

JANUARY 29, 1977

REPORT OF MAYOR'S COMMISSION ON SCHOOL SECURITY

MIAMI BEACH SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL

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INTRODUCTION

On October 14, 1976, Miami Beach Mayor Harold Rosen appointed a group of citizens to study the security needs for Miami Beach High School. The action by the Mayor was prompted by the dissatisfaction expressed at a parent meeting two days earlier. At that time, several hundred parents had abruptly terminated their regularly scheduled back-to-school visitation to discuss the recent assault on a female student. The student had been severely beaten on the schoolgrounds by a young man, attempting to steal her jewelry. The parents at the meeting were highly agitated over what they perceived to be a lack of adequate security and a failure of the school to have promptly notified the local police of the crime. While the incident involved a white victim and a black assailant, it was not characterized by the parents as having racial origins. Nonetheless, there were some undertones suggesting that this assault, and others in the past, were somehow related to the busing of students. The parents demanded that those in authority guarantee the safety of their children in the school. It was in this emotional setting that the Mayor convened this Commission.

Mayor Rosen directed that the inquiry be completed in 90 days and charged the Commission as follows:

1. Determine the needs for an effective security system.
2. Determine the manner in which the agencies responsible for the safety of students can best perform.
3. Provide a plan, that is capable of prompt implementation.
4. Provide a follow-up mechanism to make certain that appropriate action continues to be taken on the submitted plan.

The Mayor described the composition of the Commission as being "blue-ribbon". Of the 19 members appointed, all have children either attending Miami Beach High School, or children who had attended in the immediate past, or eligible to attend in the immediate future. By occupation, the 19 members represented a diversity of view. Some members by virtue of their elected or appointed position had a professional involvement and responsibility in school security. Included were a Juvenile Court Judge as Chairman of the Commission, the School Principal, the Chief of Police, the District School Board Member, a union leader, P.T.A. officers, a teacher, a housewife, four lawyers, student body officers, two medical doctors and a business executive. Four of the members were women. Ethnically, fifteen were anglo, two black and two latin.

Serving as ex-officio members of the Commission in a consultant capacity, were the Director of the Dade County School Security System, the Superintendent of the Northeast School District, a lawyer assigned by the Miami Beach Bar Association to provide legal counsel, the author of a 1973 school security system study, representatives of the Mayor's Traffic Advisory Committee, and as well, other interested parents, teachers and students, all of whom attended meetings and worked on our committees.

The characteristics of Miami Beach High School show a three year high school with a 2200 student population, located in the City of Miami Beach but part of a County School System. It is a tri-ethnic school, 54% anglo, 23% black, 23% latin. The black students do not reside in Miami Beach and are daily bused in and out of school.

The number of reported criminal incidents at Miami Beach High School are at about the same level as the three other high schools in our Northeast Schools area. All four schools currently (1975-76) reflect a marked decrease in these incidents compared to the year 1974-75.

At its organizational meeting, the Commission agreed to the following format for conducting its business.

The group would meet weekly (Saturday - 10:00 A.M. to 12:00 Noon). Several of the early sessions would consist of overview reports in the areas of:

- A) School Security Department - Police Department Relationships.
- B) Internal School Discipline Procedures.
- C) Student Involvement in School Security.
- D) Parent - Community Involvement in School Security.
- E) Response of the Justice System to School Disruption.

Each of the above areas were then designated as committees. These committees met with expert witnesses in the field, and reported their findings to the weekly Commission meetings.

Our inquiry took us beyond the areas of concern at Miami Beach High School. We found the problems strikingly similar at other schools. The conclusions and recommendations we offer refer to our school, but they may well be applicable to all schools. We were pleased to learn that Miami Beach Senior High School is doing as well or better in most of the problem areas.

School violence is a highly emotional issue. All of the members of the Commission therefore are not necessarily in accord with each of the specific solutions suggested, nor do we all even agree on the definitions of the problems. As a group, however, we are unanimous in the belief that answers and controls can be supplied through an energetic and concerned parent and community input.

We are grateful to Mayor Harold Rosen for initiating this Commission and for the support he has provided and will provide in implementing the proposals we offer.

SEYMOUR GELBER,
Chairman

PREFACE

As parents and residents of the community who are concerned with what goes on in our high school, we took the task of serving on this Commission very seriously. Many of the disturbing things we found and much of the feeling we experienced have been seen and expressed before, but it seemed even more pronounced as the scenes unfolded before us.

The fear that exists for the safety of students, the inability of the school system to respond, and the sight of the entire educational process being immobilized as occurred at American High during their class boycott make it evident that all our law enforcement resources both inside and outside the school need to be made available to protect the student and the teacher. We have been tolerating crime in our schools and this permissive attitude must not continue. The school disciplinary machinery needs to shift its emphasis from mass student disruption to the more prevalent problem of individual crime upon person and property.

We found the primary problem at Miami Beach High, as with other schools, to be the inability of the School Board to recognize the full dimensions of the problem, and their failure to treat it as the enormous crisis it really has become. This environment of violence and vandalism has been with us for years and we find ourselves still at the beginning, debating the relative merits of expulsion, suspension and paddling. We are offered no plan and little guidance. Some schools have established a tight strongly-disciplined operation. Others such as Miami Beach High School tend to be permissive and provide fewer controls over students.

Real progress will require a firm, definite policy that calls for the selection of aggressive leadership, better able to cope with this situation. The failure of the School Board to adequately focus on crime is exemplified by

the decision not to provide direct-line authority from the School Superintendent to the Dade County School Security System. If there is anything that must be a day-to-day, primary concern of the School Superintendent, then the safety of students and the preservation of property should be it.

While we chastise the School Board for its failure to provide leadership, this is a problem that really goes far beyond the issue of their capability and resources. It is a community crisis that needs input from many other governmental entities, in addition to requiring strong community support. For too long we have all stepped aside and allowed the "ivory tower" educators to make the decisions. We need some fresh thinking on the subject. We need a revitalized, concerned, organized approach. We need all the agencies and forces involved to start talking to each other, and we need to be willing to discard old methods and start anew. Frankly, we doubt that the School Board alone can accomplish these goals or that the school administrators and Principals will willingly accept the massive change that will probably be necessary.

We think that the parents will have to exert heavy pressure on the various legislative bodies to bring about a reordering of priorities. In addition, we see the need for the school security programs to be extensively monitored by the media and by civic organizations. The angry parent response to the assault incident at Beach High School and the racial conflict at American High School are the kinds of warnings that must be heeded.

We have seen nothing in the current recommendations and responses of the school administration that suggests these incidents will not recur.

SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

The Commission has conducted a comprehensive examination in response to Mayor Rosen's charge. Each of the Committee reports, herein, detail the findings in some depth. An Implementation Committee has been appointed to appear before the various legislative bodies so that all the recommendations will receive the attention warranted.

The following Summary is an effort to highlight some of these proposals but is not meant to lessen the importance of the other recommendations.

Miami Beach Senior High School has had a long tradition of academic excellence. Its students always scored among the highest on state and national achievement tests and were admitted to the finest colleges.

Today, the collective student body ranks well but no longer can claim the same high level of academic attainment. This is due in great part to the change in student composition. During the 1960's, the desegregation laws and the emigration from Cuba brought new ethnic groupings into the school.

The transition has been difficult for many of these students, facing a new language, different sub-cultures and an affluent community. Often, these difficulties have surfaced in the form of student disruption. This has happened generally in all the schools of Dade County. Miami Beach Senior High is but an example. It is obvious that the Dade County school system was ill-prepared in the 1960's to meet the sociological and academic demands that such a massive turnover required. In the decade of the 70's, the response continues to be a piece-meal ad-hoc reaction to each explosion of violence.

It is only just beginning to occur to school administrators that the past is gone. New approaches to maintaining order must be instituted, beyond the old obedience that a teacher and principal once invoked merely by their institutional presence. The traditional responses that have long been available with the disobedient child are not applicable for today's disruptive and assaultive student.

