy, the total time that students are absent from school  
13 because of suspension, and some lack of consistency across  
14 the district with the use of suspensions and the reporting  
15 of student suspensions as a disciplinary measure.

16 The district then asked a group of parents and  
17 teachers and administrators to study the district use of  
18 suspension, and to identify subjects of concern and  
19 recommend corrective action. The committee completed its  
20 work in the fall of '87 and reported its findings to the  
21 board of directors.

22 The superintendent then recommended a plan for  
23 corrective action to the board of directors in January,  
24 1988. I will summarize the district committee conclusions  
25 and describe the district's progress on corrective actions

1 in several areas.

2 First of all, the reporting system itself. The  
3 reporting system was designed in about 1981 or '82. It was  
4 put in place so that we could -- it was the first time that  
5 we had ever had any kind of accounting of the number of  
6 suspensions issued. The nature of our data processing  
7 services has some limitations because we get our service  
8 through a center rather than have an in-house computer.

9 So we had to rely on printed reports, and so the  
10 reports had to be defined before studies were made, and the  
11 reports come out as summaries.

12 All right, the first finding that the committee  
13 had was kind of a universal one. They found that the major  
14 source of information available was a prepared data summary,  
15 and they found that it was inadequate to study a problem as  
16 complex as what we were dealing with there, and anyone  
17 should exercise caution when studying data summaries.

18 When data is compressed it loses a lot of its  
19 identity and meaning. Important things get lost and minor  
20 things appear to have too much significance. On the other  
21 hand, some compression is necessary, because in the district  
22 the size of Des Moines to study each suspension would be  
23 impossible.

24 As a result of the committee's work, the district  
25 system for reporting suspensions has been changed, and the



1 change will allow the compressing of data with a minimum of  
2 loss. The computer can, in effect, open up the summaries to  
3 release data that was previously lost. An in-depth study of  
4 any aspect of the activity can be made. The summary report  
5 is still available to help us monitor the activity.

6 By the use of microcomputers we can take the raw  
7 data and we can look at any part of what we want. For  
8 example, in the district's discipline policy, and I'll leave  
9 copies of that, it defines 26 different ways you can get in  
10 trouble in school. Schools report now the exact reason, the  
11 exact infraction for issuing the suspension. They also  
12 report whether it is an in-school suspension, a suspension  
13 to the home, or a suspension to the district office.

14 Naturally, that many factors in a summary wouldn't  
15 be a summary, but the computer can report the data out as a  
16 single report for each type of suspension, compress the  
17 reasons into 10 groups and yet have the raw data for in-  
18 depth study.

19 The first report of this new system was generated  
20 at the end of the first semester in January. One difficulty  
21 with it, there are some comparisons with the new report that  
22 you can't make with the old report, but there are many that  
23 we can make, and we will be studying closely those reports,  
24 because they will tell us something of the outcomes of some  
25 of our other activity.

1           School rules: The second finding of the study  
2 committee was an apparent lack of clear understanding about  
3 the district's discipline and attendance policies by people  
4 in the district, and I will leave these policies here for  
5 your information. And if you want to read them, you will  
6 find how difficult it is to read and comprehend them.

7           The committee recommended that we develop a  
8 student handbook that would have a clarified version of what  
9 is contained in the district's discipline policy without  
10 having all of the legal language there. Our legal advisor  
11 insists that we need to provide for every parent and every  
12 student the exact copy of the discipline and attendance  
13 policies. But we intend to put out the district handbook  
14 summary which will be in easy reading form.

15           Work on the production of the handbook is now  
16 underway. Students will do most of the work of designing  
17 and writing the handbook. If students write it, students  
18 ought to be able to understand it.

19           Racial equity: The disproportionate numbers of  
20 suspensions to minority group students was a nagging  
21 question for the committee. No evidence of unequal  
22 treatment of students by school officials could be found,  
23 and yet the numbers were there. Correlation studies on  
24 suspension with low socio-economic indicators showed a  
25 stronger relationship than did a similar study using

1 suspension and race.

2           Persons who have been working with student  
3 discipline for a long time, and we have them in the district  
4 and some of them are pretty good at it, have reported that  
5 over the years they have observed that students from homes  
6 of higher economic level, those students have better skills  
7 for conflict resolution, they don't fight as much, and they  
8 don't act out in other ways in the school, and consequently  
9 get in less trouble as compared to students from homes where  
10 the economic income level is lower.

11           The committee responded to the question by  
12 advising that administrators, teachers and support staff  
13 receive information about cross-culture relationships and  
14 related topics as a part of the district staff training.  
15 District activity in response to this concern include these  
16 items.

17           All administrators in middle and high school,  
18 where most of the suspensions are issued, will receive  
19 training in conflict resolution before September, 1989.

20           The district's Administrative Academy, it's a  
21 program where our "home-grown" leadership develops  
22 specialized training for our own staff, they will develop  
23 and present an instructional program entitled "Dealing with  
24 Students at Risk". And if you look at the list of the  
25 students who received suspension, you find a list of those

1 kids who are very apt to be dropping out of school in the  
2 next couple of years.

3 The district's "Framework for Effective Teaching"  
4 which has emerged from the district Phase III activities  
5 lists these teacher behaviors which seem to be relative:

6 (1) - The teacher conveys clear behavioral  
7 expectations to students and parents and monitors for  
8 compliance.

9 (2) Shows awareness of what is occurring in the  
10 classroom and deals with behavior problems effectively  
11 before they escalate into disruption.

12 (3) Gives specific, corrective feedback  
13 acknowledge a clear, firm and consistent manner. I didn't  
14 read that properly.

15 (4) Addresses misbehavior as nondisruptively as  
16 possible.

17 (5) Uses the condition of punishment only as a  
18 last resort.

19 (6) Manages more than one situation at a time,  
20 when necessary. Good teachers do that a lot.

21 (7) Works with parents and others to develop and  
22 carry out a plan to improve specific and chronic behavioral  
23 concerns.

24 One of the four courses listed for training in the  
25 effective teaching program is Gender/Ethnic Expectations and

1 Student Achievement program. This is a program that's used  
2 nationally and examines five areas of disparity in  
3 classrooms and proposes the use of appropriate strategies to  
4 reduce or eliminate disparity.

5 These components of the effective teacher program,  
6 when modeled in the classroom, should strengthen students'  
7 skills in conflict resolution and positive interpersonal  
8 relationship building.