Times have indeed changed. On the walls of the Miami Beach High School library, amid the catchy signs extolling learning, there are now several signs which warn, "Girls: Remember, Carry Your Purse at all Times, so it is Protected!" These signs reflect the new concerns at Miami Beach High School, as do the students' hesitancy to use certain bathrooms, their avoidance of the school cafeteria and the seeking out of "safe" corridors for movement.

Our nation and state invested huge sums of money and energy in the desegregation process and in the support of Cuban emigres. It is regrettable that we expected that somehow all these students would routinely blend together in our schools without positive pre-planning and direction. Couple this with school educators, who are unequipped by training and background to cope with massive disruptions and individual crimes, and often lack the disposition to even acknowledge the enormity of the problem, and we have the dilemma we now face.

We find that Miami Beach High School has made, and is making, a tremendous effort to cope with the situation. Numerous programs and techniques have been

installed to respond to the needs of the students. The school has availed itself of virtually all that is available. Unfortunately, our estimate is that it is not enough. The resources available for Beach High and the other schools are woefully short. They are short because no matter how much we pour into security measures for protection against the seventeen year old disrupter, we will not succeed until we first face the problems of the seven year old delinquent-prone child. Obviously, the shortcoming is that we must face both problems simultaneously and that limited funding forces a choice, which must be the immediate threat of the violent 17 year old.

Notwithstanding the lack of funds, the ineffectiveness of school administrators, and other failings in the system, we believe that constructive steps can be taken that will positively impact on the problem. Our recommendations will, perhaps, require some new approaches and new attitudes, but we are of the firm conviction that anything less will be of no avail. These recommendations apply generally to all schools.

Recommendations:

1. We propose the establishment of a county-wide Commission on School Security to be appointed by the Dade County Commission to include representatives of all governmental agencies involved in the school security process. These are to include but not limited to the police, City and County government, the School Board, the prosecutor, State Health and Rehabilitative Services (HRS), and the Dade County legislative delegation, and the Community Relations Board (CRB).

This is essential in order to be assured that all the community resources are made jointly available and to make certain that a mechanism exists where the progress of school security can be adequately monitored by a non-school group. A Commission of this nature will also have the stature to earn an audience before all of the legislative funding bodies, and also its existence will reassure the parents of the commitment by public office holders to properly face this problem.

2. We recommend the phasing-out of the Dade County School Security System as it presently exists, and in its place law enforcement services be contracted for with local municipal and county police agencies.

A School Security unit can continue to serve as a liaison with police agencies, as an educational component in the classroom and as a technical assistance source for security planning for school buildings and grounds.

The Dade County school security system is an illusion. It appears to exist, but is so undermanned, so uncertain as to its function, and so unclear as to its goals, that it is little more than a token operation. This is said notwithstanding the high quality of leadership it has been provided by its directors and the fine effort put out by its officers. If the security system is a step-child, the school administration has made it so. In the hierarchy of departments it is on the low rung, somewhere in the Maintenance Department, with no direct access to the School Superintendent. When budget cuts were necessary, the school security was dealt a cut from 103 personnel to 80. Considering the unfilled positions, the

supervisory personnel and the night patrols, there are only 14 security guards available in Dade County during school hours. Since there are close to a quarter of a million students in Dade County, the mathematics of the situation is all too obvious.

3. School principals are trained to be educators and have little expertise in handling disruptions, maintaining security and providing for the general safety of students and teachers. We are advised that many school principals spend 50% to 80% of their time in these non-educational pursuits.

We recommend that the principal be divested of this area of responsibility and that it be placed in the hands of a specially-trained administrator (without police powers) responsible to both the principal and the Area Superintendent. The principal will continue to establish policy, but in this manner it can perhaps be more forcefully administered. A check and balance will also be provided by creating a direct reporting line between this new administrator and the Area Superintendent. The person in this position would control the security personnel, relate to the local police, be a liaison with the court system, implement internal disciplinary measures such as hallway control and student passes, and be informed and involved with both the school and community alternative programs.

4. We found that communications among the various enforcement agencies and the schools continues to be appalling despite two previous Grand Jury Reports on the subject. No one appears to be aware of what the others do.

On occasion the court system will be aware of the child's school deficiencies, and by accident the school will sometimes learn of a child's encounter with the law. But there is no organized effort to share information. School people are generally unaware of community resources to treat delinquent children, and similarly non-school professionals in the child-rehabilitative system are only vaguely familiar with the schools' efforts and resources. There is a school liaison person in the court system, but a one person staff for the entire school system is hardly adequate for what is needed. The State of Florida confidentiality laws and the federal Right-to-Privacy Act do impede the flow of information, but the impression here is that public agencies, particularly the schools, have in the past insulated themselves from meaningful relationships with other community agencies.

- a. We recommend that the Dade County Computer Center develop a computer program so that the schools, the police, and the courts are provided on-line information on delinquent juveniles. This day-to-day sharing of information will fully apprise schools of the current status of the violent-prone, and will update the police and the courts as to precisely what and who they are dealing with.
- b. We further recommend the development of a more fully operational liaison program that will connect all the school and community resources with one another.
- c. In addition, we see the need for intensive seminars and workshops among these groups so that they can learn how to better assist each other.

5. We discovered that a crucial area that determines student behavior is in the transfer of students from the lower schools to the senior high schools. Since the desegregation laws require certain elementary schools to feed into junior highs and similarly to senior high schools, we examined the patterns of "feeder" schools into Beach High.

We found only minimal prior contact between the "feeder" schools and the receiving schools. The extent of this contact is crucial since many of these youngsters are entering schools distant from their homes, and often with a student body they view as unfriendly.

- a. We deem it essential that, at an early date, long before the actual transfer, community leaders and parents, faculty and students of each school begin meaningful exchanges with their counterparts. Some small effort is currently being made in this direction, but considering the cultural and social divergences, there needs to be an extensive outreaching among these groups so that some common basis of understanding may already exist when the child enters the new school. We are not going to really solve the security problem, until we first solve the people problem.
- b. We further suggest that the schools in each feeder system conduct an early exchange of student records so that basic planning can be initiated for the incoming students and an evaluation can be made by the feeder school as to the appropriateness of prior planning for the student already advanced.
6. Our Commission was somewhat dismayed to discover that there is apparently little security input in the architecture of school buildings. Most of

us recall the vertical, one-building school structure of our youth, enclosed by a rather high fence. Today's horizontal sprawling campus is perhaps more pleasing to the eye but it also produces innumerable dark corners, blind corridors and other areas conducive to the commission of crime. Without denying esthetic value, we would hope that future architectural plans include advice from an appropriate security expert in the architectural field, of which there are many.

We recommend that all future school building construction require the input of a security specialist prior to approval by the Board of Public Instruction.

Further, we suggest that all presently existing buildings be reexamined for possible alterations concerning crucial security areas, such as:

- (a) Additional fence construction.
 - (b) Removal of outside bathroom doors to be replaced by visual barriers.
 - (c) Redesign main school thoroughfares so that they run through active, open areas.
 - (d) Shrubbery rearranged or landscaped to enable full visual contact.
 - (e) Placement of additional lighting in secluded areas.
7. It is regrettable that the lack of funding has limited efforts at early intervention in the school system. We find it absolutely amazing that every report examined on school discipline always focuses in on the critical need for early intervention yet this continues to remain the area receiving the least attention. The screening, evaluation and treatment of the delinquent-prone youngster in the elementary school can of course yield huge dividends in the high schools. Unfortunately schools must respond to the threats immediately before us, and we

therefore expend all of our limited resources in behalf of the adolescent hard-core problem student. The State of Florida's failure to adequately fund their Early Diagnostic Treatment programs, and the cutback of elementary school counselors in a recent budget cut are two examples of a short-sighted approach. We urgently request that school counselors be placed in every elementary school.

We are not optimistic that in the current financial stress, these funds will suddenly materialize. We do suggest that our legislative bodies at least show the foresight to mark these projects with the high priority they deserve. And that when funds are available, they be designated categorically for a specific use to prevent their being used for any other purpose.

8. Violence in the public schools has received relatively little attention from the State of Florida. The Legislature showed some interest in 1973, enacting the Florida Safe Schools Act which provided funds for each school district to develop preventative and innovative security programs. Dade County received approximately \$415,000 in the years 1973 and 1974. Although the Act is still in force in Florida, the Legislature chose to discontinue funding for 1975 and 1976.