9 The loss of instruction time: The district pilot  
10 tested programs in the middle and high schools that would  
11 keep students in the school rather than to send them home  
12 during a disciplinary period. With many parents working  
13 outside the home, a suspension to home may result in the  
14 total lack of supervision for children who don't make very  
15 good judgments about their own activities.

16 In response to needs identified by the committee,  
17 an in-school suspension program in all middle and high  
18 schools was implemented in September, 1989. The program  
19 employs 15 additional teachers and had a budget of over  
20 \$450,000. The program is costly but it does reduce the  
21 loss of time from studies for students. About two-thirds of  
22 the suspensions for this year to date are reported as in-  
23 school suspensions. It certain appears that this is a  
24 better penalty for truancy than another day out of school  
25 would be.

1 Compliance procedures. The study committee  
2 considered the question of how the district deals with  
3 complaints from parents and students about disciplinary  
4 action taken by the school. They found that the district's  
5 educational equity and employment policy is published  
6 annually and a description of the district's compliant  
7 procedure is provided for all parents and all students. In  
8 a report on on-site review findings from 1984, the review  
9 team from the Iowa Department of Education, which was  
10 probably DPI at that time, noted as areas of strength in the  
11 Des Moines District, these two points which are relevant to  
12 this topic:

13 "3. The school board policy on teacher and  
14 student discipline demonstrated the district's concern for  
15 improving intercultural relations and cites persistent acts  
16 of intolerance and harassment as a breach of discipline.  
17 Student displays a racial bigotry or intolerances are  
18 considered breaches of discipline."

19 And, "4. Students and staff interviewed in each  
20 building perceived that discipline is fairly administered to  
21 all students regardless of sex, race, national origin, or  
22 disability."

23 Uniform administration of policies: The  
24 discipline and attendance policies provide guidance for the  
25 use of suspension as a sanction. In our judgement, this is

1 as far as we should go in a written policy statement. If  
2 equity of administration of a policy is to be achieved,  
3 school personnel must be able to judge each case on its own  
4 merit and apply the sanctions appropriately.

5 They should be able to respond properly to each  
6 case. And "respond properly" is the important phrase here.  
7 Both the elementary and secondary instruction departments  
8 plan to develop skill training materials and activities to  
9 assist administrators at every level to "respond properly"  
10 and to respond uniformly across the district.

11 Case in point, what I was thinking of there.  
12 Fighting, fighting is a big thing in schools. Those who  
13 have been around school you know that kids get in fights,  
14 some places more than others. Do you have a uniform rule  
15 that says, if you get in a fight, you get a three-day  
16 suspension? Or do you have a rule that says, we will have a  
17 program of progressive discipline? If this kid gets in a  
18 fight, okay, we work on him with something. The next time  
19 he gets in a fight we work on him a little harder. If he  
20 continues to get in a fight, we'll do something more. We  
21 need that kind of flexibility, and you can't write that kind  
22 of flexibility in, because the second time that kid gets in  
23 a fight, he might take a club and bang somebody across the  
24 head. You've got to treat him a little harsher than you  
25 would if they just had a mouth fight or a fist fight out

1 there. So that's what we're talking about. You've got to  
2 make some decisions about each case.

3 Summary: Evidence that the administration of  
4 student discipline and attendance could be improved emerged  
5 from a report of the school suspensions. The district has  
6 taken, or plans to take, corrective action to improve its  
7 efforts in the administration of -- I think it's supposed to  
8 say "discipline" -- on the administration of student  
9 discipline and student attendance. These corrective actions  
10 are planned and implemented.

11 (1) Improve the content and uniformity of reports  
12 about student suspension.

13 (2) To improve the public's understanding of the  
14 school's expectation with respect to student attendance and  
15 behavior.

16 (3) To provide staff training and conflict  
17 resolution, cross-culture disparity training, and students  
18 at risk.

19 (4) Implement a program of in-school suspension  
20 for middle and high schools.

21 And, (5), we are going to plan activities to get  
22 uniformity of administration of discipline and attendance  
23 policies in the 56 schools of the district, so that this  
24 elementary school on this side of town is treating the  
25 infractions about the same way as an elementary school on



1 the other side of town.

2 Thank you.

3 DR. ALLEN-SOMMERVILLE: Well, we've heard from Dr.  
4 Hyde.

5 Any questions? Mr. Wolf?

6 MR. WOLF: Dr. Hyde, has there been an increase,  
7 as far as you can tell, in certain specific offenses like  
8 fighting, weapons, finding weapons or drugs or alcohol on  
9 campuses as far as you can tell?

10 DR. HYDE: We haven't -- as I said, we started our  
11 reporting system in 1982, I believe, and so we don't have  
12 all that much history to go on. But the answer is, yes.

13 Now we are finding, in the area of weapons, the  
14 use of weapons in the fighting in the school has escalated  
15 pretty good. We have a lot of incidents now where weapons  
16 are found with students, where we find students using  
17 weapons.

18 Yes. I think fighting probably has increased and  
19 is the number one reason for suspensions. Now at one time  
20 attendance problems or truancy, but fighting has overcome  
21 that.

22 MR. WOLF: Has there been an increase in racially-  
23 motivated fighting as far as you can tell?

24 DR. HYDE: That's one of the things you can't  
25 hardly measure, because nobody is really willing to say this

1 fight was racially motivated. Of the things that I see, and  
2 I see the things that come at district level, I'm seeing  
3 more things that seem to have implication of racial  
4 motivation.

5 Very frankly, and this is probably one of the  
6 reasons why a large number of minority students are  
7 suspended is because there is -- there isn't any question  
8 about it -- there is bigotry, discriminatory behavior in our  
9 community. It's not unusual that we would have the same  
10 kind of behavior of students as we have with adults in the  
11 community. Anyone that says there isn't this kind of  
12 behavior just isn't aware. It's there. It's in every  
13 community to some degree.

14 We are noticing a lot of the things coming in now  
15 with our most recent minority group in conflict with other  
16 groups, and that's the Asians. We are getting a lot of  
17 inter-racial conflict now between whites and Asians, between  
18 blacks and Asians. That's something at we're going to have  
19 deal with, and we do have plans to deal with that.

20 Does that answer your question?

21 MR. WOLF: Yes, that's very helpful.

22 DR. ALLEN-SOMMERVILLE: Mr. Muldrow.

23 MR. MULDROW: Dr. Hyde, I found this to be a very  
24 impressive and thought provoking program.

25 The question I would have, to what extent in the

1 original study committee and then in the system -- the group  
2 which developed this approach -- to what extent were  
3 minority parents, faculty and staff involved?

4 DR. HYDE: I don't recall the exact makeup of the  
5 group. I know there were minority parents there. I know  
6 there were majority parents there. There were minority  
7 teachers, majority teachers, and minority administrators and  
8 majority administrator. I know they were represented. I  
9 don't know the numbers, but there was representation. It  
10 was a very well composed committee.

11 MR. MULDROW: How soon do you anticipate that you  
12 will be able to measure the impact of this program?

13 DR. HYDE: I don't know. When you start measuring  
14 outcomes over here in terms of looking at who is suspended  
15 and why they were suspended, and then try to relate that to  
16 the effect of some course that administrators take, it's  
17 pretty hard to build that relationship in there tight.

18 I think we will be able to see whether or not we  
19 have a trend of more or less suspensions written. I think  
20 we can already see that we have lost less time from school  
21 because of a large number of our -- about two thirds of our  
22 suspensions from school this year already are in-school  
23 suspensions.

24 Now I know that a lot of those probably last year  
25 were not written as suspensions, a thing called detentions.

1 Detentions will now be called in-school suspension. So that  
2 isn't particularly clean either. But we can already see, I  
3 think, that our loss of time has been reduced, and that's  
4 important. Not only the loss of time has been reduced, but  
5 the kid who is suspended from school is also a kid who  
6 probably doesn't study very well, and doesn't do homework  
7 hardly at all.

8 Now we've got him. He's in the in-school  
9 suspension room, and he's got someone in there that can  
10 assist him and can monitor him and see to it that he is  
11 doing the homework. So when he goes back into regular  
12 class, he's not behind by having missed work. That's a  
13 plus.

14 Did that answer your question?

15 MR. MULDROW: Yes, thank you.

16 DR. ALLEN-SOMMERVILLE: Are there other questions?

17 Dr. Hyde, thank you.

18 DR. HYDE: I'll leave --

19 DR. ALLEN-SOMMERVILLE: Do you have some  
20 information?

21 DR. HYDE: It's the copies -- we have split the  
22 attendance policy into two parts, and the discipline policy  
23 is a new part. You might want to look at that. We think  
24 that it's an excellent policy, but we think it's awfully  
25 hard to read.

1 (Pause.)

2 DR. ALLEN-SOMMERVILLE: Our next presenter is  
3 Gloria Hoffmann, and Ms. Hoffmann is a current board member,  
4 and I also have information that she is on the board of the  
5 Community Focus which is a group that conducts community  
6 surveys and assessments. And in her presentation, she will  
7 speak from the district's point of view as well as her  
8 personal point of view and philosophy.

9 STATEMENT OF GLORIA HOFFMANN, BOARD MEMBER,  
10 PRESIDENT, DES MOINES SCHOOL DISTRICT

11 MS. Hoffmann: Thank you.

12 DR. ALLEN-SOMMERVILLE: Yes.

13 MS. HOFFMANN: I have been very proud of myself  
14 the last few days pulling together and recalling all of the  
15 things that we are doing that I think are very good in the  
16 district, and the two gentlemen who preceded me just  
17 summarized them all.

18 (Laughter.)

19 MS. HOFFMANN: So you may hear a little  
20 repetition, but I would like to emphasize the things that  
21 are important to me as a board member.

22 I am serving my sixth year, the last year of a  
23 second term as a member of the board, and there are seven  
24 members on our board. As some of you may not know, all of  
25 us are elected-at-large, and we all endeavor to represent

1 all students in the Des Moines schools. We feel that we are  
2 representatives of the whole city, not of a particular  
3 group.

4 I really am pleased to have an opportunity to  
5 share my personal perspective. I have been a board follower  
6 as well as a board member and a citizen of this community  
7 since I was very young. So the things that have happened  
8 have been of interest and have been sometimes a concern,  
9 sometimes exciting to me.

10 I want to point out also that the board's role in  
11 suspensions is the development of the district discipline  
12 policy which you see before you, and that is designed to  
13 treat all students fairly and consistently while maintaining  
14 an orderly learning environment and a high level of safety  
15 for students and staff.

16 The discipline policy, like all other policies, is  
17 reviewed at least three years by a committee of the board  
18 with final approval by the entire board in open session, and  
19 usually after at least one presentation for general  
20 discussion. And frequently we will work with those policies  
21 and fine tune them two or three times before we finally  
22 approve them as a board.

23 The process involves pain-taking examination of  
24 the content and the implications of the policy as well as  
25 input from legal counsel. Our goal is a policy which is

1 fair, understandable and enforceable. The procedures for  
2 implementation are actually contained in the policy, as you  
3 see. And one reason is to avoid differences in  
4 interpretation even though, as Dr. Hyde pointed out, the  
5 flexibility in administering is important because different  
6 circumstances warrant different responses.

7 But it is the intent of the board to retain rather  
8 than remove youngsters from the classroom setting. And I  
9 believe this is well understood by teachers and  
10 administrators alike, and we all recognize that there are  
11 standards of behavior which simply must be maintained for  
12 personal safety and for effective teaching and learning. So  
13 our goal is somehow to balance that fairness and equity with  
14 a safe and secure environment for our teachers and our  
15 students.

16 I believe that as a district we are very sensitive  
17 to the importance of consistency and fairness. But I would  
18 point out that it's much easier to identify and agree upon  
19 disruptive and dangerous behavior than it is to deal with  
20 them in a manner which everyone will consider to be fair.  
21 And I do feel that confusion and concerns often relate not  
22 to the actual infraction; but rather, to the interaction of  
23 the student and the authority figure, and we've heard that  
24 addressed certainly by the representatives of the minority  
25 communities tonight.

1           Student reactions to the discipline process are  
2 often based on cultural, attitudinal or environmental  
3 factors. It, therefore, becomes the role of the school to  
4 be sensitive to these differences, and not to respond or  
5 react to discipline infractions based on a student's race,  
6 ethnic background, or socio-economic status. It's important  
7 that we all play by the same rules.

8           I would like to call your attention to some of the  
9 efforts of our district to help teachers and administrators  
10 develop positive approaches to dealing with a very diverse  
11 student population, and some of these have been summarized  
12 so I'll go over them very briefly.