It is imperative that the Legislature reassert the needs defined in the 1973 Safe Schools Act. There are so many areas of legislative concern that are tied-in to the school disruption phenomena that we urge a special legislative committee be organized to review the continuing legislative role. School violence does not appear to be a passing fad that we can wait-out. If a concentrated, serious effort

is to be made, it will require an on-going concern translated into supportive legislation and adequate funding far beyond that being presently provided.

9. We had anticipated that the parents and the students would be a great resource for assisting the school in security matters. It did not turn out that way. At the time of the incident of violence that caused the formation of this Commission, there were hundreds of volatile parents, anxious to do something. As tempers receded and emotions waned, so did the parents' interest. A handful attended our meetings and served on our committees, but other than that, the parents have made themselves unavailable. The P.T.A. recently telephoned 100 parents asking for volunteers for school projects and recruited not one volunteer. The student body president circularized all the parents, inviting them for special tours of the school; only a handful cared to come.

We have had some preliminary discussion with the Greater Miami Crime Commission in terms of training parent-volunteers as observers and reporters in the corridors and on the school grounds. We think it is an idea worth pursuing, and notwithstanding the absence of parents, we would recommend to the Crime Commission and to other community service organizations that such a project be further examined.

10. Perhaps a more appropriate role for parents is that of critic and evaluator. We would strongly recommend that a vehicle other than existing organizations be formed to continuously assess the school security function. What is needed is a funded, staffed entity, willing

and able to critically evaluate the security measures in each school. The already overburdened Parent-Teachers Association and the other service-oriented civic organizations perform valued tasks in support of the school function, but their role is as school-helpers not as school-critics. The Citizen's Advisory Councils in each school, mandated by the State of Florida to report on school progress, have the potential, but lack the tools. We endorse the concept of the United States Office of Education, presently being developed in a federal grant Demonstration Project, that will establish security committees, such as ours, in each school with the resources and technical ability to properly monitor, and critically evaluate, the security function. We have found that the mere presence of an inquiring body causes the school bureaucracy to respond with a greater sense of urgency. In the short period of our existence, we have noted an increased resolve on the part of Miami Beach High School administrators to tighten up security procedures.

11. As to the students, we foresaw their involvement in an active security role, but as with the parents, we also found resistance there. They do not perceive the situation as seriously as do we, and resent assuming a police posture. There is also present some fear of retaliation by those they have identified as wrong-doers. The students see their role not as informers, but as part of the educational process. They suggested that efforts be made to educate students through a week-long crime awareness project involving community law enforcement leaders and instilling a sense of community-school loyalty.

We, of course, endorse the kind of crime awareness programs they suggest that will bring community leaders on campus. We think, however, that the sensitizing of students to the security problem should become a regular part of the school program, rather than a one-time response to today's situation.

12. We find the students' position more akin to that of the faculty-administration, than in agreement with their parents. While we respect the divergent views, these differences will probably once again lead to another parental outburst with the next criminal assault on campus. Both the students and the parents appear to be relying on basic premises that are not understood or accepted by the other. We urge that the school administration establish a series of conferences, seminars, meetings, etc., among parents, students, and faculty to examine the implications of this Report with the hope that some common base of understanding may result.

13. The philosophic approach to treatment of disruptive children among the child-caring professionals in this community is deserving of some comment. Our schools do not expel and our courts do not punish. We emphasize, instead, alternative programs aimed at modifying anti-social behavior.

It is evident that stronger measures are needed. A recent poll of students and teachers found the vast majority concurring that a major reason for continued disruption is that "nothing happens" to the violator. We endorse recent announcements by the County school administration signalling an end to their non-expulsion policy. We do not consider expulsions the ultimate in solving all of our disruption problems, but neither can we accept the earlier School Board philosophy

of no expulsions. We encourage the change and await the results.

14. With all due respect to the merits of the social-work treatment approach in our courts, we find that the "nothing happens" label is also most appropriately applied to our justice system.

We urge that some balance be created by the Legislature, permitting Juvenile Court Judges to directly impose "split" sentences that provide both a limited period of incarceration followed by the presently used alternative programs. Presently, Judges in Florida do not have this authority.

If school disruption is indeed of the crisis proportions that we have perceived, then certainly we should impose penalties that are responsive to the seriousness of the situation.

15. Throughout our review of school functions we repeatedly came in contact with situations where staff is overwhelmed with the paper work. We found this to be a particularly depressing situation among counselors where mountains of forms prevent a direct contact with students needing guidance. It is even more pronounced in the process of taking disciplinary action against the student. It takes a diligent and enterprising Principal to be willing to subject himself to the requirements of transferring a disruptive student.

We are not unmindful of due process but we are of the belief that students' rights can be protected without bringing the corrective

and educational process to a standstill. We urge the Board of Public Instruction to establish a study panel consisting of their lawyers, the teachers' union lawyers and some outside business efficiency experts to cut down on the excessive paper flow.

I. SECURITY - POLICE RELATIONSHIP

Principal's Responsibility to Notify Police

In the assault incident, the focal point of attention was the alleged failure of the school authorities to promptly notify the local police department. School personnel had immediately called the Miami Beach Fire-Rescue Squad which arrived 4 minutes after being called. Subsequently, the victim was taken to Mt. Sinai Hospital and hours later the Miami Beach Police were routinely notified by the hospital, rather than by school security.

The anger of the parents was centered about this aspect of the incident. Why weren't the police, with all their investigative facilities, called immediately by the school, so that the assailant might have been apprehended?

Implicit in this question, and in the answer, has been the long-held philosophy of school administrators that school security is a private matter and that outsiders will be involved only as a last resort. The schools have viewed their Security Department as a police unit, adequate for all violations of the law. Since the Security Officers are trained, sworn, law enforcement officers this, on its face, is not an unreasonable approach.

According to the "Guidelines for Control of School Behavior" issued February, 1975, by the Office of the Superintendent, the Principal MUST (their emphasis) report assaults and other crimes to the Security Department. There is no requirement that the local police be notified. This is an optional procedure.

The 1975 Guidelines are replete with directions to the School Principal placing full responsibility on him to "develop and implement a school security plan" that responds to school disorders. The Principal must also maintain contact with the

School Security Department and report all incidents to School Security so that system-wide statistics can be maintained.

In addition to a full-time School Security Officer, Miami Beach Senior High School has two Security Aides. Together, their daily routine is to supervise the arrival and departure of school buses, check all the buildings for security, provide reports, supervise the cafeteria and generally be available for any situation. They do a good job, but they can hardly be classified as a crime-control unit to monitor 2200 students in a 20 acre complex.

It is almost absurd to expect that one trained Officer with two Aides can be THE police force for a school. Describing some of the concerns that make the routine functions even more difficult, the Miami Beach High Security Officer emphasized such problems as the need for clearing students congregating in the hallways, the difficulty in transferring disruptive students to alternative schools, the poor communications with State Youth Services agencies, the need for additional Security Aides to cover the nine school buildings, the openness of the buildings permitting non-students to enter the area with ease, the special time scheduling of students who enter and depart at various hours, and the poor lighting in the hallways and surrounding grounds. Can we really expect a Security Officer to handle all of these routine problems and then in addition provide the police, investigative techniques that will normally result from a police department follow-up of an assault such as occurred here?

Obviously, the Security Department is not equipped by manpower or by resources to properly provide the police function, and the sooner the school administration recognizes this fact, the safer our schools will be.

One of the first acts of our Commission was to recommend that the school Principal be required to report any serious crime to the local police. We are pleased to report that the December, 1976, issue of "Procedures for Control of School Behavior.." issued by the Office of the Superintendent mandates, "The Principal MUST (their emphasis) report to the appropriate police agency when...

We consider this a major movement, far beyond its direct policing implications. It suggests philosophically a recognition by school administrators that agencies and forces outside of their own tightly-knit bureaucracy are acceptable and necessary, and are to be utilized in security problem-solving.