13           Our annual in-service and staff development  
14 programs provide courses dealing with class-room management;  
15 stress management including such programs as the Boy's Town  
16 model which addresses appropriate responses when under  
17 stress; and the effective teaching program under Phase III,  
18 as was mentioned, includes emphasis on interactions and how  
19 we differ from one another with site-based classes in a  
20 number of our schools, and those are increasing, of course,  
21 because Phase III is really just beginning.

22           And I can't say how much the development of the  
23 programs under the Phase III funding are meaning in the  
24 development of teaching strategies and improving the skills  
25 of our staff in many of these areas.



1 Strategic planning, which is now being implemented  
2 district-wide, deals specifically with at-risk students in  
3 the learning environment, and will emphasize the fact that  
4 we may need to deal differently with some situations in  
5 different setting.

6 A district study committee is addressing the  
7 incorporation of conflict resolution into the curriculum.  
8 And at our March 6th teacher in-service day coming up, there  
9 will be a presentation of GEESA, the program you heard about  
10 dealing with gender/ethnic expectations in student  
11 achievement.

12 An example of our efforts to retain rather than  
13 remove students from the classroom is the in-school  
14 suspension program which again Dr. Hyde mentioned and which  
15 we are very exciting about now, and in fact in all 10 middle  
16 schools and all five comprehensive high schools it's  
17 structured, it's supervised, it's a learning environment,  
18 and certainly beats sending the child home to watch TV or to  
19 stand on a street corner.

20 And we think it's a deterrent to disruptive  
21 behavior. I am very interested as a board member to see  
22 what happens two or three years down the line and how those  
23 numbers may decline, because many times the youngsters act  
24 out because they would like to go home. And if they know  
25 that they are going to be in a structured environment

1     instead, it may really tend to minimize the disruptive  
2     behavior, and that's not typical of minorities necessarily.  
3     It's all youngsters.

4             So we feel that this sends a message to student  
5     and parent not only that behavior is important, but we want  
6     you to be in school, and that's the message we want to get  
7     across.

8             Only when students repeatedly resist discipline  
9     guidelines and/or are involved in activities which endanger  
10    other students or staff does the board become involved  
11    through the expulsion process. And looking back over some  
12    figures, three years ago we had 10 expulsions, and I believe  
13    four of them dealt with weapons, and some with assault on  
14    students, some with assault on staff.

15            We did develop a very rigid weapon policy that  
16    year under the direction of the superintendent at that time.  
17    In the next year, we had no expulsions.

18            Now I don't know just how that balanced out, but I  
19    think it's interesting that more rigid requirements do not  
20    always necessarily result in more penalties. And, of  
21    course, our goal is always to have none if we can.

22            But in addition to adhering to legal requirements  
23    for due process, we do consider every avenue of assistance  
24    to try to deal with each case individually, provide for  
25    reentry if it's at all feasible into the district, and those

1 are probably the most difficult decisions we make as board  
2 members.

3 Educators and school board members are becoming  
4 increasingly more aware that a successful student is less  
5 likely to be a disruptive student. And through such efforts  
6 as the Des Moines Plan, which is a process for testing and  
7 remediating math and language skills to help all children  
8 reach grade level, the many efforts that we're making we  
9 hope will help our students develop a feeling of self worth  
10 and a positive attitude toward learning, and that this will  
11 result in a minimizing of discipline problems.

12 On the issue of the gifted and talented minorities  
13 in the Des Moines schools, as you have also heard our state-  
14 approved plan does provide direct continuous service to 3  
15 percent of our students, and serves an additional 5 to 6  
16 percent on an intermittent basis in our talent pool. I  
17 think the identification by building is extremely important,  
18 because it does assure accessibility in spite of differences  
19 of socio-economic and variations from building to building  
20 in general.

21 Those in the talent pool have opportunities to  
22 take advantage when there are slots open, if an activity is  
23 taking is taking place that might be expanded and include  
24 other children, they have an opportunity to take advantage  
25 of that. So it's quite flexible from that standpoint.

1           Two special programs have been implemented at the  
2 elementary level to identify gifted minority students so  
3 that there is a total examination process for identification  
4 rather than just depending upon the test, and this gets into  
5 the identification by a peer or by a parent where people  
6 feel free to say, I think this child is gifted and talented.  
7 Please explore it, and there are ways to explore that with  
8 the staff working together. Again, staff awareness plays a  
9 vital role in the process, and in-service workshops, both  
10 locally and through national conferences, have exposed our  
11 staff to techniques for identifying and nurturing minority  
12 students, including those with language barriers.

13           And I happen to think -- I was trying to think of  
14 something they hadn't already told you, and I happen to  
15 recall again under Phase III, a large number of our staff,  
16 and Dr. Bowman, you can probably tell me how many went to  
17 the conference for black educators about a month or so.

18           DR. BOWMAN: Thirty-one or --

19           MS. HOFFMANN: Over 30.

20           DR. BOWMAN: Yes.

21           MS. HOFFMANN: Which was a real opportunity to  
22 exchange with other educators from other parts of the  
23 country, and this was something we were able to fund under  
24 the Phase III program as a staff development program, and  
25 we're most appreciative of that.

1           As a district, we are continuing to examine new  
2 options and programs which nurture and stimulate the talents  
3 and abilities of our students. Our magnet programs at King  
4 Perkins and Edmonds Elementary Schools provide unique  
5 learning options in the areas of fine arts, science and  
6 computers, and those schools run 34 to 38 percent. Those  
7 are at the top of our elementary schools in minority  
8 enrollment, and I don't know how many of you on this busy  
9 day had a chance to read the article, "Paper Planes Soars  
10 Spirits, Spirits Soar at School", about several professors  
11 from Iowa State who were brought in with some special  
12 funding to King Perkins, and these are all science and  
13 people who were able to come in and give demonstrations and  
14 involve the children in this sort of things. And, of  
15 course, that is something that's available to all of those  
16 children.

17           Our ESL and bilingual programs are designed to  
18 eliminate language barriers. We have a students in  
19 leadership program at the middle school and high school  
20 level both throughout the city, which is an excellent  
21 vehicle for learning leadership for social skills and  
22 developing civic responsibility. And I have visited those  
23 programs several times, and there are many, many minority  
24 students active in those programs. And now similar programs  
25 are being developed at the elementary level.