We might also note with favor, the creation by the School Superintendent's Office of an ad-hoc committee consisting of school personnel, court officers, social workers, and other child-caring professionals to study and make recommendations in the area of student disruption. This ad-hoc committee has provided several worthwhile recommendations and its creation certainly displays a searching spirit, not always visible before. The community will make final judgment of the effectiveness of that Committee, depending on the implementation of their proposals.

Operation of School Security Department

The School Security Department is a relatively new operation. Its rate of development parallels the rise of school disruption. In 1965, there was but one Security Officer for all of Dade County's schools. In 1966, there were 2. In 1967, it was 4. In 1968, it was 25 and by 1973, the number rose to 102. In 1976, the number was cut back to 80 due to budgetary limitations. Obviously, security is one of the lower priorities today. We were advised by the Dade County Security Chief that of the 80 member staff, only 14 were available for permanent assignment

at a school during school-hours. The low number available was due to other staffers being assigned to area patrol, night-time duties, supervisory duties, and unfilled positions. There are 18 Senior High Schools in Dade County and we are therefore fortunate in having one Security Officer assigned to Miami Beach High School.

A School Board study of the Dade County public schools security services in 1973 produced two major recommendations cited below which have not yet been implemented. It is time that they be acted upon.

1. Contract arrangements with local police agencies be established whereby these agencies will perform the functions of night patrol and property protection.
2. A county-wide "Security Advisory Council" be established with appropriate representation of school administration, security services, operational personnel, teachers, pupils and the community.

There are several alternative courses of action that need to be examined in the rethinking process.

1. Enlarge the security force so that it can adequately respond to all violations of the law. (Los Angeles has over 300 school security officers).
2. Limit the security function to that of serving as liaison with other law enforcement agencies, providing technical assistance, offering planning skills and being available for special investigative services. (This was role prior to 1970).

In either choice, up-grade the status of the Security Department by removing it from under the Physical Plant Division to a direct line of responsibility to the School Superintendent.

We endorse a complete separation of the security function and urge the contract arrangement with local police agencies as recommended in 1973.

The statement in the Miami Herald of January 15th by the School Superintendent that he was responding to the lack of Security Officers available at schools during school hours by reshuffling the present security complement is the best evidence of what we mean when we say that the school responses are inadequate and shortsighted. This game of "musical chairs" to cover up each day's security service shortcomings hardly reflects an understanding of the enormity of the problem. This approach of providing additional personnel was used at Beach High and at American High, immediately following the angry parent reaction to the violent incidents. When calm again prevailed, the extra personnel returned to their previous assignments.

School Resource Officer

Any discussion of school security must include some comment on the School Resource Officer concept. Miami Beach Senior High School is not one of the schools fortunate to have had such a program. The City of Miami has sponsored a School Resource Officer program using 20 police officers and sharing the cost with the Board of Public Instruction. We examined their operation to determine the possibility of establishing a similar program at Beach High.

From all indications, it is a superb program. Specially-trained police officers with backgrounds in the social sciences are selected. The concept calls for the officer to be available to any student who wants him. Demonstrations, tours, discussions, and participation in school activities are all part of the program. The officer maintains his police identity, sometimes wearing a uniform and on other occasions in civilian attire, and is available for investigation duties in criminal violations of the law. He will not, however, be a part of the school discipline structure in terms of violation of school rules. The main thrust is to seek to identify the pre-delinquent child and provide available community resources, all in a non-punitive manner.

Our study Commission is in the process of seeking funding from the City of Miami Beach to establish such a program in our City. This will have a top priority with our Implementation Committee.

We note that the City of Miami and the Board of Public Instruction are currently at odds as to who shall continue funding that program. It would be tragic for the City of Miami to lose a program of such fine reputation. We hope that the problem will be resolved.

We recommend to the Miami Beach City Council, notwithstanding the position of the Board of Public Instruction as to sharing the costs, that a School Resource Officer program be funded at Miami Beach Senior High School, and as well at the junior high and elementary schools in the City of Miami Beach.

Parking Lot - Traffic Control

Although this Report is at times highly critical of the security "system" and the school administrators, we are sensitive to the bureaucratic roadblocks often mandated by law, the lack of funding, the shortage of staff, the priorities that need to be established, and other impediments. Sometimes, the obvious requires a complex response. The school parking lot turned out to be such a situation. We found the parking of vehicles at Miami Beach Senior High School disorganized, and immediately requested that parking sites be reorganized, permits issued, teacher areas be controlled and traffic patterns revised. We were dismayed to learn that a security aide had the major responsibility each morning to make certain that student vehicles did not usurp faculty parking spaces. In addition, we were told that City and County traffic laws did not provide the school with authority to cite traffic violators or to remove offending vehicles. Considering that the parking lot is often the central site for student disorder and narcotics sale, we viewed it imperative for the school to maintain complete control over that area. Furthermore, enforcement of these rules in a just, consistent way helps promote an atmosphere of respect, so important in building a positive attitude among students and staff.

For the next two months our legal counsel travelled the rocky road of legal opinions as to who had the authority to issue traffic citations, tow away violators and other legal issues. What is our legal base? City Police? County Police? School Security Officer? Legal opinions flashed back and forth from the School Board Attorney, County Attorney, State Attorney General, Police Legal Counsel, and our Attorney. We expect to soon have a legal Traffic Plan for the School that can be effectively enforced but it is apparent that change does not come easily.

School Entrance Control

Examination of the school disruption problem always lumps the student violator and the outside intruder together. In truth, a sizable number of criminal law violations occurring at school are committed by outside intruders. They may be former students or students attending other schools, but they come from outside and have no lawful presence on campus. They are a greater menace to the school because they have no ties to the institution, are not as easily identifiable, and often come on campus seeking to cause trouble. The ingress and egress on campus is therefore of a crucial consideration. Both the open grounds surrounding the six acres of building sites and the many school buses bringing students to class are clear invitations for non-students to enter the campus grounds.

Notwithstanding the esthetic value of open grassy terrain and the psychological blocks that some may conjure up in the presence of a high fence, our Commission recommends such a construction. Control of the premises must be maintained by the school administrators and so long as there are endless points of entry, that is not possible.

Certain portions of Beach High are presently fenced in, yet we know of no complaints that have ever been made in that regard. While a fence may not exclude those intent on making entry, it will not be an open invitation to those bent on mischief.

Our inquiry shows that a six foot fence can be constructed around the Beach High perimeter for \$18,000. It is a worthwhile expenditure that will enable an organized, controlled process to be developed for admission to the school grounds. This is sorely lacking today.

There is no evidence to support the suggestion that non-student troublemakers are being transported by school bus to the campus, and that they also return home via that route. Nonetheless, this charge has been made from several sources. In the event there is some truth to the allegation, it appears to be a problem capable of simple solution. A bus identification should be necessary to board the school bus, and the school security persons responsible for unloading and loading the buses should make certain that only students entitled to transportation be permitted the use of the bus.

Hallway and Bathroom Control

We learned that the hallways and the bathrooms were places where many school crimes are committed. We also learned that an increased security staff, electronic surveillance, anti-intrusion devices and other sophisticated technology may cut the crime rate to some extent. We concluded that visual and sound contact with the areas of concern were necessary and could be accomplished without the high cost of installing expensive electronic gear. We thereupon recommended that the following procedures be instituted immediately.

1. In each hallway one class functions with the doors open.

A student is seated near the door so that visual as well as sound contact with the hallway may be continuous. If it is a long corridor-type hallway, two classes per week draw this assignment.

A telephone located alongside the teacher will enable School Security to be called immediately.

Several rooms on each floor can rotate this assignment, so that it will only be necessary to install a few phones.

Student-observers are instructed to notify the teacher and Security, and not to become personally involved in resolving any problem.

2. The strongest ally to violence in the school bathroom is the typically ponderous door that shuts out all sound. We suggest that doors to bathrooms be replaced by small visual barriers as exist in many public lavatories. This will continue to maintain privacy, but sounds of aggression and signs of smoke will more easily emanate as a warning signal.

The classroom hallway-observer technique has already been adopted at Beach High and in some other Dade County Schools. We think it an idea worth further exploration.