1           Earlier this month we did approve the agreement  
2 with the University of Northern Iowa to try to identify  
3 minority students beginning at middle school level, to  
4 encourage them to look ahead to college, to say this is  
5 something that you might be able to do. And we hope that  
6 this program will serve as a real incentive to stick to the  
7 knitting through school, and to say to them you do have an  
8 opportunity to go to college. Here is a college that cares,  
9 and part of the program is that we would then in turn  
10 employ, offer them employment when they were through, and we  
11 feel this then starts providing those role models which we  
12 need so badly.

13           We do work with both state and federal legislators  
14 trying to get adequate funding for the special programs that  
15 we need to work with at-risk students. And I was very  
16 interested in the mentoring concept that was presented  
17 earlier. This is something that I think has real  
18 possibilities. It's very difficult to coordinate. It's a  
19 lot harder than it sounds, but it's certainly a possibility.  
20 Providing equally and equitably for a diverse student  
21 population is a challenge, and it's my observation that the  
22 efforts of this district are indeed focusing on the special  
23 needs of students.

24           As we continue to examine and refine our programs,  
25 we anticipate increasing numbers of students who achieve to

1 their highest potential. This is certainly our goal. And  
2 we do appreciate the interest of the panel. And as a board  
3 member, it's been very interesting to hear all the reports.  
4 I appreciate the opportunity to be here.

5 DR. ALLEN-SOMMERVILLE: Thank you.

6 Are there any questions directed towards Ms.  
7 Hoffmann.

8 Dr. Morrison.

9 DR. MORRISON: Christina, you mentioned this in  
10 your wrap up a little bit. But Christina mentioned, you  
11 know, working -- if the board of education would provide  
12 some resources.

13 What's your feeling toward that?

14 MS. HOFFMANN: I think it's a wonderful idea.  
15 Again, we never have enough funds to hire all of the staff,  
16 all of the counselors that we need. We have a real concern  
17 about what our staffing patterns will be for next year  
18 because of funding and because of the fact that about 88  
19 cents or 89 cents out of every dollar goes to staffing. So  
20 that person has to come from somewhere, and the dollars have  
21 to come from somewhere.

22 I think it's conceivable that we might be able to  
23 put together some kind of a grant request. There is some  
24 additional money available at the federal level, and we met  
25 with a member of the Appropriations Committee just last week

1 talking about at-risk students, and perhaps this is an area  
2 for some creativity.

3 We were just visiting with some people the other  
4 night about this possibility, and the need for mentoring,  
5 the role that an individual contact plays. But that, of  
6 course, we can't provide the individual contact, but this  
7 community might be able to. And if we could work with some  
8 of the groups that are already active, I think it has real  
9 potential, and I would certainly be glad to try to pursue  
10 it.

11 DR. ALLEN-SOMMERVILLE: Other questions?

12 Thank you.

13 MS. HOFFMANN: Thank you.

14 DR. ALLEN-SOMMERVILLE: We've certainly had a full  
15 schedule today and our last presenter is a retired  
16 supervisor of the Talented and Gifted Program of the Des  
17 Moines School District, and at this particular point is a  
18 volunteer worker for the Heartline TAG Hotline. I got that  
19 out. I have that she has provided workshops for the TAG  
20 teachers and has done extensive work in all of the TAG  
21 classrooms. That's quite an accomplishment.

22 Ruth Blome.

23 STATEMENT OF RUTH BLOME, VOLUNTEER HEARTLINE  
24 GIFTED AND TALENTED HOTLINE

25 MS. BLOME: Thank you.



1 I have brought some of the gifted and talented  
2 hotline brochures, and I think you have those, and anyone  
3 else who would like to have these brochures.

4 I will speak primarily about what I've learned  
5 from the hotline. It's a very interesting thing. I was  
6 doing a number of teachers workshops and it involved a lot  
7 of traveling in Iowa winters. And I decided after I retired  
8 didn't want to do all of this icy road business, and so area  
9 education said, would you like to have us install a  
10 telephone in your home. I said, no, I think I'm just about  
11 through with the school business.

12 But then after we talked it over several times, we  
13 decided that we would try it, and I've done it now for about  
14 10 years, and it's a perfectly fascinating thing. You know  
15 perfectly well I have known for years that people out in the  
16 community have their own particular problems. But when you  
17 talk to them on the telephone, when someone gets up enough  
18 courage to call you, that's something else.

19 Callers primarily are parents, some school  
20 personnel, more and more are students, and I'm surprised;  
21 also other family members call. I want to talk a little bit  
22 using this hotline underlying everything, and I have  
23 discovered on this by listening to all these different  
24 people talking that there are so many things that one -- the  
25 impact that one individual has on another individual, and

1 most of the time we say what does this committee do, what  
2 does the school do, what does the community do, what does an  
3 agency do. But the impact of one individual on another  
4 individual is something gigantic. It's something that we  
5 just don't expect, and each of us should be about the  
6 business of doing something like this.

7 Let's talk, first of all, a bit about  
8 identification. Of course, the IQ tests are all predictors,  
9 and we know Binet, Wechler, Torence Creativity and Renzulli  
10 Triads. I think Dr. J. B. Straud at the University of Iowa  
11 described those tests best, and we need to go through this a  
12 bit to see why these people are calling and what they are  
13 thinking about.

14 He says that an IQ test is only a sample of what a  
15 particular person can do on a particular day under  
16 particular set of circumstances. There are many variables,  
17 and it could change from day to day. There is self-  
18 discipline, or there is the lack of it. There is motivation  
19 and persistence, or there is a lack of them. And so that  
20 makes predictions of little value in the end.

21 Some students take longer to learn and some learn  
22 by intuitive leaps. And then besides those people we have  
23 the savants. These are people who have islands of  
24 brilliance that nobody can describe or explain.

25 Leslie Lemke, whom you've probably seen on TV,

1 he's been on a number of times, is a savant. He's blind,  
2 severely mentally handicapped, has cerebral palsy, cannot  
3 hold a utensil to eat, answer in a monotone, but when he was  
4 a teenager, he heard Tchaikovsky's Piano Concerto No. 1 for  
5 the first time, and played it back flawlessly. And there is  
6 a book written about him entitled "May's Boy" by Shirley  
7 Monte.

8 It shows the great diversity in humanity, and this  
9 is what people call on the hotline about. My child is a  
10 little bit different. You expect parents to say that. But  
11 sometimes there are these very great differences.

12 You know, Dr. Albert Einstein was four years old  
13 before he could talk, and seven years old before he could  
14 read, and people advised his parents to keep him at home.