We mention the deficiency of school architecture, as it relates to school security, in other portions of this Report. A perfect example is the construction of bathrooms, usually in a secluded corner of an alcove. Why place a potentially high crime area, at an out-of-the-way spot? Why not bathrooms in the middle of the hall, or at the busiest intersection?

II. INTERNAL SCHOOL DISCIPLINE

Disciplinary Process Paper-Work

We found a willingness on the part of the Beach High faculty/administration to utilize the many disciplinary procedures available, but the process appears to inundate everyone with paper work. For example, a child whose conduct has been continuously disruptive and who already has run the gamut of corrective programs at Beach High must be sent through a laborious process in order to be transferred to an Alternative School. The student must undergo a psychological evaluation and be tested in math, reading, hearing and speech. The Principal completes the form for Tentative Request for Reassignment, obtains the parent's consent and forwards same to the Area Superintendent who approves or disapproves, and sends it to the Director of Pupil Personnel Services who then forwards it on to the Admission Committee for Alternative Schools. From there it is finally approved by the Superintendent of Schools who then is required to notify by certified mail, the parents, the Principal, and the Area Superintendent. The Teacher/Counselor completes a four page referral form detailing and documenting the conduct warranting the transfer to the Alternative School. A Visiting Teacher serves as intermediary with the family explaining the process and obtaining consent. Other personnel also are involved along the bureaucratic route.

Similar experiences result in the process of suspensions, expulsions and exclusions. The paper work is so extensive, so enervating and so time-consuming, that faculty we interviewed, indicated that the limited results simply were not worth the extreme effort. School administrators always respond to these charges with the observation that the law mandates "due process" for the child. We suspect that the paper work generated by the system far exceeds due process requirements and suggest that the Board of Public Instruction review all the extensive

requirements they have established in this area. Perhaps their lawyers along with the lawyers for the teachers' union and some business efficiency experts might conduct this kind of survey.

The paper-work syndrome also seems to be swallowing up the guidance counselors. They are desperately needed to provide guidance but too much of their time is spent preparing class schedules and routinely verifying the number of credits that students have attained toward graduation. Guidance counselors are specially trained to aid border-line students by such approaches as recommending appropriate vocational programs, providing aptitude testing, offering remedial and learning disability programs, conferring with parents of truants, and being available for any personal problems confronting the student. The 2,200 Miami Beach High School students have a fine group of five counselors who could do a better job were they permitted to concentrate on the duties for which they were employed. The often raised question as to the adequacy of the ration of one counselor to 400 students is not a real issue, if the counselors are not used properly.

It does not make sense for them to be performing clerical chores, that can be competently handled by Aides. We would also suggest that teachers who need to complete certain tasks to obtain certification credit for licensing, be permitted a helping role with the undermanned counselor corps, in lieu of taking courses.

Role of the Principal

The Principal is the fulcrum around which the school revolves and we examined his role rather carefully. We found ours to be an extremely hard-working, dedicated, innovative educator. He, however, was not intended to be "a man for all seasons". Good business sense tells us that one man cannot run a 10 million dollar plant as if it were a retail bake shop, working all shifts, preparing the product, merchandising, meeting the customers and ringing the sales. School disruption has become the major occupation of many schools and can no longer be handled as an adjunct to other duties. The Principal has to have a staff to relieve him of the business responsibilities such as budget, equipment, records, cafeteria and the countless reports that he must prepare, or in the alternative, the Principal must in great part be relieved of the day-to-day responsibilities in the area of school disruption. We opt for the latter.

It is too much to ask of school principals that they be all things to fill all needs. Whereas in the past the disobedient child could be handled in the normal functioning of the school, today's violent disrupter is a new breed requiring prompt, specialized attention that an already overburdened principal cannot be expected to handle.

The Dade County school administration responded to a recent student boycott of classes at American High School by sending in two "experts" from other schools. The boycott arose from a series of violent incidents with racial overtones and the "experts" presumably were skilled in allaying fears arising from such incidents. Why not have had such trained experts on staff in that school, and in all schools, so that the strife and the student walkout could possibly have been avoided?

A school Principal has no special training or qualification to handle school disruption. We distinguish the violence phenomenon from that of the disobedience of students, with which our educators do have familiarity. A school environment, where violence and disruption breeds, needs specially trained experts who devote themselves full-time to this pursuit. Principals have ultimate authority in each school and would be expected to establish policy, just as they do in other areas, but the performance should be in the complete hands of others, better equipped to handle violence and vandalism. To make certain that the Principals do not encroach on the newly-created Special Assistant Principal for Discipline, that position should have direct-line responsibility to the Area Superintendent.

The matter was best summed-up in testimony before United States Senator Birch Bayh's Committee to Investigate Juvenile Delinquency, first by the Executive Secretary of the National Association of Secondary School Principals who stated:

"While Principals are concentrating on maintaining order, they are not doing what they were employed to do: that is to improve the quality of student activities. Most of them now find themselves from dawn to dusk, and sometimes far into the night, zeroing-in on problems of violence and vandalism."

His view was then confirmed by the President of the National School Security Directors Association who testified:

"Educators are trained to teach. They have no experience or training in security and therefore have little success in attempting to cope with the problems of school violence and vandalism."

We urge that the responsibility be placed in a new position befitting the major area of concern it has grown to be, and that in its implementation, it be treated as a true shift of power and not as a paper transfer of title.

School Rehabilitation Programs

The Commission is not unaware of the extensive programming at Miami Beach High School in the counseling, rehabilitative, and career development areas. These are supplements to the regular academic program and hopefully provide the needed elements that enable problem-students to make the necessary adjustments. Some of these programs bring special classes to the school and, in others, the students go off-campus to community agencies for their sessions. We counted 46 agencies, individual practitioners, and special units of the school system available for Beach High students. They include psychological services, reading and speech therapy, family counseling, police and court student observers, human relations groups, drug education programs and a host of job training opportunity programs including a shared-time vocational program with Lindsey Hopkins School in the City of Miami.

A Committee examined three of these programs and came away impressed with the effort of the School to reach all of its students.

They met first with a group run by the James E. Scott Community Center (JESCA). This Community Center is based in the City of Miami and provides an outreach program at Miami Beach High School. Its clientele are mostly black students.

The program at Beach High reaches about 40 students, meeting once weekly with 8 - 10 students in each class. It is a voluntary rap session for students unable to handle the daily classroom routine. Students are urged to express themselves freely. The use of street language is considered acceptable. This talking-out of problems in a contained and controlled atmosphere hopefully provides some self-therapy and ventilation of feelings for the student, and also may point the proper direction for providing aid to the student. Counselors

assigned to lead these groups are specially-trained to design a remedial package for the student. Admittedly our Committee was somewhat taken aback at the language of the participants but recognized the value-potential of such an approach.

A second program examined in some depth by the Committee was one that also involved the use of an outside agency. This was a pilot project funded for one year called the Metropolitan-Miami Family Service. Here the school provides an Intervention Counselor, who works with three other professional counselors provided by the Dade County Department of Youth Services. These Counselors offer sessions with students at school, and then follow-up with their families at home. They utilize other County social agency resources in making student and family referrals.

The third program the Committee looked at carefully was aimed at getting the truant back in class. This requires that all chronic absentees and class-cutters must have a Daily Progress Report signed by the class teacher each period of the day. They also receive counseling and remain in the program until grades and attendance improve. Of the 52 students in this program last quinmester, 51 passed all their subjects.

These three programs and the others are positive approaches to the disruption problem. They apparently are not the total solution. More and better enforcement procedures, such as we indicate in this Report, are also essential. We think both approaches are viable. We would hope that funding bodies do not react to the need for tightened security by foreclosing on rehabilitative programs that seek to modify student behavior.

Hallway Control

A good test of discipline in a school is the extent to which the hall corridors are populated by students during class periods. In some schools there are few, if any, students wandering about when they should be in class. In others, such as Miami Beach High, many students move freely about during class periods. Serious efforts however have been made at Miami Beach High to overcome this problem.

One of these efforts was a "hall sweep" recommended by the school "cadre." The "cadre" is a group of Miami Beach High School teachers, elected by their peers, who serve as liaison between the faculty and the administration. The hall sweep process calls for a group of teachers, joined by administrators, to operate as a dragnet, picking-up students in the hallways, who can not properly account for their absence from class. The hall sweep was held on unannounced dates and during the course of the three day sweep over 300 students were found to be improperly out of class. Their names were taken, they were escorted back to class and notified to serve a detention or to suffer an indoor suspension at the Center for Special Instruction (CSI). The long range results were good. For several weeks afterwards the hallways continued to be clear. Today, two months later, an evaluation would probably produce a negative score. Due to lack of clerical assistance the administration has not been able to process the paper work necessary to notify the well over 100 students who had not accepted detention and were therefore subject to indoor suspension. And it further became evident that the CSI program which only can house about 25 students, could not accommodate the large number of additional students involved. This was a good idea, poorly planned and haphazardly executed.

While the initial impact of the hall sweep was positive, it now appears that the credibility of the program has diminished considerably. A hall sweep is a dramatic kind of challenge to the students, and whatever sanctions are available need to be administered promptly and with certainty. This was the first and only hall sweep carried out at Miami Beach High. Apparently no further effort has been made in this direction due to the lack of staff and space to fully provide the penalties due the violators. We urge the cadre and the Principal to quickly find a solution to the administrative problems so that hall sweeps can be promptly reinstated.

Another effort to maintain hallway control is mandatory teacher hall duty. Whereas the hall sweep was manned by volunteers, the hall duty concept requires teachers to accept assignment to monitor a hallway post during a specific period of time. Under their union contract, teachers may only be called upon for hallway duty during emergency periods. The Miami Beach High School Principal has declared the first and last week of each quinmester as an emergency and for that period the teachers are out in full force, covering a fixed post on their floors, during their free periods.

This is an effective technique but by its limited use, it advises students that strict hallway discipline is officially limited to the first and last week of each term. Even the most cooperative teachers find this duty onerous. They are willing to accept responsibility for the behavior of students in their own classrooms, but they resent having to serve in a police capacity in the corridors.

This is an area of service, better-suited for Security Aides and perhaps for parent-volunteers. The limited funds available for Aides and the lack of volunteer

response from among the parents has prevented the development of this approach. We encourage the PTA and other civic organizations to consider this as a project worthy of further development.

Early Intervention

It became apparent early to us that, whatever criticism we had of the manner in which our high school responded to disruption, the seeds for the disorder were planted back in junior high school and elementary school. In examining what happens in the early school years, we found that all the deficiencies noted at the senior high school level were already present and visible at the lower levels. Diagnostic and treatment programs involving medical and psychological services are perhaps even scarcer in the early grades. In 1974, the State of Florida created a system of diagnostic and resource centers in 16 Florida regions, one being Dade County. The centers were provided only "seed" money. In 1975, further legislation was enacted adding two more regional centers but again virtually no funds were provided. Fortunately, the Dade County Board of Public Instruction to its credit, provided local funding and the Dade County center is operational, although functioning only at a minimal level.

Improved communication between the junior high schools and the senior high schools, especially regarding orientation of ninth grade students, is essential. More complete information on the reading and math levels, stanines, and behavior problems is also necessary in order to place the student successfully. Providing more extensive profiles on the incoming student would, in addition, enable better scheduling and result in a smoother adjustment to high school.

Not only do we ignore the elementary schools in terms of early intervention programs, we have made little effort to respond to actual school disruption in the early grades. Elementary schools do not suspend or expel students and the few counselors they had, have been largely eliminated by a budget cut. Elementary School Principals are reluctant to label their children "delinquent-prone" as evidenced by an administration request last year for the names of 5th and 6th grade students who had demonstrated norm-varying behavior. Less than 100 names were submitted from among all the 172 Dade County elementary schools. Yet an identification of such a student early in his school life would make it possible to provide the necessary intervening action available through counseling and community services. The Junior Highs receive a bit more attention than the elementary schools, but hardly adequate for the large number of offenders in those grades. The current annual data show the 14 year olds as committing the second largest number of school offenses among all age groupings.

The prognosis for long-range success lies in the early efforts we make with these youngsters, more so than with what we do in the high schools. We believe high school violence can be held at bay by a massive, coordinated, strong response, but if we are to make a lasting impact, it will require an investment of much more of our resources than we apparently are willing to expend.

Teacher Training

Although Beach High encourages faculty attendance at seminars and courses designed to improve the teacher's ability to cope with disruption, we found that most teachers are not equipped to handle this situation. A study of Dade County teachers found almost 80% stating that they had never taken such a course, and over 40% did not believe that their training had prepared them for this kind of an encounter. A more intensive program needs to be instituted which will insure teacher attendance. In-service training, released time, and other incentives must be offered to make certain that teachers are capable of adequate responses to disorder situations. Perhaps these kinds of courses should be required at either the undergraduate level or for renewal of the teaching contract.

In addition to sharpening the teacher in terms of technique, a greater effort should be made to educate the teacher as to the many resources available to the student, both on and outside the school grounds. Many teachers are unaware of the scope of the rehabilitative programs available for their students. It would also be of reassurance to the parents to know of these quality programs and to be aware of the effort being expended.

"Feeder" School Patterns

We found a whole new language among the educators in terms of the articulation among elementary, junior and senior high schools. We were somewhat distressed to discover that some children literally "travel" through the school system without staying in any one school long enough to establish roots. In order to satisfy desegregation quotas, a child may go through five or six schools before completing high school. Almost on the average of every two grades, some children are required to move to another school which is "paired" to meet desegregation requirements. How can we expect children to establish stable patterns of behavior in a school, when the child is constantly thrust into new situations and new environments? We are grateful however, that at least for Beach High these feeder patterns have been adjusted, and that this problem has been somewhat minimized. This requirement certainly needs looking into, in terms of how these numerous changes are affecting the conduct of these students upon their entrance into high school.

III. PARENT - COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

Apathy of Parents

Notwithstanding the crisis aspect of the security problem, it became readily apparent that the parent-community response was to be a business - as - usual approach. The level of interest here, as in other school problem areas, was high, but participation was virtually nil. Only a few parents care to carry the load in school involvement.

While we deplore the lack of parent involvement, perhaps we have never adequately structured a mechanism to encourage and facilitate such participation. And perhaps our governmental leadership has chosen not to fully support this kind of apparatus. For whatever the reason, we are faced with the fact that there is no on-going, watchdog parent group, and there is no core of parents available to service security and other vital functions in a volunteer capacity.

The presently existing mechanisms are either inadequate or underutilized. The Miami Beach High School Parent-Teachers Association (PTA) supports many fine programs such as a Volunteer-Listening Program to aid the Guidance Counselors, and also provides funds for several extra-curricular school activities. Since only 5% of the parent population are PTA members, many programs have been forced to curtail their activities. The high aspirations - low results coming from PTA activity was evidenced when only five Miami Beach High School families attended a joint meeting with parents of one of the junior high schools feeding students into Miami Beach Senior High School.

Also available as a forum for parents is the Miami Beach Citizens Advisory Council for Secondary Schools. This is a group formed at each school, mandated by State law, that must meet at least three times yearly. Presumably it operates

independently to provide input from the local level to the District and County School Administration. Although we understand that they have been helpful in some areas, we know of no involvement on their part in school security or discipline problems. Again, as with the PTA, no more than a handful of parents attend these meetings.

We suspect that the apathy of parents can in part be traced to their recognition that existing approaches are designed to maintain the status quo, rather than bring about needed change. If groups such as these Advisory Councils are to have any real impact they need to be staffed, funded and strengthened so that their voice can be heard.

There is a need for a critical, evaluative body consisting of parent and community representatives to assess the functioning of our schools. Educating our children is too important in our lives to be left solely to the educators. We see the PTA as a school-support function in a variety of commendable ways. The PTA should not be expected to critically evaluate the performance of school administrators.

Programs for Parent Participation

We understand that the United States Department of Education has recently received a grant from the Law Enforcement Assistance Administration (LEAA) for a Demonstration Project in 85 communities that will organize Regional Resource Centers aimed at reducing school violence. These Centers will provide professional services for a Local Action Team (LAT). The LAT will consist of parents, teachers, students, law enforcement officers, and social service personnel. This is the kind of direct, forceful response-mechanism that is needed.