15 It's clear to me, and I've thought about this for  
16 years and years and years, but it's clear to me that every  
17 single human being has some gifts and some talents. And I  
18 think we're very prone to make a division at 3 percent or  
19 some place or some place and say the test shows this and  
20 this. You are 129 or you are 130, you are 141, and we can  
21 put no such numbers on anyone's forehead. We just aren't  
22 that good.

23 There are so many other gifts and talents beside  
24 intellectual, strictly intellectual academic ones; of  
25 course, the visual arts, the performing arts, and the

1 psycho-motor abilities, all those. Then you also have all  
2 such gifts and talents as those in leadership.

3           Sometimes when you talk to -- I have talked to  
4 several people who were very trouble, they were  
5 troublemakers in school, and speaking with them individually  
6 when I had them in classes and so on, I found -- I learned a  
7 great deal from them, and I learned that when you affirm  
8 them with integrity and talked with them, they are entirely  
9 different people than when you look at them abstractly as  
10 troublemakers. And I think we need to put ourselves to  
11 something like that, because you are perfectly amazed at  
12 watching what kind of potential can develop. You can't do  
13 this with all people. I'm perfectly aware of that. Human  
14 beings are very varied and varied and you can't do all that.  
15 But think about it for a little bit.

16           A troublemaker really has leadership qualities.  
17 He is the person who defies the status quo. He defies his  
18 peers, the teacher, the principal, the parents, all the  
19 adults, and that's a rather brave step to take. This is  
20 what leaders need to do. They are pretty much loners when  
21 they start out. They are very successful with this.

22           And when you look at history and stop back and  
23 think for just a moment, I was teaching in Germany shortly  
24 after Adolf Hitler was there, and the people were telling me  
25 what he said in the town square and all this kind of thing,

1 and how he just held people fascinated. I couldn't imagine  
2 this. I couldn't imagine such an evil man doing this, but  
3 he did it. And several people said, imagine what it would  
4 be like if some individual had gotten a hold of that young  
5 lad and had had directed his leadership abilities  
6 constructively. See, this is what I mean, the one-on-one  
7 person, can't always be a one on one, but if somebody could  
8 do that for someone else. Self-esteem has a great deal to  
9 do with it, and it means essentially that you like yourself  
10 and you have good feelings about what you do.

11 In one school system that I read about, 38 percent  
12 of the dropouts and suspensions were gifted and talented  
13 students who decided very quickly that there was no use in  
14 doing what they were doing, and so the low self-esteem  
15 saying that moves rapidly to marijuana, progresses to crack;  
16 and from absenteeism progresses to suspension.

17 When you and I fail, we don't always look in the  
18 mirror. But we tend to blame youngsters who don't blame  
19 themselves for their problems. We don't always take the  
20 blame. We think of someone else, or some circumstance that  
21 takes the blame. And the example, I think, is enormously  
22 important.

23 We need to do something about logical thinking and  
24 teaching more about thinking, because no matter what the  
25 thoughts are they lead eventually to attitudes, and

1 attitudes are pretty hard to break. It's hard for the  
2 person who has them, and it's hard for the people who are  
3 working with them.

4 The attitudes are very low, or the self-esteem is  
5 low for people who are dropouts. I learn so much from them.  
6 I did not drop out of high school myself, and I am amazed  
7 how those people feel when you talk to them on the first.  
8 First, they are very belligerent, and if you have the  
9 patience and they have the patience to stay with you, you  
10 learn a great deal.

11 A girl called me on the hotline. She's pregnant  
12 and she was home, and she had to stay in her own home. Her  
13 mother and father were both working, and they expected her  
14 to do the housework and the cooking for staying there. She  
15 says, I hate it. I can't cook. I just hate housework. My  
16 parents hate me. They don't want me at home. I have no  
17 friends. I have no future. And she just screamed and cried  
18 on the phone.

19 See, you are just stopped cold with this. And she  
20 said, I don't want you to know where I'm from, and I don't  
21 want you to know what my name is.

22 I think two strengths of the hotline are that we  
23 don't ask for identification, or we don't ask where the call  
24 is originating. Occasionally people will say, I can't talk  
25 any more because this is long distance and I am out of

1 money.

2 But I want you to know this in another instance  
3 that I give you too of a young man who called, how often the  
4 word "hate" is used. They hate the school. The parents  
5 hate them. Other people hate them.

6 This girl, I will say very quickly, you can't  
7 solve the problems for those people, you know, but this one  
8 turned out very, very well. She mentioned something about  
9 going to church and about having an aunt who was retired and  
10 so on. And so I suggested to her, I said, well, when this  
11 baby is born, why don't you see if some senior citizen in  
12 your church will take care of him while you go to get your  
13 GED.

14 (Continued on next page.)

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1 MS. BLOME: Incidentally, they do not want to go  
2 back to the high school that they dropped out of or were  
3 suspended from, because usually they have strong feelings  
4 against it, so they want to know how to get a GED. And so  
5 these senior citizens took that baby girl of hers and took  
6 care of it, and she got her GED.

7 She called back. And you know, this is a great  
8 virtue to stay with it. She called back, she said I am so  
9 grateful. She said now I can go for a job, and I have  
10 something to show the man who is hiring me.

11 A young man called, and his words were like this.  
12 School is a prison, teachers hate me, so I quit, but I have  
13 got to have that old piece of paper, the diploma. He looked  
14 for a job for six months and he finally got one, but he told  
15 the boss that he had a diploma and he did not have one. And  
16 so he said that he had just left the diploma at home, and  
17 the man was nice to him and said you come to work tomorrow  
18 and bring the diploma with you and leave it in the office.

19 So he went to work in a machine shop. And he said  
20 that the man who was teaching him was so good, and he said I  
21 wanted to stay there and work. And pretty soon he said I  
22 felt a tapping on my shoulder, and there was the boss, and  
23 he said did you leave your high school diploma at the  
24 office. So he said that he hunted through his coat pockets.  
25 And he said no, I guess I left it at home. So he said well,



1 we will take off time from your work now for you to go home  
2 and get it.

3 So of course, he said all I could do was leave  
4 there and never go back. And he said I did the same thing  
5 with school. He said that is all I do is leave and never go  
6 back. Your sense there is that you want so much to help  
7 that.

8 Communication is another thing that we receive a  
9 number of calls about that. Most of these students like the  
10 two that I am telling about were belligerent to begin with,  
11 but they are incredibly lonely. I cannot describe to you  
12 how lonely those people are. I never thought about that.

13 One girl said to me you would think I was a  
14 criminal, everybody ignores me. Do you know what it is  
15 like, she said, to be ignored by everybody. You see, it  
16 really is quite a pitiful thing.

17 I get many calls from frustrated parents. And  
18 they say you would not believe what the principal or the  
19 teacher said to me. And so I try to explain to them that  
20 there are many teachers, particularly young teachers, who  
21 are really threatened by parent calls, and it is hard for  
22 some of those parents to believe that.

23 One parent said to me I just cannot believe that,  
24 I cannot believe that anybody at school is ever threatened,  
25 they are so sure of themselves. And so the parent comes

1 with fear and trembling to the school. And I know what when  
2 I was beginning teacher that if I saw a parent coming up the  
3 sidewalk, I trembled.

4 But when home/school communication fails, the  
5 child is always the casualty. And I try to explain that and  
6 make that clear. And adults are really in the world to help  
7 people to grow up, are they not.

8 Well, after hearing all of these different things  
9 and having the experience of many years with these people, I  
10 have a dream. Like Martin Luther King, I have a dream. I  
11 would like to see a school sometime with children in one  
12 classroom of varying ages like families are from varying  
13 backgrounds, from varying ethnic origins altogether.

14 I had something like that in Europe. It was a  
15 very, very interesting mix. And when we had rural schools  
16 early in the United States, and I also taught in one of  
17 those, and it is a family-like situation. I learned a great  
18 deal about teaching from eighth graders for example. I also  
19 had some ninth graders in my rural school, and I learned  
20 from them. When somebody had some problems with learning  
21 about fractions in the fourth grade for example, somebody  
22 would say oh, I know how I learned that. You see, they are  
23 still close, very close to that age of the fourth grader,  
24 and they understand what to do about that. They can teach  
25 the teacher.

1 impressed with your program, and I think that you must be a  
2 very effective counselor and teacher. Our special concern,  
3 of course, is along the lines that you have talked about as  
4 it is applied to minority students in the district.

5 And I am wondering what kind of response or  
6 participation in the Hotline program have you had from  
7 minority students and parents?

8 MS. BLOME: I have had a number of calls and I  
9 have learned resource places from the lady who was speaking  
10 for the Spanish speaking people. Some Spanish speaking  
11 people have called. And I have had a number of Negro people  
12 who have called. And they are concerned because they are  
13 not in the gifted program. And from where I am, all I can  
14 say is there are so many other things that you can do. And  
15 when you really come to the showdown what do you do with  
16 your life.

17 You know, a lot of very brilliant people may be  
18 brilliant during school, but do they continue that on. Of  
19 course, many of them do, but not all. There are other  
20 things that can be done.

21 And as far as I can see, every parent no matter  
22 what the color, no matter what the ethnic background, they  
23 all want the same thing. It is all the same thing. They  
24 call love their children, and they all want to know how they  
25 can help them. That is all there is to that. It is the

1 same thing.

2 And I think that sometimes that we make very  
3 artificial differences. It is pretty ridiculous really.  
4 But I do think that we are improving.

5 DR. ALLEN-SOMMERVILLE: Are there other questions?

6 (No response.)

7 DR. ALLEN-SOMMERVILLE: Thank you.

8 MS. BLOME: You are welcome.

9 DR. ALLEN-SOMMERVILLE: We certainly want to thank  
10 the Des Moines community and the Des Moines school district  
11 for the testimony. And we will break.

12 (Whereupon, a recess was taken.)

13 DR. ALLEN-SOMMERVILLE: We will now have our open  
14 session. As we previously announced, there are individuals  
15 who perhaps wanted to speak before the group, and those  
16 individuals were not on the agenda. And we have the open  
17 session. The open session for each speaker will be five  
18 minutes. And those persons were to have registered.

19 We would like to reemphasize the fact that the  
20 topic for discussion relates to minorities and suspension  
21 rates as well as gifted and talented programs.

22 So with the five minute rule, we have one speaker,  
23 Mr. Harry Wagoner.

24

25

## 1 STATEMENT OF HARRY WAGONER

2 MR. WAGONER: Yes. I am not specifically with  
3 either your minority or your gifted and talented. But I am  
4 concerned about education and discrimination in education.

5 What I have is I have a U.S. Supreme Court ruling,  
6 and I have underlined it in green I think for most of you.  
7 And this is all that I am going to refer to which is the  
8 green underlining.

9 The First Amendment rights, and this is why I am  
10 addressing this committee, that I think that there are First  
11 Amendment rights that are being denied in our state  
12 educational system.

13 "The First Amendment rights, applied in light of  
14 the special characteristics of the school environment, are  
15 available to students."

16 "Our precedents have focused 'not only on the role  
17 of the First Amendment in fostering individual  
18 self-expression but also on its role in affording the public  
19 access to discussion, debate, and the dissemination of  
20 information and ideas." And this last is what I am  
21 concerned about.

22 "The State may not, consistently with the spirit  
23 of the First Amendment, contract the spectrum of available  
24 knowledge."

25 "The Constitution protects the right to receive

1 information and ideas."

2 "The right is an inherent corollary of the rights  
3 of free speech and press that are explicitly guaranteed by  
4 the Constitution in two senses. First, the right to receive  
5 ideas follows ineluctably from the sender's First Amendment  
6 right to send them. The right of freedom of speech and  
7 press embraces the right to distribute literature."

8 "The dissemination of ideas can accomplish nothing  
9 if otherwise willing addressees are not free to receive and  
10 concerning them. It would be a barren marketplace of ideas  
11 that had only sellers and no buyers."

12 "More importantly, the right to receive ideas is a  
13 necessary predicate to the recipient's meaningful exercise  
14 of his own rights of speech, press, and political freedom."

15 "In our system, students may not be regarded as  
16 closed-circuit recipients of only that which the State  
17 chooses to communicate. School officials cannot suppress  
18 'expressions of feeling which they do not wish to contend.'"

19 "In sum, just as access to ideas makes it possible  
20 for citizens generally to exercise their rights of free  
21 speech and press in a meaningful manner, such access  
22 prepares students for active and effective participation in  
23 the pluralistic, often contentious society in which they  
24 will soon be adult members. Of course, all First Amendment  
25 rights accorded to students must be construed 'in light of

1 the special characteristics of the school environment.'"

2 And if you would notice, this is a Des Moines  
3 ruling that is quoted here, Tinker v. Des Moines School  
4 District.