All of our legislative bodies - local, county, state and federal - should indicate support for the funding of programs that envision this concept.

We believe that citizens will get involved if they know that their efforts can bear some results.

One of the problems that concern us is the incidence of crime in residential areas adjoining our school. The police have responded by increasing their patrols in the neighboring areas during and immediately after school hours, but the problem still remains.

We would urge that the Crime Watch Program sponsored by the Greater Miami Crime Commission organize and train volunteer observers living on streets adjoining public schools. These crime-spotters would be aided by information identifying those students who have cut classes on the day that criminal offenses have occurred. School neighborhoods have become as unsafe as schools, and a crime-watch program made up of a combined school-police-citizen group is needed.

In addition we see the Crime Commission training parents (and grandparents) as observers and reporters in the corridors and parking lots of each school. We are not suggesting a police enforcement role for parents, but rather a presence in certain school areas that can promptly report trouble by radio or phone to the security office.

Parent groups, such as the PTA or other civic organizations, can also initiate or assist in developing programs of safety awareness among students and teachers. Too often, safety programs are avoided because school administrators do not wish to bring attention to their crime problem. Usually after a particularly heinous crime

on campus, a splurge of safety awareness programs will surface. But these exist only for a short time. We recommend that this be an on-going activity at each school, with a specific time allocated and certain content required. From time immemorial we have had fire drills in the public schools; why not regular safety awareness programs?

Relationships with Feeder Schools

We note with approval the effort of the Beach High PTA to communicate with parents of the feeder schools so that there may be some orientation prior to entering Beach High. We think that this kind of approach can lead to stabilizing the relationships among the students. Unfortunately, the circumstances are such that it will require a hundred-fold increase to make the effort effective. We have a tri-ethnic student population with a diversity of cultures, varying mores, and a wide range of family income, plus a large number of students not residing in our city. To achieve a harmonious blend will require considerably more than the one or two joint meetings scheduled by the PTA.

Our situation is analagous to the diplomacy needed in the resolution of an international dispute. First we need to bring to the conference table in each of the school areas the top community leadership representing each of these ethnic groups so that a plan can be created to "sell" the school to the new students, to persuade them of their acceptance, and to show the parents by deed and by action that they have a voice in the school's operation. This kind of massive, operational plan will require heavy parental input but even more it will require the attention of business and governmental leaders. There is no doubt that much of the hostility at Beach High results from the rejection felt by many of the non-resident students.

No matter the numerous security measures adopted, the anti-intrusion devices installed, and the corridor patrols instituted, the problem will not be resolved until the human relationships are satisfied.

These tri-ethnic articulation programs need to take place not only at Miami Beach High School, where some have taken place, but they need also be held at the feeder school sites. And even more importantly the top community leadership in each area needs to be involved so that a tone of understanding and acceptance can be established, long before the student enters Miami Beach Senior High School.

IV.

STUDENT INVOLVEMENT

Students Uncertain as to Security Role

It was only toward the end of our term as a Commission that we began to realize that many of the students had interests and concerns that did not necessarily parallel that of their parents. Whereas the parents reacted from fear of physical violence upon their children, the students were more apprehensive about how our recommended reforms might infringe upon their freedoms. They resented tightening-up procedures such as hall sweeps, and the student newspaper scoffed at our proposal that a fence be built enclosing the school grounds.

Our impression is that the students are not an important part of the decision-making process, although there are many mechanisms for student involvement at Beach High. We sense that students feel that whatever is determined is done to them, not for them. We are not certain that an equal student voice in areas such as curriculum is really desirable, but in the area of security, a total student involvement is absolutely necessary.

If the term describing parent involvement is "apathetic" then the term picturing student involvement is probably "uncertain." Students are not persuaded that the situation is as bad as we describe it, and are more fearful of the cure than the illness. They do not want a police presence and do not choose to be a part of any such policing activities. Deep down, they think the parents are overreacting and have lost their cool. Their attitude is almost a "Leave us alone and we'll work things out ourselves."

This view is reflected in a recent Dade County study of the problem. To the question posed to Senior High School students, "Do you feel that your school is generally a safe place to be?", only 1.6% answered "Dangerous for much of the time..",

and but 0.4% answered "Very dangerous at all times."

Yet in the same questionnaire the uncertainty among students becomes apparent when those answers are contrasted with the responses to the question, "What things do you usually do when threatened with attack?" Here 43% answered "I tend to avoid places around school that are dangerous", 32%, "I tend to fight back", 28%, "I always have some friends with me", 18%, "I report the threats", 16%, "I pay kids to leave me alone." It may be that students have learned to accept the risks to their safety that go with school attendance, whereas parents have not yet made the adjustment.

In the relatively short period of our term we were not able to adequately examine the student role. It goes into many depths that we left untouched. Our contact was primarily with the Anglo student leadership, and we therefore missed out on other important student viewpoints. We left unanswered the question as to why a school that so emphasizes human relations projects, and has many communications mechanisms available, such as the student-teacher Grievance Committee, still continues to show considerable student unrest?

Reappraise Student Role in Security

In making these recommendations we are a bit uncertain ourselves.

1. We suspect that the Beach High student's perception, minimizing the threat to personal safety, is a reflection of the faculty-administration posture. There needs to be a reopening of lines of communication between the school administration and the parents. The parents who recently were so vocally opposed to the school administration cannot now be shrugged off because

the tensions have lessened. In addition, the students need to be informed of the situation in its fullest context. We would therefore urge that a series of meetings and conferences be held with parent and student groups as a follow-up to the issuance of this Report.

2. We see students as taking a more activist role in school security matters. In many schools the student leadership is involved in duties such as locker-room patrol, parking-lot monitoring and corridor control. There appears to be little support for such activity at Beach High. We would suggest that the students convene a Student Security Seminar to reassess their role in insuring the safety of persons and the protection of property at their school.
3. We would suggest a reexamination of the role of the Student Senate, the Grievance Committee and other student bodies to make certain that there is real opportunity for the student to voice an opinion, and more importantly, that someone who can act is actually listening. Too often these groups have a purpose limited to what educators like to call "learning experiences", which means that nothing will be done. In the security situation, the cooperation of the student is the key, and the student must play a real, not a make-believe' role.

V.

JUVENILE COURT SYSTEM

Agencies Unaware of Resources

There seems to be little communication between the school system and the Court system. All information flows only in one direction, with neither system making any real effort to learn about the other's function. There are many fine rehabilitative programs available through the social work and Court system, and many schools, in turn, have initiated excellent alternative programs but each seem unaware of the other's effort.

The perception of the Court system by school personnel is one of a negative nature. They see school children, accused of committing crimes, as lost in the judicial process. To the school administrator, it appears that the Youth Services Intake concern is primarily to keep the child out of detention. When the child finally does appear in Court, they view the Judge as having little authority. The result too often is that nothing happens to, or for, the child. A Youth Services Counselor may occasionally contact the school to get pre-sentence information requested by the Judge, but other than that, no formal procedure exists to provide progress reports to the school, to jointly plan the child's reentry or transfer, or to provide remedial help. Some Youth Services Counselors do seek to develop a joint effort, but others apparently ignore this approach. Mostly, the schools are in the dark as to what happens to delinquent children.

We have learned that in the present system the child placed on probation is seen only infrequently by a court counselor, due to the heavy case load. Invariably, the troublemaker at school is soon back on campus, causing even greater disturbance, secure in the knowledge that nothing much is going to happen anyway. The general impression of educators is that the more serious offender doesn't get sent to State School until about a dozen offenses are of record, and in a few months is

usually back in the street and in the schoolyard. We suspect that these impressions are fairly accurate.

The worst tragedy beyond the lack of rehabilitation or punishment is that the schools have no idea what is going on in Court, or why. No effort is made by any segment of the Court system to notify the school as to what is happening. This is not the total fault of the Court system. Just as the Court system personnel have large case loads and are pressed for time, so each school has difficulty in providing staff to follow-up the progress of delinquents who are in the Courts. There is some problem of transferring information between the agencies based on state and federal statutes of confidentiality. But we think that the problem is created more by the self-imposed insulation of governmental agencies than by the limits created by the laws on confidentiality.

To some extent there is also an underlying attitude in the Courts that the schools are avoiding their full responsibility. Court personnel often criticize the schools for expecting the Courts to solve discipline problems that more appropriately can be handled in the schools; on the other hand, they accuse the schools of failing to report the really serious crimes that should be handled by the justice system.

We find it most disturbing to view two child-caring systems, both well motivated and both with reasonably good resources, running closely alongside each other but somehow avoiding any real contact.

Control Over Truants and Runaways

The situation involving crime within the schools is indeed unfortunate, but it is not in near as much disarray as is the situation concerning the

chronic truant, the runaway, the incorrigible, the child parents can't handle. These categories are not of a criminal nature and under recently enacted law, the State has little or no authority to require youngsters in these classifications to comply with the dictates of the Court.

In the past, the schools could look with some hope to the Court system for help with truant and incorrigible children. Presently, a child referred to the Court for these misbehaviors, is there almost as a volunteer. The Family Services and the Courts are handcuffed in terms of enforcement and with the little resources available provide minimal service for these children.

We recognize and support the concept of non-punitive action against children who have not committed crimes. However, if compulsion is to be eliminated, alternative programs must be available for these type of youngsters. Apparently the Judges no longer have authority over these children, and the social workers have no facilities for them. This is indeed a tragedy.

Improve Inter-Agency Communication

We recommend that:

1. A communications system be established that requires the Court System to periodically inform the school of the status of cases, and of the progress of students in rehabilitative programs. A joint court-school liaison office should be established for this purpose.
2. Educational seminars involving court personnel, social workers and school administrators should be held frequently so that each of the disciplines learns to understand the philosophy and techniques of the others.

3. Legislative reviews should be made of the State Juvenile confidentiality laws and the Federal Family and Privacy Act to make certain that these laws do not interfere with the flow of information among the Courts, the schools and law enforcement agencies.
4. Legislation should be considered that will enable the Juvenile Court Judges to assume more of the decision-making than presently exists. Judges should be the major factor in determining the kinds of programs the child enters, the length of the stay, and the early release from such programs.
5. We endorse legislation enabling a Juvenile Court Judge to impose a "split" sentence on a juvenile resulting in both probation services, and detention for a period not to exceed 15 days. This authority presently does not exist in Florida and would be most applicable for extremely disruptive students who do not have extensive records of delinquency.
6. Legislation to solve the problem of the truant, runaway, incorrigible should be enacted that will either provide funds for servicing these youths, or else the Courts should again be vested with authority to exercise some enforcement controls over them.

APPENDIX

List of Witnesses Appearing Before Commission or Committees

Carlton Jerkins, Assistant Principal for Administration, Miami Beach High School

Francisco Fernandez, Assistant to the Principal, Miami Beach High School

Jack Gordon, Florida State Senator

John Truitt, Director, Department of Security Services

Howard Kaminsky, Northeast Area Supervisor, Security Services

Rocky Pomerance, Chief of Police, Miami Beach

Major Ray LeGrande, Consultant, 1973 School Security Report

Sam Martin, Miami Beach High School Security Officer

Dr. Sol Lichter, Principal, Miami Beach High School

L. D. "Sonny" Gross, Dade County Director of Pupil Personnel Services

Dr. John Earle, Northeast Superintendent, Board of Public Instruction

Marlyn Smith, Director, Intake, Health and Rehabilitative Services

Eldridge Williams, Dade County Director, Office of Equal Education

Pat Tomillo, Executive Director, United Teachers, Dade County

Albert Mindel, Chairman, American High School, Parents Advisory Committee

Paul Kansler, Member, American High School, Parents Advisory Committee

Marlene Snyder, Administrative Assistant to Principal, Miami Beach High School

Eugene McAllister, Assistant Director, Department of Security Services

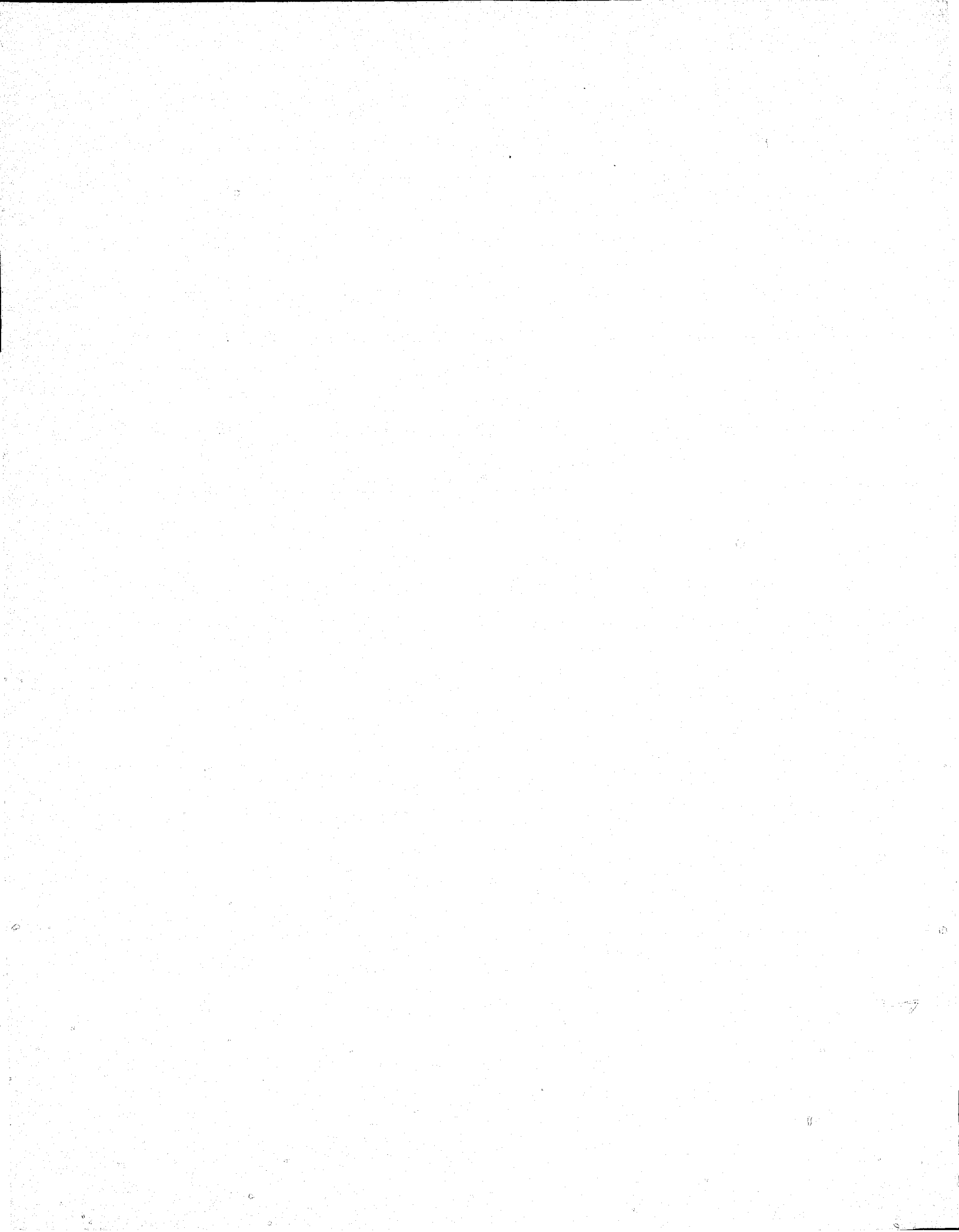
Martin Kavanaugh, Principal, Nautilus Junior High School

Craig Sturgeon, Student Activities Director, Miami Beach High School

Booker T. Long, Assistant Principal, Fisher Junior High School

Nick Valeriani, Community Relations Officer, Miami Beach Police Department

Miriam Wilcox, David Haber, Kevin Rutledge, Neal Kitchner, Nancy Schwartz,
Joyce Siegal, Herman Deveareux -- Students Interviewed.



END