5 "But the special characteristics of the school  
6 library," and that is my main concern tonight, the school  
7 library, "make that environment especially appropriate for  
8 the recognition of the First Amendment rights of  
9 students."

10 "A school library, no less than any other public  
11 library, is 'a place dedicated to quiet, to knowledge, and  
12 to beauty.'"

13 "--observed that students must always remain  
14 free --" And I do not believe that is true today, that  
15 students are not free. "--to inquire, to study and to  
16 evaluate, to gain new maturity and understanding. The  
17 school library is the principal locus of such freedom."

18 "A student can literally explore the unknown, and  
19 discover areas of interest and thought not covered by the  
20 prescribed curriculum. The student learns that a library is  
21 a place to test or expand upon ideas."

22 And then on the other side is another ruling that  
23 came out of the McLean, Arkansas ruling. And the one that I  
24 am concerned about is the one that refers back to Everson v.  
25 Board of Education, and it refers to the state and federal

1 government.

2 "Neither can force -- disbelief in any religion.  
3 No person can be punished for entertaining or professing  
4 religious beliefs --"

5 My concern that I would like to address before  
6 this committee, and I would like to ask you for a study  
7 session as you had tonight. I have sat in on this and had a  
8 chance to listen to various members of the school district  
9 and members of the community express their concerns about a  
10 denial to certain students. I would like you to study the  
11 denial to our students in our state in the various school  
12 districts of access to certain creationist resources in the  
13 school library.

14 The creation evolution issue has been around, and  
15 I have been a participant in this for at least the last  
16 twelve years. And students today do not have access to  
17 creationist resources in our school libraries.

18 I have also written to our three universities  
19 asking how they dealt with the human relations program, and  
20 I have a copy here with me of their 670-13.18. This says  
21 that human relations, and this is a requirement for  
22 teachers --

23 DR. ALLEN-SOMMERVILLE: One minute, Mr. Wagoner.

24 MR. WAGONER: All right. "Preparation for human  
25 relations shall be included in the programs leading to



1 teacher certification. Human relation studies shall include  
2 interpersonal" so far we are not a part of that  
3 interpersonal relationship, "and intergroup" and we are not  
4 a part of the intergroup "and shall contribute to the  
5 development and sensitivity to and understanding of the  
6 values, beliefs, life styles and attitude of individuals,"  
7 creationists are not considered apparently as individuals,  
8 because we are not covered in any of our three universities  
9 in this area "and the diverse groups found in a pluralistic  
10 society."

11 This is why I think as a denial of a First  
12 Amendment right that this committee should study this  
13 educational issue, and look and see why our AEAs, and our  
14 school districts, and our universities fail to give the  
15 creationists representation when the U.S. Civil Rights  
16 Commission in 1983 identified the Native American Indian as  
17 those who believe in a creator and a created life in their  
18 Publication No. 80. It was called I believe Religion and  
19 the Constitution, a Delicate Balance.

20 One more statement and I am done. A Florida  
21 professor found that 85 percent of the blacks believe in a  
22 creator and a created life. So it would affect our  
23 minorities as well.

24 DR. ALLEN-SOMMERVILLE: Thank you.

25 MR. WAGONER: Thank you.

1 DR. ALLEN-SOMMERVILLE: Are there any questions?

2 MR. MULDROW: Mr. Wagoner, do you represent any  
3 particular organization?

4 MR. WAGONER: No. For the most part, I have been  
5 an individual, but I have been invited to our universities.  
6 And I have been on two television documentaries. And I have  
7 spoken to our two governors. There are probably close to  
8 200 presentations within the state. But I do not represent  
9 a specific group.

10 MR. MULDROW: I assume that you have registered  
11 with us out there?

12 MR. WAGONER: Yes, I did.

13 MR. MULDROW: So that we can contact you.

14 MR. WAGONER: Yes. And I know most of those who  
15 have been presenters here this evening.

16 MR. MULDROW: Thank you very much.

17 MR. WAGONER: Thank you.

18 DR. ALLEN-SOMMERVILLE: Thank you.

19 MR. WOLF: Madam Chairman, I have a brief  
20 question.

21 MR. WAGONER: Yes.

22 MR. WOLF: What case is your first citation from?

23 MR. WAGONER: It is from Pico v. Irontrees School  
24 Board. That is not noted on there. I am sorry about that.  
25 I think that was in 1982. And the other case on the other

1 side was in 1982 also.

2 MR. WOLF: Thank you.

3 MR. WAGONER: Thank you.

4 DR. ALLEN-SOMMERVILLE: This concludes the  
5 testimonies from invited individuals as well as the open  
6 session.

7 Mr. Muldrow, do you have anything else to come  
8 before the group?

9 MR. MULDROW: I think that is all. I just would  
10 like to add to your expression of thanks earlier to all of  
11 you who have participated. We have had folks this morning  
12 who drove clear from Davenport, and some of you have sat  
13 through the entire long day of proceedings.

14 And I think that we have received some very  
15 substantive and helpful information. And we will see that  
16 each of you receive copies of the report which we presume  
17 will be published and available to be distributed to the  
18 public.

19 DR. ALLEN-SOMMERVILLE: If there is no other  
20 business.

21 MS. HOFFMANN: I would just like to commend you  
22 for the manner in which they has been conducted. It was  
23 very orderly and timely. And I really appreciate it. It  
24 has been a good experience. Thank you.

25 DR. ALLEN-SOMMERVILLE: Thank you.

1 Any other committee member?

2 (No response.)

3 DR. ALLEN-SOMMERVILLE: If not, we stand  
4 adjourned.

5 (Whereupon, at 9:25 p.m., the hearing was  
6 adjourned.)

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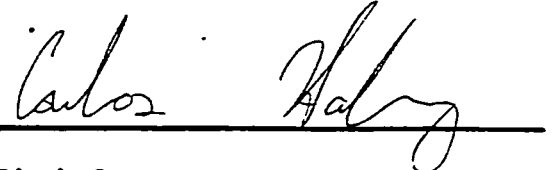
CASE TITLE: Selected Civil Rights Issues in Iowa's Public  
Education

HEARING DATE: January 25, 1989

LOCATION: Des Moines, Iowa

I hereby certify that the proceedings and evidence are contained fully and accurately on the tapes and notes reported by me at the hearing in the above case before the United States Commission on Civil Rights.

Date: January 26, 1989



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